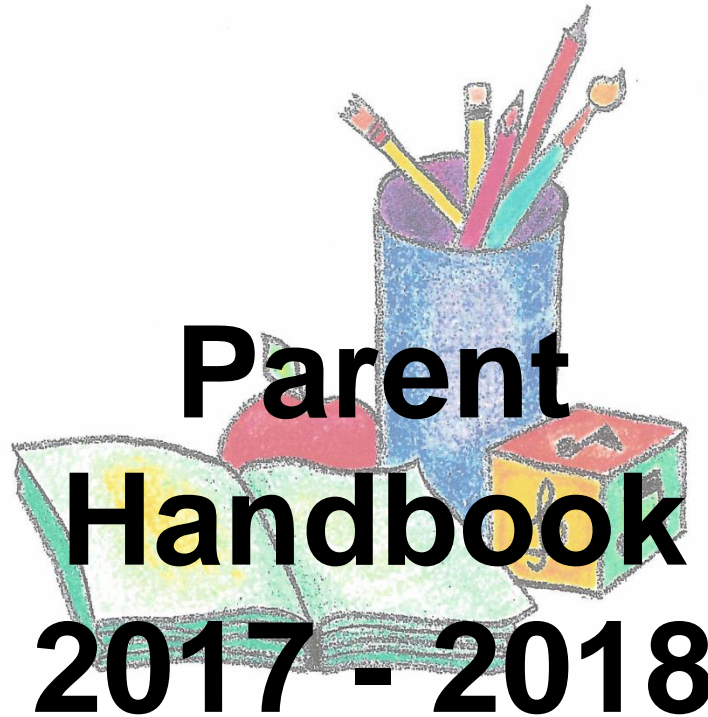


Poplar Grove Learning Academy:

Poplar Grove Preschool

At Poplar Grove United Methodist Church



Parent Handbook 2017 - 2018

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Visit us on Facebook!



Overview

Poplar Grove Learning Academy, Inc was organized to provide learning opportunities for Preschool and School-Age Children in the community. Poplar Grove Preschool has been in existence for almost 30 years, providing engaging learning opportunities and enrichment for children. An After School Center for school age children also operated within the Learning Academy from September 2004 until May of 2015.

Poplar Grove Learning Academy is licensed by the State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and meets or exceeds all the standards and requirements for Day Care Centers.

Purpose and Philosophy of Preschool

The purpose of Poplar Grove Preschool is to provide enrichment activities and learning opportunities for 3, 4, and 5 year olds to facilitate physical, intellectual, emotional, and social growth.

The program **philosophy** is based on beliefs that:

- Each child is an individual and has a unique background;
- Children have different rates of developing and ways of learning;
- Learning at the preschool level is play-based;
- Self-esteem and the ability to learn are interdependent;
- Music and motion are essential to development of circuitry in the brain;
- It is our responsibility to provide an environment that:
 - Provides a wide variety of play-based learning opportunities
 - Play centers with age-appropriate toys and media
 - Seasonal or thematic play centers
 - Group and individual games and activities that use large muscle groups
 - Group and individual games and activities that use fine motor skills
 - Provides individual and group activities (games, music, arts, crafts, puzzles, and other manipulatives) that allow natural teaching opportunities for developing math and literacy skills.

The **goals** of the program are to assist in developing a child who:

- Has a positive self-concept
- Is able to interact, work and play with children and adults
- Deals with his/her emotions
- Is physically coordinated
- Can orally communicate (talk, ask questions, listen)
- Expresses himself/herself in many ways (movement, art, building materials, drama, music, spoken word)
- Is curious and wants to learn
- Has readiness skills for full time school

The program purpose is accomplished through the use of structured and unstructured discovery time, outdoor time, physical activities, small group time, music, art, drama, dance, and story times.



Calendar:

Preschool will begin each year on the first Tuesday after Labor Day in September and will end on the Friday before Memorial Day in May

September 5	PRESCHOOL T-TH CLASS STARTS
September 6	PRESCHOOL M-W-F CLASSES START
October 9	No Preschool – Columbus Day Holiday
November 22, 23, 24	No Preschool – Thanksgiving
December 9	Preschool Christmas Programs
December 22 – Jan 5	No Preschool - Christmas Break
January 8	Preschool Resumes
January 15	No Preschool - M.L. King Day
February 16 & 19	No Preschool – President Day Holiday
March 26 - April 2	No Preschool – Spring Break & Easter Holiday
April 3	Preschool Resumes
May 19	Preschool Spring Programs
May 25	LAST DAY of PRESCHOOL

Emergency closing of preschool due to weather or other emergencies will be announced before 8 AM on LOCAL radio and TV stations.

Arrival and Departure

- **For the safety of all children**, please always use the Carson Road entrance to the church parking lot. DO NOT USE THE ENTRANCE off ROUTE 173 for drop-off and pick-up.
- Parents or the authorized/designated representatives are responsible for getting the preschool children safely into and out of the school building.
- Parents or the authorized/designated representatives must **sign the child in** when they arrive and make the staff in the classroom aware of the child's arrival.
- Children will need to wash/sanitize their hands in the Preschool bathrooms upon arrival at school.
- When picking up the child, parents or the authorized/designated representatives must **sign the child out**. Children will be released by the teacher or the assistant only to those individuals whom the parents have authorized in writing on the Emergency Form. If someone else is designated to pick up the child on a particular day, the teacher must be notified by the parent in writing. Picture identification may be requested at the time of pick-up. If the teacher/assistant has a concern about the representative picking up the child and the child does not recognize the person readily/spontaneously, the parent will be contacted; the child will not be released until that contact is made.
- Children are to **arrive** no earlier than 5 minutes prior to the beginning of class. If children are not picked up by 10 minutes after class ending time, parents will be charged \$5.00 for every 15 minutes, payable in cash at the time of pick-up.



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- On some days, it may be difficult for some children to separate from their parents. This is normal. It is recommended that parents make the drop-off brief and cheerful with a hug and assurance of being back to pick them up. The teacher and assistant will get the child quickly involved in play or activities. The child will not be forced to participate, but will be given positive alternatives and options.

Preschool Daily Program:

- Preschool possible session times 8:45 – 11:15 AM and/or 9:15 – 11:45 AM
- 30 minutes - Wash hands, welcome, free play
- 15 minutes - Clean-up time, Circle time (job chart, calendar, pledge, weather)
- 20 minutes – Music & movement, story time, bathroom break, prepare for snack
- 20 minutes - Snack time
- 30 minutes- Movement & exploration (outdoors if possible)
- 20 minutes – Small group activities (learning centers, manipulatives, games, crafts)
- 15 minutes – Closing song & story

Nutrition & Snacks:

- Nutrition is essential for healthy bodies and effective learning. Preschool children are expected to be brought to school having had breakfast.
- Approximately midway through the session, a nutritious snack will be served. These snacks will be oriented toward low sugar and good, basic nutrition. Apple juice, milk, or other 100% juice will accompany the snacks. Water is always available.
- Preschool parents will be asked to furnish nutritious snacks approximately four times during the school year. A snack schedule will be issued regularly. The Preschool “Snack Bag” will be sent home the class day before the family is scheduled to bring the snack.
- One of the scheduled days for you to send snack will be to celebrate your child’s birthday; children with birthdays outside the school year will have their “½ birthday” celebrated. Special napkins are a good way to recognize the special day. **** Please DO NOT send cake, cupcakes or frosted cookies.**
- Snacks **MUST** come to school sealed in the original packaging from the store where purchased with the **ingredient label intact**. Homemade snacks cannot be accepted due to allergies and DCFS health regulations.
- Appropriate store-bought snacks include:
 - Apples or other washed fruit such as grapes, bananas, oranges etc. (we will cut the fruit and distribute)
 - Raisins, fruit bars (e.g. Fig Newtons), applesauce, fruit cups
 - Popcorn, pretzels,
 - Crackers & cheese
 - Cheese sticks
 - Snack mix, snack bars, low sugar cereal (<10 gm sugar/serving)
 - Granola bars
- Children will not be forced to eat the snack, but no substitutions will be made. **HOWEVER**, children **allergic** to contents of the snack provided will be served a suitable substitute.
- A short prayer will be said after we gather at the snack tables.



Outdoor Activity and Field Trips:

- Whenever possible, children will be taken outside for games and activities. We will not go outside if the temperature is below 32°F or if wind chill makes conditions unsafe. **PLEASE DRESS YOUR CHILD FOR THE WEATHER.**
- In-house field trips are scheduled to introduce the children to different animals, professions, and other experiences. We have the 'experience' come to us rather than have us go somewhere else.
- If we were to plan a field trip or excursion off site, permission forms and information about the event will be sent home several days before the event. These forms will need to be signed and returned prior to the child being taken on the trip.

Transportation will be contracted with an agency providing safe mode of transportation for preschool children.

Walking field trips may be taken to sites within a reasonable distance. These trips will also require a written permission form and additional parent or adult volunteer supervision will be used.

Staffing: Teachers, Assistants, and Substitutes

Kathe Keithley	Director
Judy Haselhorst	Owner, Assistant Director
Marie Woodcock	Assistant Director / Teacher
Diana Morland	Assistant
Sharon Stoner	Teacher Substitute
Melissa Webb	Assistant Substitute
Arlene Buttke	Assistant Substitute

- *Staffing Ratios – minimum 1 teacher & 1 assistant per 20 children; additional staff & volunteers as indicated.*

Admission

Admission will be on a "first come-first served" basis. To be admitted to the Preschool program, students must:

- Meet the age requirements for the program
3 years to 5 years old. The child must be 3 years old by September 1st.
- Preschool children must be able to handle toileting independently.
- Pay a non-refundable Registration Fee
- Provide the required forms, completed, and signed prior to attendance:
 - Registration Form
 - Emergency Form
 - Consent Form
 - Receipt Verification Form (for Parent Handbook & DCFS Summary of Licensing Standards)
 - Health / Physical Form – including immunizations, vision and hearing, signed by a physician and not older than 6 months prior to the first day of school
 - Birth Certificate - a copy of the official county certificate



Discharge

A child will be discharged from Poplar Grove Learning Academy for any of (but not limited to) the following reasons:

- Failure to pay tuition
- Failure to complete required forms in a timely fashion
- Lack of parental cooperation and compliance with policies/procedures
- At the request of parents, in which case a two weeks written notice is requested. No refunds of tuition will be made.
- At the request of the Director or Teacher because of:
 - An inability to participate or benefit from the program.
 - Discipline problems that jeopardize the ability of the Director, Teacher, and/or Assistant to provide necessary supervision and appropriate learning environment for the other children.
- A parent-teacher conference will be held to determine appropriate strategies to handle the situation. A time frame will be agreed upon by both parties. A follow-up conference may be requested by the Director and/or Owner.

Attendance

Preschool

- Preschool Sessions may include:
 - Session 1: Monday/Wednesday/Friday 8:45 – 11:15 AM
 - Session 2: Monday/Wednesday/Friday 9:15 – 11:45 AM
 - Session 3: Tuesday/Thursday 8:45 – 11:15 AM
 - Session 4: Tuesday/Thursday 9:15 – 11:45 AM
- It is expected that children will attend their assigned Session regularly, except in cases of illness. There are no “part-time” options for the Preschool Sessions.
- Parents are to notify the Director if the child will be absent for any reason.
- Transportation must be provided by the parent or authorized representative.

Tuition and Fee Structure

- Registration Fee \$35 (non refundable)
- Tuition
 - 2 days/week **\$90 per month or \$760 paid in full before Oct. 1**
 - 3 days/week **\$130 per month or \$1,120 if paid in full before Oct. 1**

The tuition fee is divided evenly across the 9 months of school. There are no refunds for holidays, vacations, non-attendance, or illness.

- Tuition may be paid monthly, quarterly, or yearly. If paid monthly, it is due the first day of school of each month. A monthly invoice and / or payment envelope will be sent home with students a few days before the first of each month. Parents are to return the payment to school in the envelope provided by the first day of school of the month.
- Parents should contact the Director or Owner prior to the 10th of the month to arrange for delayed or partial payment if there is a problem. A late fee of \$25 will be charged for tuition not paid by the 15th of the month. Three delinquent payments (with no notification) within one year will be cause for discharge.



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- A \$25 service charge will be assessed for checks returned to the Academy because of “non-sufficient funds”; a note will be sent home along with the returned check. Payment including tuition and service charge must then be paid in cash.

Clothing and attire

- Children should wear/bring clothing appropriate for indoor activities as well as daily (as weather permits) outside activities. Snow boots will NOT be worn in the classroom.
- Children should wear well-fitting shoes appropriate for active play. (e.g. NO LOSE-FITTING SANDALS, FLIP-FLOPS, CROCS, OR DRESS SHOES)
- We recommend all clothing (including boots, backpacks etc.) brought to the school shall be inconspicuously marked with the child’s name.
- Children should bring a tote or backpack with name or ID inconspicuously attached, to use to take home crafts, newsletters, and other materials. Backpacks should also include a complete change of clothes in case of accident or spill.
- Coat hooks are available outside the classroom door for outer wear and backpacks/totes. The child will be responsible for identifying his/her own belongings.
- Personal Belongings - Children will not be allowed to have personal belongings, toys, games, jewelry, money etc., in the classroom except by special permission or for a special event. Any item brought to school will be secured in the child’s backpack or in a safe place in the Preschool Room until departure.
- Parents are asked not to send candy, gum, or food to school unless prior arrangements are made with the teacher.

Health, Illness, and Medication

- The school must be notified if the child is absent for any reason, including illness.
- Poplar Grove Preschool is for well children. Parents are asked to keep their child home if there are symptoms of illness, including, but not limited to fever, vomiting, diarrhea, rashes. The child should be fever free without medication for 24 hours prior to attendance.
- Parents or the designated representative will be called and asked to pick-up their child if they exhibit any of the above symptoms while at school.
- Children are expected to participate in all activities, such as going outside if the weather permits. If the child has not fully recovered from an illness to permit this, the parents will be asked to keep the child at home.
- A doctor’s decision regarding return to preschool may be required.
- Medication will NOT be administered at the Preschool. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis. If emergency medications like an epi-pen might be needed, a special form must be filled out.
- **Medical Emergencies** - If an emergency injury or illness occurs, the parent or designated representative will be notified immediately and asked to pick up the child. (Parents are required to maintain an updated Emergency phone list at the school.) A cot and blanket will be provided for the child to rest on. If the injury or illness appears life-threatening or serious, the parents will be contacted and the child, accompanied by the director, teacher or assistant, will be taken by ambulance to the designated hospital.



Guidance & Discipline:

Discipline is viewed as a process of learning self-control, respect for others, and responsibility. To help children learn this process, the following guidelines are in place:

- Children will be oriented to school behavior expectations in the first weeks of each session and will be reminded throughout the year.
- Children will be redirected when demonstrating inappropriate behavior. The goal is to help the child become self-disciplined and responsible for his/her own actions. Learning the consequences of an action and taking responsibility will be emphasized.
- At times, children will assist with making clear and concise rules and limits.
- Teachers, and assistants will;
 - Anticipate and redirect inappropriate behaviors;
 - Remind children of expectations, rules, and limits;
 - Help children use words to express anger, resolve conflicts, and express needs and desires;
 - Assist children in the conflict resolution process.
- The teacher or assistant may remove a child from an activity if inappropriate behaviors persist and help the child to find an appropriate activity to engage in; if needed, a child will be directed to a chair in the room to take a break for no more than one minute per year of age.
- If a child physically hurts another child, he/she will be removed from the activity, the hurt child will be comforted and the children will then be assisted with the conflict resolution process. The parents will be informed at the end of the day.
- If the child continues to behave inappropriately, parents will be called for a conference with the teacher and assistant to develop a strategy and timeline for correction. Professional or outside intervention may be requested. Should the strategy not be effective, the parents may be asked to withdraw the child from the program.
- No corporal punishment will be used.

Parent Participation & Conferences:

- Parents are welcome to visit our classes. It is most helpful if the teacher is aware of the visit ahead of time, but this is not required. As a safety precaution, the doors to the building will be locked during school hours. Please ring the doorbell to the left of the door. The ability to exit the areas is possible at any time.
- Parents may call the Director after hours to discuss issues. Phone numbers will be provided at the orientation and are on the front and last page of this handbook.
- A Preschool orientation session will be conducted in August of each year.
- Parents may volunteer to assist in the classroom and may be asked to help with particular projects. A sign-up sheet will be posted to keep us from having too many helpers on one day.
- Resources and information about interesting events will be posted on the bulletin boards outside the class areas near the entrance doors. Information will also be sent home with the children.
- Emails and/or newsletters will also be sent to keep parents informed.
- Conferences may be requested by the parent or teacher, if needed.



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Student Records:

- All student records will be confidential and secured at all times.
- Records or individual student information will not be released unless proper, written authorization by the parent or legal guardian is secured and on file. Written authorization will consist of DCFS form CFS 600-3.
- A copy of the Emergency form will be maintained in the student's file.
- Student Records will be maintained by the corporation for a minimum of 5 years after the child is discharged from the program.

Safety:

- At times, demonstration animals may be brought into the classroom or onto the outdoor play area. All visits will be supervised and controlled by the Teacher. Safety precautions will be taken and hygiene routines followed after the visit.
- Pest control is carried out by thorough cleaning and when necessary isolated spraying with non-toxic materials. Parents will be notified if other methods of eradication are necessary.
- The facility has been tested for radon and found to be in compliance and safe.
- Monthly fire evacuation and/or tornado drills are conducted for all classes.
- In an extreme emergency evacuation, children will be taken to the Poplar Grove Elementary School (if it is open). Parents will be called via the staff cell phones and notices of where the children are will be posted. If the public school is not open, the children will be taken to a nearby home or public facility as deemed safe by the staff.
- Teaching staff will carry their cell phones. Please have these telephone numbers handy for making contact as needed:

Director: Kathe Keithley 815-742-3033

Preschool email: pgpreschool@gmail.com

Website: www.pgumc.us/preschool

Assistant Director: Marie Woodcock 815-289-6083

Owner/Assistant Director: Judy Haselhorst 815-742-6101

Business Mailing Address:

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