



## FOREWORD

The time has arrived for your child to attend preschool and this creates a great change for your child and your family. You will no doubt have many questions you would like to ask; especially if this is the first time you have had a child at preschool. We believe that you, the child's parents, are the most important link in the educational chain and that together we can make your child's experience of preschool and school an enjoyable one.

Education is a very human process. Parents, children, and teachers need to be able to talk, listen, laugh, and work together in the learning process.

A sincere welcome is extended to you. It is hoped that your association with *The Wonder Place* will be a very pleasant one.

Christine Benedix

Preschool Director

Welcome to *The Wonder Place Preschool*. Our purpose is to provide the highest quality preschool education in a secure, nurturing, and stimulating environment. The Wonder Place serves the physical, emotional, and intellectual needs of preschool children and their families. *The Wonder Place* is a Christian preschool and strives to exemplify that in all we do.

We meet these goals with our age-appropriate curriculum, our highly qualified staff, the highest standards of cleanliness, and our ongoing communication with parents.

The *Wonder Place Handbook* has been designed to provide important information that parents need when selecting the preschool program for their child.

All of the dedicated, caring staff at *The Wonder Place* want to be certain that your child has the very best early childhood experience possible. We want to thank you for entrusting us with that privilege and responsibility.

Please take the time to read all the following information to help you better understand our program and philosophy. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the preschool director.

## **Teachers and Administration**

### **Director**

Christine Benedix

### **Teachers**

Christine Benedix (M-F)

Kathy Pflug (M-F Art)

Nancy Meng-Frecker (Science)

Kim Shaneyfelt ( Spanish)

### **Aides**

Bev Jensen (M-W-F) (Christian Ed. and writing table)

Molly Koley (T-Th) (fine motor)

Amy Rossitto (M-T-W) (math )

Our teacher ratios are;

M-W-F        7:1

T -Th         6:1

## Meet the Staff

Christine Benedix Preschool Director returns for her fifth year at *The Wonder Place*. She has been Dundee's Nursery Director for ten years. Christine is an active member in the National, Nebraska, and Omaha chapters of the Association for the Education of Young Children. She enjoys sharing the joys of learning with her students. After four wonderful years as director, Christine is excited to lead the preschool again this year. Two of Christine's daughters will be attending college this fall; her younger daughters are 15 and 11.

Bev Jensen, our fabulous resident grandma, returns this year despite a long commute to her new home in Bennington. She will be working with the three day class. Bev is devoted to children and *The Wonder Place*. She will be assisting in our new Christian based monthly discovery center.

Kathy Pflug, the lead teacher for the *Wonder Tots* 2005/2006 will expand her role in our art program. She will teach art M-F with a strong focus on process and using recycled materials. Kathy has 10 children including Miss Molly our past art teacher. Kathy is a nurturing teacher with a constant smile.

Nancy Meng-Frecker joined the staff three years ago. Mrs. Meng-Frecker will lead our expanding science program. She has an early education background and previously worked at Sunset Elementary. Nancy loves the energy and spirit of preschoolers and is a wonderful asset to our staff.

Kim Shaneyfelt has had children at the Wonder Place for over 8 years. She will be joining the staff as our Spanish teacher. Kim brings both elementary and high school teaching experience to her classroom. Mrs. Shaneyfelt is also a piano teacher. We are excited to welcome this high energy new teacher to our classroom.

Amy Rossitto returns for her fourth year as a teaching aid. Her college background focused on Psychology. Amy has the energy and enthusiasm of a young mother. Mrs. Rossitto's focus will remain on kindergarten readiness skills. She has a preschool age daughter who loves to come to work with Mom!

Molly Koley, a ten year nursery veteran will return as a preschool aid. She has a family of six children from college to 6th grade. Molly loves children and has patience and understanding for every child. Molly is a hands-on teacher always able to work at the child's level.

## PROGRAMS OFFERED

Three and Four Years Old: 2 days (T/TH) a.m.

Four and Five Years Old: 3 days (M/W/F)a.m.

Wondergarden: 5 days (M/T/W/TH/F) a.m.

Early Three's: 2 days (T/Th) a.m. Jan-May (3 by Jan.15)

At *Wonder Place Preschool*, the teachers see themselves as partners with parents in the faith education, as well as the general education of the child. Therefore, at Wonder Place we work together and invite parental participation in the classroom.

At Preschool, children are encouraged to:

- express themselves and communicate with others
- form basic concepts which help them understand their world
- develop self-confidence
- make friends
- share and co-operate with others
- develop physical skills and
- develop a positive attitude to learning.

Many people still remain unsure as to just what preschool is all about. Preschool is not "baby-sitting": It is about the development of important skills that are needed in everyday living, in relationships with other people, and in being ready for school. We strive to have each child working to his or her full potential, in all areas, and to have them feel good about themselves and the prospect of school.

A child's play is his/her work. It is the one way he/she has of making sense of the world in which the child lives and of developing the child's skills - emotionally, socially, intellectually, and physically. Due to the unique nature and capabilities of each child, we cannot expect them to have all reached the same level at the same time. What we can strive for, though, is to capture the learning interests and curiosity of each child. We do this through the educational experiences we offer, and through providing an environment in which the child feels free to explore and learn without fear of failure. Parents of preschoolers play the most important role in the education of their child, so we welcome your involvement.

You can help by:

- Sharing information that will help us understand your child and meet his or her needs
- Visiting the classroom and joining in with the program
- Reading and contributing items of interest for our notice boards
- Collecting clean recyclable materials for use in the program
- Providing supervision on excursions away from the classroom and on special days at Preschool
- Sharing your own hobbies with us - music, pottery, art, craft, cooking, carpentry . . .

Our Preschool aims to provide a program and environment that will assist the children to make a smooth transition from the naturalistic learning environment of the home to the more formal learning environment of the later years of primary school.

Parents are encouraged to participate in their child's learning at the preschool. To do this effectively it is important that the parents understand the educational objectives being pursued for their children.

### **Curriculum**

*The Wonder Place preschool curriculum* is a discovery-based learning experience that gives each individual child the opportunity to move through specially designed learning centers of his or her own level of interest and ability. The curriculum focuses on learning basic concepts and skills through hands-on experiences and activities. Some centers are designed to develop large and small motor skills while others are more academically oriented. Through our program, each child is given the tools needed to encourage the growth of the whole child.

### **Goals of the Curriculum:**

- To provide a positive sense of identity and emotional well-being
- To develop age-appropriate social, physical, language, and literacy skills
- To encourage thinking, reasoning, questioning, and experimentation
- To provide exposure to the arts and encourage creative expression
- To demonstrate proper health, safety, and nutritional practices
- To respect gender, age, and cultural diversity

## **Clothing**

We believe that child's work is PLAY. Please send your child to school in "Work Clothes". There will be many hands on experiences taking place during the school day. Please remember this in the morning when dressing for school and have your child wear clothes that can get dirty or even possibly paint stained. We suggest clothing that is washable, comfortable, and easy to take off and put on for toileting purposes. In spite of smocks and washable paints, clothes will get dirty and become stained. Shoes with closed toes and non-skid soles, such as tennis shoes, are safest for climbing and outdoor play.

## **Health**

All students are required to have a current record of immunization on file at school. The forms for these records are mailed to parents during the summer and must be returned to the main office before the first day of school.

## **Illness**

Colds, flu, and other contagious diseases seem to occur frequently and spread easily among preschool and toddler children. To help protect your own child's health and to minimize the possibility of contagion at school, please keep your child at home if you observe any of the following symptoms:

- Ⓞ Nasal discharge that is green or yellow
- Ⓞ Complaints of ear pain
- Ⓞ Productive cough
- Ⓞ Severe sore throat
- Ⓞ Eyes that are pink, burning, itching, or producing discharge
- Ⓞ Diarrhea or vomiting
- Ⓞ Fever

If these symptoms of possibly contagious conditions are observed in your child during the day, you will be called to pick up your child immediately.

When your child has a fever, please keep him/her at home an additional 24 hours after the temperature returns to normal. This will help to ensure that the illness has actually passed and that your child will be well enough to resume school activities.

If your child is ill, be alert for signs of contagious symptoms or rashes. A doctor should check these symptoms before the child attends school. Be sure to inform the teacher of any allergies or special physical needs your child has.

Minor injuries such as scrapes, scratches, and paper cuts are common occurrences at school. We treat such injuries with soap, water, and, when needed, a band-aid. We are not able to apply antiseptics or ointments, nor may we remove splinters. When an injury is more serious, we notify parents and file an accident report.

### **Food Allergies**

Teachers must be notified immediately, *in writing*, concerning any food allergies a child may have.

### **Fire Safety**

Fire drills will be conducted throughout the school year. Our teachers help the preschoolers to understand the need for fire drills. When the fire alarm rings, signaling a drill, the students are calmly guided to a special meeting place outside the school.

### **Emergency Notification Card**

Emergency cards are kept on file at school. In case of illness or injury, the cards are used to notify and advise you or the person(s) designated by you of your child's status. It is extremely important that the information be kept current with correct phone numbers. If your information changes at any time, please notify us so that we can better serve you and your child.

### **Share a Story**

Beginning in the late fall and continuing throughout the school year each child will be given the opportunity to bring a favorite book to be read at story time. We also invite a parent, grandparent, sibling, or another "guest reader" to read at story time.

### **Snacks**

Each of our preschool classes has a snack break. Parents are asked to take turns providing snacks for their child's class for a day at a time. Snacks should be nutritious and low in sugar and salt content. (No peanuts please)

Parents may sign up for their preferred snack day in their preschool hallway.

Suggested snacks include vegetable sticks, crackers, pretzels, granola bars, muffins, cheese, fresh or dried fruit, yogurt, and applesauce. Children four years and older may also have popcorn, sunflower seeds, or pumpkin seeds.

It is essential that children learn now about the value of eating nutritious foods that promote energy, concentration and focus for the whole school day. Research is showing that many prepackaged snack foods and foods high in sugar content cannot do this. Their rate of consumption by school children has become a source of concern to medical and nutrition experts.

### **Discussion and Resolution of Concerns**

Parents are asked to contact the preschool director about any concerns they have about the classroom and their child's education. Concerns are most effectively addressed when those involved speak from first hand knowledge of events, remain open to and respectful of others viewpoints, and focus their attention on a cooperative solution. Teachers are encouraged to be sensitive and responsive to the concerns parents have for their children. Parents are encouraged to be trusting of the teacher's role as educator. The preschool director is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the preschool and in that capacity has the final authority to make decisions relative to the resolution of concerns. The director also addresses concerns relative to programs and operations of the school.

### **Photographs**

From time to time, we may take photographs of your child for art projects, displays, and preschool publications. If you would rather us not take photographs of your child, please speak to the director.

### **Arrival and dismissal**

Our school doors open at 9:15. We ask that an adult accompany the child to the classroom door. Children are to be picked up in the classroom by an adult immediately following class dismissal at 11:30. If someone else will be picking up your child from school, please notify the teacher in advance in writing. Your child will only be released to those designated on the registration form. Children must always be picked up inside the building. A late fee will be charged if your child is not picked up in a timely manner.

## **Toys from home**

Children are discouraged from bringing toys or personal items from home to school unless it is for show and tell. Personal toys from home may cause problems and we cannot ensure that the toy will not be broken. The preschool room is equipped with many toys for everyone to use. If your child has a "security toy" which he/she wishes to bring to school, he/she will be asked to keep the item in their backpack or cubby while school is in session. You may check the Christian Education office for misplaced items. Lost or damaged personal items cannot be replaced by the preschool.

## **Discipline**

We believe that children learn best through experience. We believe that teachers must guide and redirect children to help them to learn to cooperate with their peers. We believe that this will enable each child to have a positive, educational experience. Our ultimate goal is to encourage and enhance each child's growth and development while he/she is in our care.

We believe we can accomplish this by:

- Having a variety of activities available
- Using group management techniques, limiting children in areas, and having sufficient materials as well as giving the opportunity for constructive interactions
- Speaking with a child if behavior is inappropriate
- Using positive language with the child to give praise for appropriate behavior
- Redirecting a child to another area if they are having problems cooperating
- Encouraging children to solve relational problems among peers by using their words and their reasoning abilities, with a teacher standing by to provide encouragement or intervene if necessary

After exhausting these methods, if a child still has a problem with appropriate behavior the child is asked to sit by the teacher, to think about the behavior and with the help of the teacher think of better ways to handle the situation.

Children with consistent difficulties are taken through the above steps and the parents are counseled regularly. If necessary, outside help is sought and ultimately the child could be dismissed from our program. This is seriously considered when health, safety, and welfare of this child or another child are at risk.

Please be advised that under the law any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, and harsh, humiliating, or frightening treatment is illegal and is against our philosophy.

## **Tuition and fees**

All tuition is due on the first of each month. Tuition received after the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month will incur a late payment fee of \$5.00. A late pickup fee of \$5.00 will be charged for pick up more than 15 minutes late. (Fees may be waived after communication with the program director if applicable.)

If there are personal or financial problems in any particular month, please let us know and we will try to work out a plan with you.

## **Junk Please**

Many important skills are developed by the children's use of junk materials, and thus we need a constant supply of all sorts of junk;

- Cardboard/paper of any size, color, shape
- Silver and gold foil
- Cardboard cylinders
- Wool
- Material scraps
- Stamps/envelopes
- Milk bottle tops
- Pipe cleaners
- Tins
- Brushes
- Squirt bottles
- Greeting cards
- Wrapping paper
- Cellophane/crepe
- String/lace/ribbon
- Buttons
- Ice cream sticks
- Calendars
- Soft wood
- Corks
- Bottle tops
- Sand paper

Anything Else You Think We Might Be Able To Use

## **Excursions**

Throughout the year, small excursions will be organized for the children's educational interests. Letters informing parents of the excursion are always sent home. Parents are advised well in advance of any planned excursions and always have the right to veto their child going on an excursion. Parent assistance for supervision may be necessary for the safety of the children, and parents will be notified prior to the event.

## **School Cancellation**

If the weather is questionable, please listen to the radio or television for word of school closing. If the **Omaha Public Schools** are **closed or delayed** in opening, **preschool will be cancelled** also.

## **Yearly Calendar**

The Wonder Place Preschool follows the yearly calendar of the Omaha Public Schools as a guide for major holidays. We try to combine vacations with neighborhood schools as well. A list of vacation days for the coming year can be found at the end of the handbook. A preschool calendar of activities and special events will be distributed each month.

## **Holidays**

Some of the highlights of our school year are centered by holiday celebrations and family. We emphasize the religious aspects of Christmas and Easter with stories, songs, and activities. A Christmas program involving all students is presented before Christmas break.

## **Car Pools**

You will receive a class address list to assist you in forming a car pool with people living near you. We encourage this cooperative practice whenever possible.

You may park on Webster Street or any of the streets near the church. We apologize that at times church activities may cause parking to be difficult to find. Nonetheless, please do not block intersections or double-park and be aware of pedestrians, especially young children.

## **Purpose**

The Dundee Presbyterian Preschool was established to provide a Christian atmosphere that encourages social, emotional, physical, and intellectual growth serving children three years through six years of age from the congregation and the surrounding community.

We work together as partners to teach and care for your children. Thank you for your belief and trust in our programs.



