



Parent Handbook

The Children's Nursery School at Peace UCC

9123 Aboite Center Road

Fort Wayne, In 46804

260-436-6821

Nursery School Director

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THE CHILDREN'S NURSERY SCHOOL IS PART OF PEACE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY TO CHILDREN. IT IS OPEN TO ALL YOUNG CHILDREN AND IS NONSECTARIAN. A CHILD ENROLLED IN OUR PROGRAM WILL NOT BE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST BECAUSE OF RACE, ETHNICITY, NATIONAL ORIGIN, SEX OR DISABILITY.

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History

The Children's Nursery School was integrated into the life of Peace United Church of Christ in 1980 as a ministry to the community. The Nursery School had originated in 1967 as Hope Presbyterian Church, located at that time on Homestead Road. When the Hope Congregation dissolved and sold its building, the Nursery School was invited to continue its commitment to children with the supportive congregation at Peace. Since joining Peace UCC, it has been known as The Children's Nursery School. CNS is a community ministry of Peace UCC. It was the desire of the church to have the CNS program be based on Christian morals and beliefs but not have a biblical curriculum taught within the CNS program. It is our desire to have every child feel welcome regardless of religious affiliation.

Philosophy

The Children's Nursery School at Peace United Church of Christ is a play-based preschool that focuses on the needs of the whole child. CNS believes that nurturing the whole child is the best way to promote kindergarten readiness through celebrating independence, cultivating confidence, and promoting joy in learning. CNS is an open and welcoming preschool to all families. CNS does not have any religious education as part of our curriculum. Our curriculum is designed to be developmentally appropriate and encourage child-led exploration of materials and concepts.

Discipline and Guidance

“Discipline is the slow, bit by bit time consuming task of helping children see the sense in acting a certain way” –Dr. James Hymes (Early Childhood Specialist)

Our goal, as Early Childhood Professionals, is to guide and direct children toward acceptable behavior, thereby helping them “see the sense of acting in a certain way.” To accomplish this, teachers maintain the delicate balance between children's attempts to be independent and their need for outer controls. Rules and limits are reinforced clearly, fairly, consistently, and regularly. It is our desire to create an affirming, cooperative, accepting environment where children can gain self-respect, self-control, sensitivity towards others, and opportunities for finding mutual peaceful resolutions to problems and conflicts.

Guidance Techniques

Giving children choices whenever possible.

Making directions or suggestions in positive statements.
Reinforcing what children do appropriately and what is desired.
There will be logical consequences for inappropriate behavior.
Redirecting the activity to one that is more acceptable.
Teaching problem-solving skills with the child or children involved.
Helping the child find acceptable ways of expressing negative feelings.

Guidance Techniques Excluded

Physical abuse or punishment.
Shaming, frightening, or humiliating children.
Carry-overs from incident.
Consequences that are too long, punitive, or postponed.
Lots of rules, only enough to ensure a safe environment.
Threatening children with loss of affection.
Being overly helpful in a way that does not allow children to do as much as they can on their own, including solving their own conflicts.

Children who consistently exhibit behavior problems are signaling a need for help. On occasion, parents will be asked to meet with staff in seeking solutions. Realizing that we may not be able to meet the needs of every child, we may, when deemed necessary by staff and/or consultants, ask that a child have additional assistance, possibly by an aid, or as a last result, be withdrawn from our program.

The CNS Committee

The CNS program is guided and supported by a CNS committee. The committee is made up of three Nursery School parents, two Church members from Peace UCC, one teacher representative, the CNS Director, and Peace UCC Pastor. The committee sets program fees and guidelines for the Nursery School and assists the Director in all Nursery School activities. The committee is also responsible for discussing CNS concerns and grievances.

The Nursery School Session

Each half day Nursery School session is 2 ½ hours in length. The full day classes run from 9-3. The two year old classes have a group size of 10 children with two teachers. Three year old classes have 15 children and two teachers. The four/five (pre-k) class have 16 children and two teachers.

Although the schedule of routines and activities vary somewhat from one classroom to another, each session includes free play in the interest centers, snack, clean-up, group time experiences, circle time and large motor play on the playground or the indoor big room.

The classrooms are arranged with clearly defined areas called interest centers. Children spend approximately one hour participating and exploring in the interest centers of their choice, individually, with one playmate, or several. These centers consist of dramatic play, blocks and trucks, books, easel painting, creative art, discover table, science area, fine motor manipulative (lego blocks, puzzles, bristle blocks), play dough, listening and writing centers. During this time, children have many opportunities for role playing, creating, building, experimenting, trying out known information and gaining new skills.

Group time takes place with all children sitting together usually 5-20 minutes, depending on their age. A brief time together is held at the beginning of the session to greet one another. Group time focuses on the learning activity of the day with related stories, finger-plays, songs and games. Show and Tell is also, periodically, a feature of this experience.

Large Motor

We have large motor activities on our playground or in our Big Room for approximately 20 minutes each day. The children have various climbing equipment, riding toys, space for running, balls and other opportunities for large muscle development. The only time we do not go outside is when the temperature is under 20 degrees or it is raining.

Please send your child dressed in weather appropriate clothes and shoes (Tennis or gym shoes are the best for active play) to be able to enjoy all the climbing equipment indoors and out.

Snack Time

Daily snacks are provided by parents for their child's classroom, according to a schedule distributed to parents throughout the school year. Each child will be responsible for one week's snack approximately three times during the school year, including their birthday week, or half birthday (for summer birthdays).

Parents are asked to provide napkins, and either a roll of paper towels or a box of facial tissue. **A beverage is not needed.** Children will be served water with snack. This will allow them to practice pouring from a pitcher into their cup without disastrous spills and will eliminate any concerns about allergies to milk or juice.

Proper nutrition is very important for young children. It is important we support good nutrition at snack time too. Please send nutritious, low fat, low sugar snacks. Snacks must be either commercially prepared or whole fruits or vegetables. A snack suggestion list will be sent home when it is your child's turn to bring snack.

CNS is a nut free facility. Please do not bring in products containing peanuts or tree nuts.

Special treats may be sent in for your child's birthday, but they must be store bought and nut free. Please communicate with your child's teacher prior to bringing in a special birthday treat.

Holiday Treat Policy

At certain times throughout the year individual classes may have parties to celebrate events. Please speak to your child's teacher about bringing in a special treat to eat if you would like to do so. While we do allow food treats at special events, food treats need to be cleared ahead of time with the teacher. We do not allow special food treats at regular snack times (snack helper).

Curriculum

All relationships, events, activities, and experiences children encounter during school is education in action. In early childhood, everything children do, sense, or feel is part of their education.

Our goal at CNS is to provide opportunities for children to grow in both their academic and social/emotional skills. We believe in the "hands-on" approach where children get actively involved in their learning.

Children learn through the use of an integrated curriculum where the overall weekly learning is woven across the areas of art, blocks, cooking, dramatic play, math, music, physical development, reading and language, science, sensory awareness, and social studies.

For instance, mathematical principals, rather than being taught by formal instructions, would be integrated into the curriculum.

Using the theme of "apples: the following might be activities experienced by the children:

- Music: singing "Way Up High in the Apple Tree"
- Routine: Learning to wait for a turn to help make applesauce
- Snack: Counting four apple slices to place on the napkin
- Science: Weighing apples and comparing their size, color and shape
- Blocks: Building a fruit stand to sell apples
- Writing: Introducing new words such as orchard, core, seeds, and apple crisp. Children are allowed an opportunity to write about their experiences with apples in a journal.
- Art: Making apple prints with paint

To take advantage of children's natural abilities, interests and enthusiasm for learning, we work to provide a child-centered, developmentally appropriate curriculum. It is through the CNS curriculum that children acquire the skills and behaviors that will help promote their optimal development.

Our curriculum includes helping to promote a healthy development of self-esteem in children. Learning to work together and cooperate is another vital tool children will learn. Most of all, it is our goal to foster the love of learning in each child. This sets the foundation for later learning in the years to come.

Health

A health form, completed annually, is kept on file in the CNS office. This form includes immunizations, allergies, medical diagnosis, and any other pertinent information regarding the child's health.

Children who are not feeling well cannot participate fully in the activities planned for the session. For your child's well-being, and the protection of classmates, please keep your child home when he/she has a severe cold, sore throat, upset stomach, raised temperature, rash, etc. **Children should be symptom free for 24 hours before they return to school.** A call or message letting us know your child will not be in school is helpful, but not mandatory. If, however, your child has a communicable disease (strep-throat, chickenpox, conjunctivitis/pinkeye, etc.) please let us know.

An accident report form will be completed anytime a child is injured while at school. This will be documented in the incident report section of Brightwheel (the app we use). If needed, children will be given first aid, and if further treatment is necessary, we will contact parents, or the emergency contacts listed on the Emergency Form.

Lunch Bunch Program

The Lunch Bunch program allows the children in our three/four and pre-k classes to extend their time with us for an additional hour. The cost is \$10 per day. Children need to bring a lunch from home. We encourage you to send healthy lunches (not fast food) that children can easily eat with little to no assistance. We serve water for drinks. Please do not send juice or milk. Volunteers are available to help your child open items, however everything should be openable by children to encourage independence and build confidence.

Lunch Bunch is staffed by parent volunteers. Parents are given a tuition credit of \$15 for every Lunch Bunch session that they volunteer. Tuition for the following month would reflect the credit.

Reservations for both children and volunteers will be on Sign Up Genius. Calendars for the month will be available one week prior to the start of the month. Payment for lunch bunch can be paid via check, cash, or Brightwheel. Lunch bunch charges will be added to Brightwheel at the end of each month. Children may stay for lunch on any day that they have class, however, if it is a year where a lot of children want to use the service, we may have to limit the number of times each child can stay per week.

- There are no refunds or credits for Lunch Bunch on dates missed.
- **Children must be potty trained to stay for Lunch Bunch.**
- Children's lunches must be labeled with their name.

Clothing

We encourage children to arrive at school dressed to play which is the "work" of the young child. Comfortable, nonrestrictive clothing that will allow children the freedom to be on the floor, climbing, riding bikes, or painting are preferred. Safe comfortable shoes are very important for running, jumping, and climbing on our playground. **Sneakers or tennis shoes provide the best footwear for comfortable and safe play at school.**

Any time the outside temperature is 20 degrees or higher (including wind chill), there is a strong possibility that the children will be on the playground for a period of play. Please send appropriate outerwear. This includes hat, gloves, boots and snow pants.

We also require children to keep a change of clothing in their backpack in case it is needed.

Possessions

Each child will need to bring a backpack to school each day. This bag should include a change of clothes (diapers if needed for 2's only). The bag will be used to take home artwork, newsletters, and other school information. It is very important that each child's book bag and outerwear (jackets, hats, gloves) be **labeled with the child's name.**

We discourage toys being brought in from home unless it has been requested for a class assignment. These items often get lost among the classroom toys and sometimes go home with the wrong child.

Parent Involvement and Visitation

We hope parents who want to be involved will feel free to participate in as many ways as possible. Parent involvement is an integral part of a successful program for you and your child. Please let your child's teachers know when you would like to come into the classroom to read a book, help with an art project or journal writing, or share a hobby. There will also be many times that our monthly newsletters will be asking for parent help with school activities outside of the classroom (Family Nights, book fairs, cookie fundraiser, Helping Hands etc.) Parents are welcome to come and visit the classroom at any time—there is an **OPEN-DOOR POLICY** in all the classroom as well as the office.

Communication

A monthly newsletter I is sent from the director via Brightwheel highlighting school events, news, and reminders. A calendar from your child's classroom teachers will be sent home to inform you of activities happening in each classroom. Teachers will send pictures and updates of the classroom once a week via Brightwheel. Parents can reach teachers and the director through Brightwheel messaging. A message sent to Staff will only be seen by the teachers in your child's classroom and the director. A message sent to Admin will only be seen by the director. The director can also be reached via email (peacecns@msn.com) or the office phone (260-436-6821).

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Conferences will be formally offered and scheduled in the fall and available in the spring if needed. Nursery School classes will not meet during the Fall Conference days, which are the Monday and Tuesday of Thanksgiving week. However, childcare will be provided for the CNS children and their siblings while parents are in the Fall Conference with classroom teachers. Should a need for a conference between parents and teachers develop at other times, this will be done either by telephone or by personal conference at a time agreed upon.

Please feel free to contact your child's teacher anytime. It is vital that we always have open communication .

Child/Parent/Teacher Times

Opportunities to bring together children and their parents and teachers are provided during the year. This includes annual events such as Classroom Open House, Family Fun Night, VIP day and night, and other social times. Watch your calendar and newsletter for these dates.

School Closings

Anytime weather conditions result in the closing of Southwest Allen County Schools, our program will close also. Parents will be notified via Brightwheel alert and social media posts. **In the event that SWAC delay their school day, we will have classes on our regular schedule. We do NOT delay classes.**

On very rare occasions, CNS will need to cancel classes because the church will need to use the building for a funeral. All attempts are made to schedule services around CNS classes to avoid this happening.

Extended Leave

We recognize there may be a time when a family may benefit from an extended leave of absence, and we have developed a policy to help accommodate both the family's needs and CNS needs. Extended leave is defined as greater than 10 scheduled days of absence. When granted leave, 50% of the total monthly tuition rate will be required for each month your child is not in attendance. This will hold first rights to the child's spot.

All families have the option to withdraw from care and enroll at a future time when/if opening may be available.

Activity/Supply Fee

The only other fee that is charged to parents other than tuition/registration fee is an Activity/Supply Fee. This fee covers our in-house visitors and supplies for the classroom. We invite people from the community to give presentations to the children rather than taking field trips. We have found that the children are more comfortable in their own environment when attending these presentations. School supplies are also purchased from this money. Activity/Supply Fee payments will be billed separately in March and is \$40.

Registration Fee

A registration fee of \$45 is charged to secure a place in the program on a yearly basis. The registration fee is due within one week of the office approving your child's registration. This fee is not part of any tuition fee and is NON-REFUNDABLE. The fee may be paid on Brightwheel or in person by cash, check, or money order. The registration fee must be paid to be placed on the waiting list if applicable.

Tuition Fees

The total cost of a child's participation in our program is calculated on a full year basis, September through May. Tuition is paid on a yearly, semester, or monthly basis. A financial agreement form is sent to each parent explaining tuition fees and due dates.

The amount of tuition remains the same during the current school year, regardless of vacation, holidays, illness of a child, or weather-related closings. The tuition is pro-rated over nine months. Tuition payments begin August 1 of the school year and are due the first of each month for the entire school year. **Checks payable to PEACE UCC.**

Late Tuition Payments

It may be necessary to charge a late payment fee to families who have a history of making late payments. The late fee will be \$20 if the tuition is not paid by the 15th of the month. We appreciate all payments being made in a timely manner. If your family is experiencing financial difficulties that will result in your tuition payment being late, please contact the CNS director to set up a payment plan. If the director is not contacted by the 15th of the month, the late fee will be applied to your tuition account.

Unpaid Accounts

If CNS tuition payments are unpaid for two consecutive months, your child's class placement will be forfeited until payment is made in full including late fees.

Withdrawal Notice

In the event that it is necessary for parents to withdraw their child from the program, we require a 30-day notice. In doing so tuition reimbursement will be given for any fees paid beyond the date of withdrawal. If less than 30 days is given, the school will retain one month's tuition before reimbursement is made.

Tuition reimbursements will not be granted after March 1st of the current school year.

Returned Checks (NSF)

Tuition checks that are returned to CNS for insufficient payment will result in a \$25 reposit fee. The Nursery School's financial institution will automatically process the check and add the reposit fee. If more than two checks written for CNS tuition are returned for insufficient funds all future payments to the school will need to be paid in cash or money order.

Late Pick-up Fee

Children need to be picked up on time for CNS dismissal. Dismissal is 11:30am and 3:00pm. There will be a \$15 late fee assessed at 11:46am and 3:16pm for children who have not been picked up from school.

Program Evaluations

Evaluations are sent via email and Brightwheel for the purpose of gaining parent feedback at the end of the school year. Surveys will be on Survey Monkey. We appreciate your comments and suggestions. We do encourage ongoing parent communication throughout the school year.

Emergency Evacuation Site

In the unlikely event there would be an emergency that would require the evacuation of our building, our alternate site would be:

**Haverhill Elementary School
4725 Weatherside Run
Fort Wayne, IN 46804
260-431-2201**

Fire Drills/Tornado Drills

CNS practices fire drills with each classroom monthly. In the spring, CNS will practice a tornado drill with each classroom.

Front Door Security System

There is a front door security system in place for our building. The school will be locked between arrival and dismissal. If you need to enter the building between those times, you will need to be buzzed in by someone either from the CNS office or the Church office. If you are running late and the front doors have closed, it is important that you do not drop your child off without making sure they get into the building safely. This means you will have to walk them to the front door.

Arrival

Children arrive through the front doors after exiting their car at the Drop Off Area (see diagram) if using car line or by being walked up to the front door by an adult if using the Park and Walk In area. Children are greeted at the front door by a CNS staff member who will see that the children safely enter and are able to find their assigned classroom. **Children should NEVER be dropped off until there is a staff person at the front doors** which is approximately 5 minutes before class time. Until that time, we ask that children remain with parents/adults.

If you do not want to use the car line, and would prefer to park and walk, please use the specific area of the parking lot marked Park and Walk In. From there you and your child can walk to the sidewalk and to the front door. Parents are welcome to walk children all the way to their classroom on the first day of school, but after that parents should say their good-byes at the front door for drop off.

Dismissal

At dismissal, children will be escorted to their car in the car line. Each child will have a number that will need to be displayed for pickup purposes. **We ask all parents to use this system to pick up their child. Due to the large number of children that are exiting the building at one time it is our main concern to make sure each child is given to the proper caregiver. We can only do this if everyone cooperates with the dismissal guidelines.**

If you need to talk to your child's teacher after class, please wait until all cars have exited the car line. At that time, your child's teacher will be available to talk.

For pick up, parents may park in the Park and Walk In area and come to space to the left of the front door with their car line number. Parents must be in this area by 11:25 and 2:55. The director or a teacher will come out at 11:25 and 2:55 to note the walk up parents and dismiss those children. Dismissal will then continue to the car line. We cannot accommodate walk up parents after we have started dismissing car line children.

Car Line Information

We ask that the first five cars pull single file along the curb/sidewalk starting where the sign states "Single Carpool Line Starts Here".

There is a sign in the parking lot that states "Double Carpool Lines Starts Here". Cars should form 2 side by side lines and alternate into the single line for the children to be loaded into the car. Please pull all the way forward when you are able to. Children will be loaded into the car on the passenger side only.

Do not pass cars in the single car line once your child is in the car. We ask that children be buckled up by parents in the designated "buckle up area". This area is by the exit area of the

parking lot and marked by a sign. Pulling to the designated area allows the carpool line to continue moving.

More detailed carpool information is discussed at Parent Orientation. Our system is in place to provide a safe and efficient means of making sure we have dismissed each and every child to their caregiver. We do need the cooperation of everyone picking children to make it work. We appreciate your support.

Please see the diagram for additional information.



Biting Policy

Our program recognizes that biting is, unfortunately, not unexpected when toddlers are in group care. We are always upset when children are bitten in our program, and we recognize how upsetting biting is for parents. We know that toddlers bite for a variety of reasons, most of which are not related to behavior problems. Our program does not focus on punishment for biting, but on effective techniques that address the specific reason for biting. When biting occurs, these are our main responses:

1. Care for the child who was bitten
2. Help the child who bit so that he or she learns other behavior.

If there is an ongoing biting issue that is not resolved it will be dealt with on an individual basis with the staff and parents.

Expulsion Policy

Exclusionary measures will be taken with a child when a serious safety threat exists and can't be addressed with reasonable modifications and/or the use of positive behavioral supports.