



# Family Handbook

Dear Parents and Families,

Welcome to God's Garden Preschool at First Baptist Church of Dover. Our goal here at God's Garden is to provide a loving, safe and developmentally appropriate environment for every child.

This handbook is designed to ensure that your family has a rewarding experience with our program. In the handbook we outline the program's policies and procedures in an effort to answer any questions you may have about our school. We strive to work closely with parents in a partnership that will facilitate the smooth transition between home and school. Daily communication between parents and teachers and a sense of trust between the two are vital to a successful partnership.

Our goal is to provide the highest quality care and education for children and to ensure that parents are valued and respected. To accomplish this, we depend on parents to be responsible and active child care consumers. We expect parents to read this handbook, follow the policies and procedures outlined in it, and be open and honest with us regarding your feedback about the program. We welcome your comments, questions, concerns and suggestions about your child's experience and the program.

Given the nature of an ever-changing quality early childhood program, this handbook is a "living" document. You will be notified of formal policy changes during the year via a written policy notice in your child's folder. In addition, the handbook will be updated as needed.

Please don't hesitate to talk to us if you have any suggestions, questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Christy Carbaugh

## **WHO WE ARE**

God's Garden Preschool is a ministry of First Baptist Church Dover in Dover, FL. We offer a full time, year-round Infant/Toddler Program, a school-year based Preschool Program, and Summer Harvest Camp for preschool and school age children.

Our goal is to share the love of Jesus Christ with our families and community. We do this through the use of a faith-based curriculum, daily prayer time, Christian songs and Bible stories, and weekly chapel time.

God's Garden Preschool serves approximately 90 families with children from six weeks through five years of age. We are licensed by Hillsborough County Child Care Licensing. Promoting high quality early care and education and teaching children about the love of Jesus Christ are our primary goals.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

God's Garden Preschool, a ministry of First Baptist Church Dover, exists to plant the seeds of Christ's love in the lives of the children and families we serve, and to create a lifelong love of education and learning.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

*Preschool Director*- The Preschool Director is responsible for the day to day operation of the school, including all scheduling and tuition collection/questions.

*Assistant Director/ Office Manager*- The Assistant Director/ Office Manager assumes responsibility for the day to day operations in the Director's absence. She is also responsible for maintaining all children's files.

*Preschool Steering Committee*- The Preschool Steering Committee is made up of members of the First Baptist Church Dover, including at least one preschool parent. They vote to approve policy and fee changes and are responsible for the evaluation of the Preschool Director. For contact information of steering committee members call the church office at 719-2273.

## **CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT**

For an updated NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct please go to [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org). Copies of the Code of Ethical Conduct are also available in the preschool office and all staff will receive an updated copy.

## **RATIOS**

Appropriate ratios are kept according to Hillsborough County Child Care Licensing and NAC accreditation. The appropriate ratio varies with the age of the children enrolled. In order to provide high quality, individualized care, most of God's Garden's ratios exceed those mandated by child care licensing.

The ratios for the center are as follows:

Infants- 1:4

Toddlers- 1:6

Two-year olds- 1:8

Three- year olds- 1:10

Four-year olds- 1:11

## **SCHEDULING**

In order to meet the needs of the families we serve, God's Garden offers a number of options for children's schedules. Schedules are determined at the time of enrollment. Changes to a child's normal schedule will be accommodated if space is available.

## **ATTENDANCE**

If your child will miss school for a planned absence, please let the office know prior to the date of occurrence. For unexpected absences, please call the office by 9:00am on the day of the absence. This policy is mandated by child care licensing. If you do not call the school, we will call or text you by 10:00am to check on your child.

**INFANT/TODDLER PROGRAM-** Families of infants and toddlers may choose a 2, 3, 4 or 5-day schedule. Hours of operation are from 7:00am-5:30pm. We do not offer a part day program for infants or toddlers.

**PRESCHOOL PROGRAM-** Families have a variety of options from which to choose, based on availability. These options include attendance for 2, 3, or 5-days per week with the following schedule choices:

Preschool Only: 8:30am – 11:30 am

Preschool with Nap and Enrichment: 8:30 am – 3:30pm

Full-Day: 7:00 am - 5:30

\*Please note, a 2-day schedule means Tuesday and Thursday. A 3-day schedule is Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Our Preschool Only program follows the School District of Hillsborough County calendar. There are days that SDHC does not have school, but God's Garden is open for extended care. Extended care days are for children who are enrolled in our Infant/Toddler Program and Preschool children who attend beyond the morning preschool hours. We do not have preschool on these days. We combine classes and schedule teachers based on the number of children who sign up to attend each day. Many of our teachers use this time to schedule their vacations and appointments. It is imperative that we know how many children will attend each day. Parents are asked to sign up for

extended care days two weeks prior to ensure we plan for adequate staffing. Failing to sign up for extended care days may mean that we will not have enough scheduled staff for your child to attend.

## **LATE FEES**

God's Garden Preschool closes at 5:30 pm. Our staff members work very hard each and every day and want to feel confident that they can leave at 5:30 pm. Many staff members have evening commitments. Parents who arrive late often interfere with these plans. There will be a late fee assessed if children are picked up after 5:30 p.m.

The late pick-up charge policy is as follows: \$1 for each minute late, per child. That is, if a parent arrives at 5:35 pm, 5 minutes late, a \$5.00 late fee will be applied (per child enrolled), 5:44 pm, 14 minutes late, a \$14 late fee (per child enrolled).

## **TUITION**

Tuition is set by the God's Garden Preschool Steering Committee and the Preschool Director.

*Infant and Toddler-* Families pay monthly tuition, year-round.

*Preschool-* Tuition is calculated on a school-year basis and then divided into 10 monthly payments, payable from August to May. For example, a full time 3-year old's yearly tuition is \$6600. For convenience, we allow parents to break this into 10 equal payments of \$660, payable August through May. ***Parents who wish to pay the full tuition amount up front will receive a 3% discount.***

For all parents who pay tuition monthly, tuition is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> school day of the month and is considered late after the 5<sup>th</sup> school day of the month. Late payment will result in a \$10 late fee.

Please refer to the tuition and fee schedule in your enrollment packet for current tuition rates.

## **CHILDREN'S HEALTH RECORDS AND OTHER RECORDS**

All children are required to have a completed physical exam and all immunizations up to date at the time of enrollment. Immunizations are to be kept up to date thereafter following the Florida guidelines schedule. Record of a physical is required every year.

Immunizations are an important public health policy effecting children. As a matter of state law, children in the program must:

- Be fully immunized, or
- Be in the process of becoming fully immunized according to the approved schedule, or
- Have a signed document from the Department of Health stating that the child is not immunized due to religious beliefs.

Your child's file is kept in a file cabinet in the Preschool office. This office is locked unless school personnel are present. Your child's file is considered confidential and only a limited number of individuals have access to view it. Parents may request to view their child's file at any time. Please contact a member of our administrative team to make arrangements to view the file.

When the program is being reviewed by Child Care Licensing, the licensing representative has access to the files that are required by the state. These forms would include but are not limited to: child enrollment, medical forms, and special instruction plans for allergies if one is appropriate.

## **FAMILY ORIENTATION**

God's Garden teachers schedule individual conferences with all families, new and returning, the week before school starts. This time is designed to allow parents and children an opportunity to meet their teacher and become acquainted with their new classroom. This is also a time for our office staff to ensure family contact information is correct and for parents to fill out paperwork for the new school year.

## **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

Arrival and departure is a busy time at God's Garden Preschool. A Check-In computer is located at the front desk for parents to sign their child in and out each day. Upon enrollment, each person listed on a child's enrollment form as an authorized pick up person will be given a unique registration code. This code will be used for initial registration on the check-in computer. After the initial registration, each authorized pick up person will create a PIN and password that will be used each time they sign a child in and out. ***These codes are unique to each person and should not be shared with others.***

Carline- For parent's convenience we offer a morning carline from 8:20-8:40am on the South side of the building. This service is for children enrolled in the two, three or four-year old classes. Children who arrive in carline will be checked in by an administrator.

Parents of Infants and Toddlers are asked to walk their child in to their classroom and pick them up from their classroom. This allows time for parents and teachers to share pertinent information about children's sleeping and eating schedules.

## **ARRIVAL**

During arrival it is very important to set up a routine that your family can follow every day. This provides your child with a sense of security. Please keep teachers informed about your child's health, mood, eating habits, family situation, or anything you think might affect your child's behavior at school. We recommend that you walk your child into the room, greet the teachers and friends, help put away items in their cubby, help wash their hands and assist your child in selecting a toy or joining an activity.

When it is time for the person dropping the child off to go, tell the child you are leaving, and say, "good-bye". If your child is having difficulty separating, signal a teacher for assistance. Feel free to call us later if your child is upset when you leave, and we will let you know how he or she is doing.

## **DEPARTURE**

If someone we do not know is to pick up your child, please inform the office staff. This person must be listed as authorized to pick-up your child on the enrollment paperwork. Remind the authorized person that we will ask for picture identification to ensure your child's safety.

During departure, it is also important to follow a set routine. We recommend that when you arrive, you greet your child and the teachers, and let your child know how much time he or she has to wrap up the ongoing project or activity. While your child is finishing up is a good time to talk with the teachers to discuss your child's day, but this is not the time to have a full conference with the teachers. If you feel you need a conference, please ask the teacher to set a separate time for you to meet. On the way out, be sure and say, "good-bye" to your child's teachers, so they know you and your child are leaving. Please remember that your child is happy to see you at the end of the day. We respectfully ask that you refrain from talking on the phone while you are picking up your child.

Once you have reunited with your child and begun departure, God's Garden is no longer responsible for your child's safety. Please be sure he/she remains with you both inside and outside of the building. Please caution your child about running into the parking lot as it is often busy with cars coming and going for church activities.

## **FAMILY ARRANGEMENTS**

God's Garden recognizes that all families are not structured similarly and that some families may live apart due to a variety of circumstances. Our teachers and staff are sensitive to the needs of children in these situations and will work to support the entire family. We are happy to provide duplicate information in the child's folder to accommodate both parents' need for information.

If information is needed by God's Garden staff regarding custody, child pick-ups, etc., please provide us with the formal paperwork. Unless we have the appropriate paperwork, we cannot keep a child's biological mother and/or father from picking up his or her child.

## **ACCESS TO THE BUILDING/PARKING**

Families who are arriving to God's Garden will enter through the Worship Center door on the North side of the building. These doors are open from 7:00a.m. to 5:30p.m.

The door to enter the preschool hallway is locked at all times. Entrance is granted by a member of the administrative staff at the front desk. If there is no one present at the desk, please press the doorbell located on the wall next to the door.

## **OUR TEACHERS**

God's Garden Preschool requires all Lead Teachers to have, or be working on, their Child Development Associate (CDA). Any teacher who does not have this credential upon hire, must commit to earning it within the first two years of employment.

In addition, all staff members must be a baptized believer in Jesus Christ, an active member of a local church, current in CPR/First Aid training and have the DCF 40 Hour Introductory Child Care Training. All teachers participate in professional development opportunities throughout the year to match current trends in early childhood education.

## **CURRICULUM**

God's Garden uses the faith-based WEE Learn curriculum for all children, Infants through VPK. Each room is designed with interest centers (blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, sensory, library, music & movement, etc.) and children choose from a variety of developmentally appropriate activities throughout the day. Our preschool program includes a balance of child and teacher-directed activities designed to actively engage children in learning throughout the day and promote their creative expression. Assessment is an integral part of curriculum planning. Monitoring and documentation of children's participation within the learning environment is on-going. Children's interests, strengths, and needs are used to shape curricular decisions.

## **ASSESSMENT/ DOCUMENTATION OF CHILD PROGRESS**

Child assessment is a vital and necessary component of all high-quality early childhood programs. Assessment is important to understand and support young children's development. Each teacher completes screenings and assessments that encompass all areas of development; sensory, language, cognitive, gross-motor, fine-motor, and social-emotional. Assessment is also essential to document and evaluate how effectively our program is meeting young children's educational needs, and to inform of needed program improvement.

Twice a year, in the Fall and Spring, your child will be screened using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire. The information from this screening is part of your child's educational file that is kept in the preschool office. All educational files are kept confidential and have limited access.

*Assessment Results* – The information gained during all screenings and assessments will be used for parent education, to provide evidence for referral, and to develop curriculum.

- Lead teachers use the information gathered during the assessment process, identifying children's interests and needs and use this in planning a curriculum that best meets the needs of all children. When appropriate the information is used in planning for individual student needs.
- If there is an indication of a developmental delay the teachers will use the information gathered for referral for further diagnostic screenings and assessments.

*Confidentiality* – All information gathered about a child is kept confidential. Records are kept in a secure area with limited access except by authorized personnel.

- Parents and guardians may ask to view screening and assessment results through asking the classroom teacher or the director.
- All information compiled during screenings and assessments will be used to promote the healthy developmental growth of the child. As appropriate the classroom



teacher, the parents, and other essential personnel will be involved in making goals for the child or a referral in cases of developmental delays.

- No information shall be shared with an outside agency without the written consent from the parent or legal guardian.

## **OBSERVATIONS AND PORTFOLIOS**

During the preschool day teachers will utilize observations and interactions to gain knowledge about each child and their learning. Each observer will use guidelines on how to observe children and record their observations.

Child Portfolio tools may include checklists, anecdotal records, self-reflections, progress reports, samples of work, drawings, paintings, writings, stories and photographs, etc.

## **DAILY SCHEDULE**

Each classroom has a daily schedule that is posted on the door to each classroom. These schedules have been carefully planned to include indoor and outdoor play times, active and quiet times, large and small group times and time for meals and snacks. Although we follow the routine of our schedule every day, we do allow for some flexibility within our schedule to meet children's needs. For example, outdoor play time may be extended during nice weather or when the children have extra energy, snack time may last a little longer if the children are preparing a special snack, or center time may be shortened to allow time for a special party or celebration.

## **NAP/REST TIME**

Nap time is an important opportunity for growing, active children to rest and re-energize. This is also a time for teachers to regroup, clean, do paperwork, discuss the day's activities, and plan future curriculum for the class.

All of the Toddler and Preschool children rest in the afternoon. Children are expected to rest but are not required to sleep. Children are helped to relax by a variety of methods: darkened room, soft music or story tapes, rubbing backs, etc. Non-nappers are expected to rest quietly on their mat until other children have fallen asleep. After that time, they may choose to look at a book on their mat

We ask that parents bring a nap mat that is at least 2 inches thick, a small soft blanket and a fitted crib sheet. We will send the sheet and blanket home weekly for parents to launder and return to school the first day the child attends in the following week.

## **SAFETY PROCEDURES**

God's Garden Preschool is licensed and inspected by Hillsborough County Child Care Licensing. We also receive annual inspections by the Fire Marshall's Office. These inspections ensure that all health and safety regulations are met and that God's Garden adheres to high quality standards regarding teacher requirements, adult/child ratios, curriculum, nutrition, and other administrative practices.

### *Emergency Procedures*

- Emergency phone numbers are clearly posted by all phones.
- The parent/guardian provides, in writing, the names and phone numbers of persons to contact if the parent/guardian cannot be reached.
- In case of an emergency, a staff member will go with the child to the emergency room and remain until a parent/guardian arrives.
- Teachers report, in writing, any injuries that may occur while the child is at school.
- Teachers notify the parent/guardian of any injury requiring first aid treatment.
- Teachers report serious injuries to the Director immediately.
- Fire drills are practiced once each month to prepare children in case of an emergency.
- Emergency evacuation plans are posted in each room.

### *General Safety Practices*

- Background screenings are conducted on all teachers and volunteers.
- All staff members are mandated to report any suspicion of child abuse/neglect.
- Children are supervised at all times and appropriate child/staff ratios are maintained.
- Authorized pick-up information is on file and kept on teachers' clipboards.
- If we are not familiar with the authorized pick-up person we will ask to see identification and will match the person's ID with the information provided by the parent(s).
- Each room is equipped with a first-aid kit.
- Teachers take roll and monitor the number of children in their care.
- Teachers move throughout the playground to ensure adequate and appropriate supervision.
- The playground is monitored closely for safety and improvements.
- Proper cushioning is used under all climbing equipment.
- Staff is trained in CPR, First Aid, and Choke Saving/Rescue Breathing.
- Medicines are stored out of children's reach in the Director's office and administered only with written permission of parent/guardian.
- Cleaning supplies are stored out of children's reach.
- Teachers fill out documentation for accidents, incidents, and health-related situations. Parents receive copies of accident/incident forms.
- Teachers follow universal precautions for blood-related accidents and incidents.
- Toys are checked frequently and broken toys are discarded.
- Health and safety information is incorporated into the curriculum and taught to the children on a regular basis.

## SCHOOL CLOSURES

- If Hillsborough County public schools are closed due to inclement weather, then God's Garden will also be closed.
- When God's Garden opens as usual, but inclement weather becomes a serious threat, the Director will determine if an early closing time is necessary.
- All announcements regarding closures will be communicated through Facebook, the school's website, and our parent communication app.

## HEALTH POLICY

Each child must have a current health form with immunization history signed by a physician on file in the office. The center will notify parents when certain communicable diseases are present and we ask that you notify the center when your child is out with a communicable disease.

*Children with the following illnesses may NOT be brought to the school:*

- Chicken Pox
- Conjunctivitis
- Whooping Cough
- Lice
- Measles
- Scabies
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Scarlet Fever

*Unusual behaviors will be monitored closely and parent(s) will be contacted if other symptoms develop. These behaviors include, but shall not be limited to:*

- Cranky or less active behavior than usual
- Crying more than usual
- Feeling general discomfort or seeming unwell
- Loss of appetite

*Children with (1) ONE OR MORE of the following symptoms may NOT be brought to school or will be sent home if these symptoms occur:*

- Diarrhea: More than one (1) abnormally loose stool
- Headache or stiff neck
- Severe coughing
- Unusually dark, tea colored urine
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Gray or white stool
- Severe itching of the body or scalp or scratching of the scalp.
- Fever over 100.4<sup>o</sup>F by mouth or 99<sup>o</sup> F under the arm

- Pinkeye-tears, redness of eyelid lining, irritation, followed by swelling or discharge of pus
- An infected skin patch(es)-crusty, bright yellow, dry or gummy areas of the skin
- Unusual spots or rashes
- Vomiting
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Yellowish skin or eyes

***Children must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school.***

*Children may remain at school if they have ONE (but not more than one) of the following symptoms:*

- A child with a temperature of up to one hundred degrees Fahrenheit (100<sup>0</sup> F) by mouth or ninety-nine degrees Fahrenheit (99<sup>0</sup>F) under the arm.
- After an illness has been evaluated by a physician, medication has been prescribed, and any period of contagion has passed as determined by a licensed physician.
- When it has been determined that a child has a common cold unless the director and the parent(s) agree that isolation precautions should be taken.
- When a child has experienced vomiting only one (1) time with no further problems or symptoms.
- When a child has experienced loose stools only one (1) time with no further problems or symptoms.

Please know that the decision for the child to remain or be sent home is based upon the director's discretion. For example, if the child vomited only one time but seems cranky, tired, or unwell, the teacher may recommend to the director that the child be picked up. In these situations, the child can return the following day if the reasons for concern are no longer present.

God's Garden has limited isolation space, so children developing any symptoms that require dismissal should be picked up by the parent/guardian as soon as possible. Children will be kept in the Director's office until the parent/guardian comes.

If the child is well enough to come to school, he/she is well enough to participate in the regular program, including indoor and outdoor activities.

### **Children Sent Home for Illness**

Children sent home from God's Garden due to illness will not be permitted to return to school the following day. A child who is feeling ill needs to be in a quiet place where he/she can rest and have lots of attention and tender loving care.

Children may return to school 24 hours after the disappearance of all symptoms, including the disappearance of fever without using fever-reducing medicine. Children returning with any of the previous symptoms or illness will be excluded from the school immediately. This decision is at the discretion of the director.

## **Medication Authorization**

Prescription medication shall be in the original container and labeled with the child's name, instruction for administration, including the times and amounts for dosages, and the physician's name. This may include sample medication provided by the physician.

All nonprescription medication shall be in the original container and labeled by the parent(s) with the child's name, and instructions for administration, including the times and amounts for dosages.

An "Authorization of Medication" form must be filled out and signed by the parent/guardian prior to our staff administering any medication.

## **ALLERGY POLICY**

When children are diagnosed with an allergy or there is a known allergy at the time of enrollment, the parent must provide a written note from the child's doctor. This would include food or other allergies (such as bee stings). If there is a doctor's plan for care of the child due to the allergy, this must be given to the center and must have the doctor's signature to meet licensing standards. A list of the children with allergies to various foods will be posted in the kitchen and in each classroom.

## **ACCIDENT AND ILLNESS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

If a child needs immediate medical attention, the teacher will call 911. Then the parent or emergency contact will be phoned. The teacher or director will accompany the child to the hospital, bringing records and all parent permission forms.

Parents will be notified of all known minor injuries.

## **CHILD ABUSE POLICIES**

Mandated Reporting- As professionals in contact with young children and their families, we at God's Garden are required by law to help the Department of Children and Families become aware of children who may be abused or neglected. According to the law, public or private school teachers, educational administrators, guidance or family counselors; as well as day care/child care workers, are mandated reporters. Thus, it is the policy of God's Garden Preschool to report any and all suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to DCF immediately by telephone and to follow up in writing within 24 hours with the same information as reported by telephone. Our school will offer full cooperation of its staff during the investigation of the reported incident.

## **GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE**

Our philosophy of guidance and discipline is based on providing a positive, supportive environment that focuses on prevention and the teaching of appropriate behaviors.

Children need to learn to identify and express their feelings. However, this often requires the caregiver to acknowledge the child's response to the situation and help him/her use appropriate strategies. For example, if we see a child about to hit another child for taking a toy away, we will prevent that child from hitting the other and say, "It looks like you want to keep the truck" and provide an alternative to hitting. We will also help the child understand the other child's point of view. "I see that Tommy is playing with the truck you had. It looks like he wants it too. Can you tell him that you are playing with it?" Through this method, we hope to prevent one child from hurting another and at the same time help that child to learn to identify feelings and verbalize expectations. An additional strategy used with older preschoolers and school-age children is to help them learn how to solve their own problems and resolve conflicts. Teachers provide support and guidance as children develop and practice these skills.

As every parent knows, caring for young children requires a lot of patience. Children require ongoing guidance and support as they learn about themselves and others. ***Dealing with challenging behaviors is a process of teaching rather than punishment and control.*** Children are reminded what TO DO, rather than what NOT TO DO. For example, instead of, "DON'T run", children are told, "walk to the door". Through this strategy: (1) children know what you expect, (2) a more positive classroom climate is promoted, and (3) children and adults form supportive relationships.

### **Use of Corporal Punishment and Harsh Language**

The use of corporal punishment is forbidden at God's Garden. The discipline philosophy of the center is to teach rather than punish.

### **Discipline Strategies Used by God's Garden Staff and Students**

- Maintaining realistic expectations of children based on knowledge of child development.
- Providing clear and simple limits.
- Planning an environment that facilitates a caring atmosphere.
- Providing appropriate activities that keep children engaged to prevent challenging behaviors
- Modeling appropriate and respectful behaviors.
- Redirecting inappropriate behaviors toward desired outcomes.
- Giving children choices between two appropriate alternatives.
- Encouraging children to work together to solve problems.
- Encouraging children to use their words to solve problems or to elicit peer cooperation.
- Providing logical and natural consequences for children's actions.
- Guiding children away from the situation until they are able to calm down and address the problem.
- Conflict resolution (for older preschoolers and school-age children).

When there is an ongoing behavior concern, teachers will contact the child's parents. Communication may be in the form of informal or formal parent-teacher conferences or written behavioral reports. If a conference is scheduled, the parent and teacher will discuss strategies to promote appropriate behavior and develop a plan for change. If the behavior concern continues

after implementation of the plan, and the behavior is detrimental to other children, a child may be asked to leave the program for a short period of time (1-5 days). If the problem is not resolved, the child may be removed from the program. It is our intent to work together with families to promote a positive experience for their child. However, we do realize that there may be circumstances that keep a child from being capable of fully participating in a group program and recognize that the program may not be equipped to deal with all circumstances underlying certain behavioral issues.

## MEALS AND SNACKS

- Infants- Parents provide all meals and snacks
- Toddlers-
  - God's Garden provides a morning and afternoon snack.
  - Parents provide lunch.
- Preschoolers-
  - Children are assigned one designated snack day each month. On your child's snack day, we ask that you provide a nutritious snack for the children in your child's class.
  - Parents provide lunch
  - God's Garden provides afternoon snack

## OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play is an important part of the early childhood curriculum, and we consider the outdoors an extension of the indoor classroom. Toys, materials, and activities are also available outdoors to enhance the children's play experience. Typically, children go outside twice each day. ***If your child is not well enough to play outdoors, he or she is not well enough to attend school.***

Children will play outside everyday unless there is active precipitation or extreme temperatures. It is important for parents to provide the appropriate clothing and outerwear for the weather conditions (i.e. jackets or sweaters).

Parents are encouraged sign a sunscreen authorization form to allow teachers to apply sunscreen when going outside. Children are also encouraged to drink plenty of water to replenish body fluids. Typically, when the weather is extremely warm, the length of time spent outside is reduced and often the children wait to go outside until late in the day or early morning when the sun is less intense. All children (except infants) should bring an insulated water bottle to school every day, labeled with their first and last name.

## CLOTHING

In order to foster independence and self-help skills, we ask that you send your child to school in clothes that he/she can manage independently. Also, please dress your child in clothing that is suitable for running, climbing, and other vigorous activity, and that is appropriate for the weather. Because the children work with paint, clay and other messy materials, they should wear clothes that can be laundered easily.

- Tennis shoes or shoes with rubber soles are required. For your child's safety we recommend that you do not send your child in flip flop shoes.
- **A complete change of clothes is essential**-please label all clothing with your child's name. The extra set of clothing will be stored in a Ziploc baggie at school. Please be sure to mark your child's name on the outside of the baggie as well as the extra clothing.

## **TOYS FROM HOME**

Bringing toys from home is discouraged. A snuggle toy is permitted for rest time, but we ask that, unless otherwise specified for "show and tell" or some other special occasion, that all other toys be left at home. God's Garden staff cannot be responsible for toys and other items brought from home. If children bring toys from home, the teacher may ask the parent to take it back to the car with them or for it to be kept in their cubby for the day. Sharing is not an easy task for some young children and avoiding this dilemma can save many angry and hurt feelings.

We welcome books, CD's, and other special items that can be shared during group time or to further learning experiences. Please be sure to mark all of these types of items with your family name.

## **SMOKING**

Smoking is not permitted on the grounds of God's Garden Preschool. This includes e-cigarettes.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

We typically take one off campus field trip per year. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend field trips and transport their own child.

## **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

Parents are invited to observe anytime. Observing allows you to note age and individual related behavior patterns and to watch your child as he/she interacts in a social environment.

If you have questions about what you observe (i.e., children's behavior, use of materials, teacher's behavior, etc.), please ask the teacher about it. When observing, people often see only a snapshot in time and may not clearly understand the context surrounding a certain action in the classroom.

Your participation is welcomed and encouraged in our programs. Your involvement can take many forms, and we hope that all parents will find meaningful ways to participate in their child's school experience. Some ways in which you may choose to participate include, but are not limited to:

- Field trip supervision
- Assisting in the classroom (occasionally or on a routine basis)
- Leading or assisting in special projects (carpentry, sewing, music, cooking, science experiments, cultural experiences, etc.)



- Construction or collection of materials for children's use such as paint aprons, raw materials for art projects, dress-up clothes, dramatic play props, carpentry materials, etc.
- Attending or planning class parties and/or school-wide events

### **Parent Committee**

God's Garden has a parent volunteer committee that helps to plan, setup and clean up for special events. Volunteers who sign up for this committee are invited to join a Facebook page where volunteer opportunities are posted.

### **Special Events**

We offer many special events throughout the school year. Families are welcomed and encouraged to attend special events. Some events are planned for a specific family member, i.e Grandparent's Day, Mother's Day, Donuts with Dad, and for these occasions we ask that only the specified family member(s) attend. Other events, such as our Back to School BBQ are open to your entire family, including grandparents. These events are always a lot of fun and we encourage your family to participate.

## **Family Handbook Acknowledgement**

I, the undersigned, acknowledge that I have read the Family Handbook for God’s Garden Preschool. While I understand that the Family Handbook is neither a contract nor a legal document, I recognize that it is my responsibility to read and understand the policies, provisions, and procedures contained in the Family Handbook.

In addition, I understand that the contents of the Family Handbook are subject to change. I acknowledge that the Family Handbook will be revised in accordance with the rules or regulations of state, federal, and accrediting entities, best practices for child care service providers, or at the discretion of the staff of God’s Garden Preschool. I recognize that any such revisions will supersede, modify, or eliminate the current contents of the Parent Handbook.

I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to stay informed of policy and procedure revisions to the Family Handbook, which will be posted on the God’s Garden website at [www.godsgardenpreschool.net](http://www.godsgardenpreschool.net). In the event I do not have internet access, I understand that I can obtain a hard copy of the updated Family Handbook upon request from the school.

Moreover, I recognize that it is my responsibility to contact the Center Director for any questions I might have about the contents of the Family Handbook now and in the future.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**GUARDIAN NAME (PRINT)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**GUARDIAN SIGNATURE**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**DATE**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**CHILD’S NAME**