

Parent Handbook

2007-2008



**Learning to Love
And
Loving to Learn**

**Northwood Christian Church Preschool
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www.northwoodchristianchurch.org

Introduction

On behalf of the Preschool Ministry Team and teaching staff of Northwood Christian Church Preschool, I am delighted to welcome your child and family to our program for 2007-2008. We believe that the program we offer 3- and 4-year-old children is an opportunity for them to explore a quality age-appropriate learning environment, interact with their age peers, develop relationships with caring and competent teachers, and grow spiritually in a faith-based program. We are excited that you have chosen to enroll your child(ren) in our program, allowing us to serve your family as an active partner in the intellectual, physical, emotional, social and spiritual development of your youngsters. This is an honor and opportunity that we embrace with gladness.

As you review the contents of this handbook, please know that we are eager to serve you at your point of need. Do not hesitate to interact with preschool staff as you see them each school day, to contact me with any questions that arise, and/or to offer any suggestions for our program and services that come to mind. Frequent and constructive interaction between home and school is well established as an effective means to enhance children's development and school success.

You'll notice that the front cover of this document celebrates the purpose of our gathering here for preschool classes and related activities each day: "Learning to Love and Loving to Learn." This truly is our mission: to cultivate in our youngsters, through God's love for them, a genuine love for their age peers, family and teachers that makes being together a joy and delight; and in turn, as we spend time together, to nurture a love of learning in an environment that encourages authenticity, exploration, and self-expression.

The pages to follow describe the organization, administration, goals and learning experiences of the Northwood Christian Church Preschool. We hope that this information covers the topics of greatest interest to you.

Again, welcome to all to our Preschool! We look forward to working together in the coming year.

In His Spirit,

Betsy Clewett
Preschool Coordinator and
Director of Children's Ministries

Northwood Christian Church and Preschool

Northwood Christian Church is proud to offer a quality faith-based preschool program to members of the Church congregation and neighboring community. Our Preschool staff and ministry team are committed to providing a Christ-centered, nurturing, and age-appropriate environment in which your child is free to grow and learn. Persons playing a key role in the church and preschool include:

Church Staff

Senior Pastor Barry Lind
Senior Associate Pastor..... Paul Jackson
Church Treasurer..... Wanda Smith
Preschool Financial Officer.... Connie Knight

Preschool Staff

Lead Teacher Christi Keefer
Teacher Tonie Watson
Atelierista/Teacher Deanna Stanton
Teaching Assistants..... Shandy Kopcenski
Kelly Oviatt
Site Supervisor Louise Karther
Coordinator..... Betsy Clewett

Preschool Ministry Team

Church Board representative..... Emily Sachs
Education Ministry representative..... Judy Hockett
Preschool Parent Representative..... Tiffani Noah
Northwood Congregational Representative..... Judy Davies

Preschool Mission, Vision and Goals

The mission of Northwood Christian Church Preschool is to cultivate in our youngsters, through God's love for them, a genuine love for their peers, family and teachers that makes being together a joy and delight. In turn, as we spend time together, our intent is to nurture the children's love of learning in an environment that encourages authenticity, exploration and self-expression.

Northwood Preschool operates as a ministry of Northwood Christian Church for families with preschool-age children in the congregation and community. Because the Preschool is a work of the heart (Col. 3:23) ministering to young children and families, our **vision** is to **work in God's love to provide an educationally and financially strong preschool that provides opportunities to share His message of love to those with whom we come in contact.**

To this end, the teaching staff and ministry team established the following **goals** for all participants in its programs:

- To acknowledge that each child and parent brought to Northwood Preschool is a gift from God.
- To demonstrate God's love to others in a consistent and observable manner.
- To create a safe, loving, age-appropriate educational program in which each child's uniqueness is celebrated, and all children are nurtured and thrive.
- To establish strong partnerships between Preschool staff and preschool parents, guardians, relatives and other caregivers.
- To maintain clear and open communication among all contributors to Northwood Christian Church and its Preschool – the pastors and church staff, the Preschool Ministry Team and teaching staff, and parents and children.
- To strengthen communication with and understanding of the Preschool with the Northwood Christian Church body.

Accordingly, our **goals for children** attending the Preschool are:

- To know they are beautifully and wonderfully made, special, and that Jesus loves them.
- To have a positive experience and be successful as young learners and citizens of the Preschool community.
- To grow in understanding of God's love and a servant heart through Preschool chapel, age-appropriate faith-based learning activities, and caring and competent adult role models.

Administration and Accountability

The Preschool operates under the auspices of the Board of Northwood Christian Church, which in turn has placed responsibility for general supervision with the church's preschool coordinator. The preschool coordinator and staff collaborate in planning and providing a well planned, age-appropriate curriculum in a safe and loving learning environment. Among many duties for the church, the preschool financial manager collects registration and tuition payments, and maintains an active data base to record attendance, participation, and funds collected and dispersed for Preschool matters. Most importantly, you may be assured that all persons in this enterprise are caring Christians, committed to one another and the children and families participating in the program.

Role of the Preschool Ministry Team

As described above, the Preschool ministry team advises the staff in its adoption and implementation of policies, procedures, programs and services. For example, the content of this Handbook is a result of the thoughtful consideration of the teaching staff, ministry team and preschool coordinator. Members of the ministry team also advise the church on its goals and efforts with respect to outreach to children and families in the church, community, and beyond. Staff and ministry team members collaborate in annual fundraising activities to support extraordinary preschool expenses and ministry activities. The ministry team, teachers and coordinator meet at least once each month to consider operational and outreach affairs, which is reported to the Church board by the team's liaison. This process insures that the teaching staff and ministry team are accountable to church leaders.

Preschool Staff

Northwood Christian Church Preschool is pleased to have experienced staff to provide its developmentally appropriate curriculum to your child(ren), including:

Christi Keefer holds a Bachelor's degree in Child Development and Family Life with an emphasis in Early Childhood Education from Oregon State University.

She has been teaching preschool most of her adult life in several nearby programs including Corvallis, Junction City, Bend, and Eugene. Christi is one of two persons who founded Northwood's preschool program in 2000, and is our Lead Teacher. She is married to Robert Keefer, and has two grown daughters. Christi and Robert have been members of Northwood Christian Church for 16 years. Robert is chair of the church Personnel Committee, and Christi serves as a member of the church Stewardship committee.

Tonie Watson is an experienced preschool teacher, working with young children in public and private, secular and church-related settings for over 16 years. Tonie and her husband, Brian, have 3 sons: Andrew (18), Kevin (13), and Trever (9). The Watson family watches movies, hikes, plays board games, cooks, and worships at First Baptist Church together.

Christi and Tonie collaborate with one another, and with their teaching assistants, on a regular basis to provide a thematic curriculum throughout the school year that is age appropriate to 3- and 4-year-old children. As a team, our staff is highly attuned to the children's interests and needs, and coordinate activities to capitalize on "teachable moments" that arise in day-to-day classroom life.

Deanna Stanton and her family are active members of Northwood Christian Church, particularly in youth and outreach ministries. Last Spring the Stanton family served on the Mission to Mexico team. Now in her second year with the Northwood Preschool, Deanna will serve as our atelierista (studio artist), providing theme-based art activities to foster creative expression among the preschool children, as well as assist Tonie in the classroom. Deanna will also provide science experiences for our youngsters and share in delivering weekly chapel activities with the Preschool Coordinator. A graduate of Churchill High School, Deanna married her high school sweetheart, Rich, and has spent the last 17 years raising their two daughters, Becca and Rachel, and volunteering her time at their school and church.

Shandy Kopczenski is beginning her second year as a teaching assistant at Northwood Preschool, but is no newcomer to working with young children. For several years, Shandy worked in the Springfield School District as a teacher's aide with specialized training in assisting with special needs students at Page Elementary School. Shandy has been married for 16 years to her husband, Bob, and has three sons: Zachary, J.T., and Grant. Miss Shandy works primarily in Miss Christi's classroom, and also with the Tuesday morning Tea and Tots program and with any child needing special assistance.

Kelly Oviatt is a teaching assistant with five years of experience at Northwood Preschool, primarily in Miss Christi's classroom. She and her husband Brian have been married for 13 years, and have two wonderful children. Kelly and her family enjoy taking their dog Molly for walks together, and spending as much time

as possible at the beach. The Oviatt family has been active members of Northwood Christian Church for six years.

Louise Karther is a member of the Preschool Ministry Team (former advisory board) who will serve as our Site Supervisor this year. In addition to assisting in classrooms throughout the year, Dr. Karther will conduct staff evaluation and professional development, and spearhead our planning for extended care and kindergarten in 2008-2009. Louise brings many years as a classroom teacher, building principal and director of special education in Springfield School District, teaching and supervision at Northwest Christian College, and a Ph.D. in reading and special education to her work with us. Dr. Karther is a life-long Disciples of Christ church member, and is a member of the Northwood congregation. Louise enjoys reading, cooking and gardening with her husband, Dick, and son, Richard, and any time spent with her daughter and grandchildren who currently live in La Grande.

Betsy Clewett begins her second year as the Preschool Coordinator and first year as Northwood's Director of Children's Ministries. Also a member of the church, Betsy worked for a decade in early childhood settings before completing her doctorate in 1984 and training teachers in public and private, secular and Christian higher education for the past 23 years. Beginning this Fall, Betsy also serves on the Lane County Commission on Children and Families. She has one daughter, Kelsey, a 2007 graduate from Sheldon High School who now attends the University of Oregon.

Northwood Preschool has personnel policies that insure the highest standards of preparation and professionalism of its staff. All are screened with respect to criminal background, good health, and certification in first aid and CPR. In addition to prior preparation for teaching and experience with young children, the staff participates in self-evaluation and in-service activities designed to strengthen knowledge and skills in specific areas of need. Staff is also familiar with professional standards for teachers and expectations of strict confidentiality, and the necessity for monitored child contact at all times.

Learning Environment and Preschool Program

Age-Appropriate Learning Environment and Activities

We are delighted to offer the Northwood Christian Church Preschool in the new facilities built and dedicated in Spring 2006. Our classrooms are a spacious and modern environment designed to serve young children. This environment insures that we offer an age-appropriate learning program based on the following premises:

- We genuinely enjoy the company of young children.

- We believe that the education of young children is most effective when consistent with their stages of physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual development. Such development varies widely within each child and among a group of youngsters.
- We are responsible for insuring that children always feel safe and protected, while also challenging them in a sensitive and supportive manner to explore new experiences.
- Children thrive when parents are involved in their education, especially during the early years. Parent involvement is critical to the preschool's understanding of the needs and interests of each child.

Northwood Christian Church Preschool offers a “developmentally appropriate” curriculum that is tailored to the abilities and interests of young children, engages them in experiential learning activities, provides for learners’ choices each day, and promotes exploration and self-expression. Young children learn by doing and need many varied opportunities to explore and experiment with concepts through play and hands-on activities in the natural environment. Although children develop through a generally predictable sequence of steps and milestones, they may not proceed through these steps in the same way or at the same time. The younger the child, the greater their need for first-hand, sensory experiences. Through play experiences, preschool children constantly refine their skill development and understanding. As teachers observe children’s play and development, they identify the signals for providing new stimulation and challenges. Activities, environment, and materials may need to be adapted to meet children’s individual needs, including modifications for children with disabilities.

While on-lookers may not immediately understand the value of the learning activities underway in the Preschool’s classrooms each day, teachers are eager to explain the themes being explored, the sequence of free choice and planned activities offered, and the work products children bring home. Teachers are responsible for providing parents with this information on a monthly, weekly and daily basis, so that related conversations and experiences may be planned at home. Equally important, activities are “differentiated” based on individual children’s interests, abilities and rate of development so that essential learnings, including pre-academic skills, are mastered by all.

In the latter regard, the Northwood Preschool also differentiates the first learning in a social setting that occurs with 3-year-olds from the more sophisticated learning in which 4-year-olds engage. While the themes and activities with both groups may look similar, the specific activities may differ based on age differences in literacy, numeracy, and/or social interaction. Teachers are also sensitive to our obligation to develop certain pre-academic skills, both cognitive and affective, among preschoolers bound for kindergarten the following year.

For these youngsters, the curriculum intentionally incorporates these skills in classes for 4-year-olds from January to June.

The learning activities that children encounter at Northwood Preschool provide skills foundational to academic learning in the elementary grades. However, these experiences with literacy, mathematics, science, music, wellness and fitness, and artistic expression are intentionally designed to be age-appropriate and engaging to young children. We accomplish this by:

- Allowing children to choose from various learning centers throughout the morning.
- Encouraging children to develop small and large motor skills, cognitive skills, social skills, imagination and creative expression.
- Providing active learning experiences, rather than passive watching or listening to teacher talk. For example, when children build with blocks or put a puzzle together, they are learning the pre-math skills of sequencing, sorting, and patterning. Likewise, when they share during circle time, they are learning to speak in front of a group with confidence and poise. At the same time, when others are sharing, they are learning to listen, recognize shared experiences, and formulate questions and/or positive feedback.
- Offering an array of learning activities that engage many forms of expression (reading, writing, counting, observing, physical movement, and music) related to a central theme or big idea. Teachers will keep you informed about these themes during the year.
- Celebrating special occasions, hosting special visitors, going on fun and informative field trips, sharing stories and singing songs to make learning fun.
- Enjoying weekly Bible lessons and chapel, and learning together to feel and share God's love.

In 2007-2008, Northwood Preschool is launching a major initiative to promote children's symbolic expression through artistic media. One teacher is named the atelierista (studio artist) responsible for designing art activities related to the thematic curriculum. These activities extend over days or even weeks at a time, with small groups negotiating and creating products that represent their own thinking about the topic being studied. Art products resulting from these lessons will be displayed in the Education wing, and presented as an end-of-year gallery showing. Pictures of projects at all stages of production will also be taken to document cooperative groups at work. The notion of the atelierista is borrowed from the Reggio Emilia preschool philosophy, but Northwood does not subscribe to other aspects of Reggio programs.

Teachers provide parents with a calendar of planned thematic units and activities at the beginning of each month. This provides information that parents can use to support and extend the content and skills fostered in the classroom. It may also surface questions which parents are encouraged to ask the teachers or Preschool Coordinator. Staff are encouraged and affirmed by parent interest in the program.

Social Development

The preschool years are an important and challenging period of social development. It is during this time that children first learn how important their engagement with age peers is to social and emotional development. While this awareness increases throughout childhood and adolescence, the first experience can shape young children's beliefs about their sense of competence as a learner and self-confidence in the company of others.

Parents are encouraged to recognize that social and emotional development is closely linked to individual differences in *temperament*. Temperament involves a dozen or so traits which are "hard wired" in all of us, and which parents naturally accommodate in their own children. For example, one trait of temperament involves **adaptability**, which refers to how long it takes the child to adjust to transitions and changes. Some children are observed to consistently adapt to change quickly, whereas others adapt more gradually by often choosing the sidelines to watch and listen to children and teachers in the classroom. Most parents recognize their children's uniqueness in temperament and other areas, and many fear that these might interfere with their child's social interactions in the early years.

At Northwood Preschool, the teaching staff is well aware of children's individual differences, including those attributable to temperament. Information parents share on enrollment forms helps us to better understand these and other unique characteristics of each child. We also expect that a group of 12-15 children will represent an interesting mix of individual differences. One of the primary purposes of preschool is to help our youngsters develop social competence and become a high-functioning learning community.

Preschoolers develop social competence in three main areas: initiating interactions, maintaining ongoing relationships, and solving conflicts with other children. While some children easily join a group at play, others have difficulty. As adults, we can help young children learn social strategies for entering playgroups or for talking to other children about what they want. Watching for a few minutes and then saying, "I'll be the big sister, okay?" works better than saying, "Hey, let me do that."

At Northwood Christian Church Preschool, we are committed to insuring a positive start to children's emerging orientation to the importance of social relationships. While providing a safe environment in which all children are

encouraged to express themselves, we also seek to create a community of learners aware of their impact on one another, able to empathize with others, and courteous in work and play. These early basic social skills form the foundation of later development of relationship-building and citizenship.

Inevitably, young children do experience frustrations and misunderstandings as they have more complex social experiences. To prevent problems, the Preschool has adopted three basic rules to guide children's behavior:

1. Respect the rights of others and their property.
2. Follow directions.
3. Use appropriate language.

Occasionally, youngsters do engage in behavior that endangers themselves or others, is disrespectful, or disrupts classroom activity. On such occasions, correction begins with an explanation of the impact of this behavior on others, followed by re-direction of attention to another activity and positive reinforcement for improved behavior. Very rarely, these efforts fail and the child(ren) involved are asked to take "think-it-over" time. Teachers use this time to teach and encourage self-control, autonomy, management of feelings, problem-solving, and satisfaction in cooperative social behavior. For the most part, these events are woven seamlessly into a positive preschool day, and do not require reporting to parents.

At Northwood Preschool, parents are assured that punishment, humiliation, or verbal abuse are NEVER used in addressing children's misconduct. Children are NEVER denied food as punishment or reprimanded for wetting, soiling or not using the toilet. Instead, the Preschool staff analyzes possible reasons for behavior and adjusts the environment as necessary and appropriate. We are firm and consistent about limitations when they are appropriate to the situation and the child's ability to understand and comply, but are always delivered with compassion and caring.

For some children, preschool is the first opportunity to form sustained **friendships** with age peers. Northwood Preschool is committed to fostering pro-social behavior, including friendship formation, during early childhood. Recent studies have found that some friendships formed in the early years of childhood are second only to family relationships in importance. From such findings comes a heightened awareness of the social and emotional importance of friendships in the early years. With many friends their own age, children encounter lots of opportunities to negotiate and compromise. Children are encouraged to express opinions and ideas while also respecting others.

Preschool involvement also offers parents the opportunity to expand their children's friendship skills. Children appearing not to have any special friendships at school may benefit from one-on-one time with a playmate outside

of the preschool setting. Playing together a few times outside of the classroom often gives two children a level of comfort with each other that carries over to their time at school. At the same time, we need not be too concerned when children frequently change best friends. After all, in early childhood, friendships are based on shared interests, which are constantly changing for many kids over time and in different settings.

Another important aspect of young children's social and emotional growth involves cultivating responsibility for their own **personal belongings**. Accordingly, the staff encourages children to care for things they bring from home by using predetermined areas to store them in a classroom cubby or backpack. Important notes and other information for parents are also placed each child's backpack to take home at the end of the class session. Please check and empty it daily. In addition, children are assigned a hallway coat hook on which to hang their coats and backpacks. Made sure that the backpack includes a complete change of clothing (underwear, socks, pants, shirts and shoes if possible)!

Please send toys to school only if your children's teacher has requested them. We rely on your common sense when sending toys. For example:

- Avoid sending toys that can be easily broken;
- Avoid sending toys with tiny or many pieces;
- Avoid sending toys that are prohibitively expensive to repair or replace;
- Send only one toy at a time;
- Do not send electronic games;
- Send only toys that fit in your child's cubby or backpack; and
- Put your child's name on all belongings brought to Preschool.

Faith-Based Learning Experiences/Moral Development

The Preschool is fortunate to have the gentleness and compassion of Christ Jesus as the consummate role model for guiding children's development. Through faith-based learning experiences in the classroom, regular chapel with church and preschool staff, and teachers who also model the kindness and patience of Christ, children at Northwood Preschool learn the characteristics of persons of character, the behaviors exhibited by Jesus' followers, and generosity of spirit so needed in today's world.

These faith-based activities build a strong foundation for moral development in early childhood as well. Even young children understand the importance of truthfulness, integrity, kindness, justice, and ethics learned both at home and at school. During these years, young children are also capable of experiencing and expressing empathy and concern for one another, which we encourage in all aspects of classroom life.

Parents are sometimes surprised to learn that spiritual and moral development proceed at predictable ages and stages, just as physical, intellectual and social maturation occur. The Preschool staff engages children in active, hands-on, and literature-based activities to foster spiritual and moral growth. These activities are linked to children's prior experiences and spark both their reasoning and feeling to lead to practical applications in school and family life. The chapel curriculum is also linked closely to the weekly/monthly thematic curriculum to provide an even broader context for understanding spiritual and moral lessons.

Holidays and Special Occasions

As a faith-based preschool program, Northwood Preschool celebrates Christian holidays that fall within the school year with enthusiasm. The Christmas season has a major impact on the lives of young children, and the preschool teaches about the birth of Jesus prior to the annual Christmas program to which parents, families and congregation members are invited. We also celebrate Easter, focusing particularly on Jesus' sacrifice for humankind on the Cross and our salvation through His resurrection. Our teachings are designed for the level of understanding of preschool-age children.

Other holidays are also celebrated as milestones of the calendar year in our general society. Civil holidays are marked with recognition of the occasion and persons associated with that date. Halloween, Thanksgiving, Black History Month, Valentine's Day and similar holidays provide an opportunity to celebrate the expression of common religious and civic virtues (e.g., generosity, gratitude, justice and love) in a positive and constructive way.

Each child's birthday is celebrated during the year. Those birthdays falling on Summer days are celebrated as "half-birthdays" with equal fervor. Teachers are mindful to schedule parent's snack days on their child's birthday so that they may choose to bring a treat to share with the class. The birthday boy or girl is also given a crown to honor their special day, and everyone sings the birthday song to share their good wishes.

Videos

Video games, cartoons and movies are rarely the best choice for teaching important concepts and ideas with young children. Video movies are shown to children only when used to supplement the theme for the week, in a way best illustrated by electronic means. The video must be rated G, be educational in nature, and previewed by teachers to identify whether brief portions are as useful as the video in its entirety. Teachers may show an educational video for no more than 20 minutes of a preschool class session. Before showing a video, it must be approved by the Preschool Coordinator, based on how it relates to the lessons for the week. Parents will be notified in advance when a video will be shown. Concerns voiced by parents will be considered before the video is

shown. Children should not bring video games or movies to school with the expectation that they will be viewed.

Wellness and Health

A number of policies exist to insure the health and safety of children and staff at Northwood Christian Church Preschool. These are described below.

Clothing and shoes worn to school should be appropriate for children to move and play safely. If a child dresses up for school (e.g., school picture day), please send play clothes for later to facilitate relaxation and play. You may want to send an old shirt for times when messy activities are planned. Remember also to have a change of clothes at hand in your child's backpack in the event of an unforeseen event.

Good nutrition is important to children's success at school. We strongly encourage parents to develop routines that include a nutritious breakfast before leaving home for Preschool. It is very evident to staff when children arrive at school without having something to eat beforehand. We do not stock or serve breakfast foods. Parents who occasionally find themselves running late may bring breakfast with their child. Please do not send doughnuts, snack cakes or other sweets. Dry cereal, toast, muffins, fruit, milk, and similar foods give your child a good start on the day.

Parents provide snack for their child(ren)'s class periodically. Please send food and drinks enough for each child in class. We ask that it be healthy and nutritious. We return any unused portion of the snack sent back to you at the end of the class session. Parents tend to be very generous in selecting snacks, which is appreciated. However, we are not providing the children with a meal, and so a piece of fruit, string cheese, or crackers with a beverage is perfectly adequate.

If your child has a **food allergy**, we ask that you teach him/her what foods cannot be eaten and provide a snack for him or her each day. Parents are also scheduled to bring snack on their child's birthday, which is encouraged. Every child enjoys wearing a birthday crown while his or her classmates sing the birthday song.

Children who do not like the day's snack may simply say "No thank you" when it is offered. We do not offer an alternative snack. Parents whose children are particularly selective in their food preferences may send an alternative snack in their backpacks.

Except for children with documented special needs, all children are required to be fully **toilet trained** at the time of enrollment in the Preschool. Of course,

toileting accidents do occur in the preschool years, so parents are expected to keep a change of clothing in their child's backpack for such an occasion. These accidents are addressed discreetly. For special needs children, parents work with staff to determine how toileting during class time will be managed. This plan, along with any other adaptations to accommodate the child's needs will be written and placed in the student file.

Every precaution is taken to guard against **accidents** inside and on the outdoor playground. Each and all staff members are obliged to correct against unsafe conditions that could cause an accident. Parents are alerted in advance that the most common (although infrequent) inside "accident" occurs if children run inside, since their tennis shoes often cause a fall that results in a rug burn. Staff pay particular attention to all incidents of inside running for this reason.

As for **playground** play, at least 3 classroom teachers/assistants must remain on the playground when both classes are present. Conversation among adults is minimal during playground supervision. One staff member carries a charged cell phone in the event an accident occurs, to immediately summon the preschool coordinator and/or senior associate pastor.

In addition, teachers and teaching assistants enforce the following playground rules:

- Children must be accompanied by staff at all times.
- Children may not throw sand, ground covering or toys.
- Children may not climb up the slide.
- Children must slide properly seated and feet first down the slide.
- No toys from the classroom or toys from home are allowed outside on the playground. Balls, shovels, or other outdoor equipment are not allowed on climbing structures.
- Tricycles stay on the sidewalk, and children remain seated on them while in motion. If a child runs into a wall, fence or another child while riding, s/he forfeits that turn on the tricycle.
- Pushing, shoving and wrestling are not allowed.
- Children may not climb on the fence.

These rules exist to prevent accidents, and not to spoil the children's fun. Playground supervisors are in continuous interaction with children to promote play that is cooperative and develops large muscle skills. All children are accounted for before returning to classrooms.

Each child must have a current **immunization** form and other Preschool health and registration forms on file at the Preschool on or before the first day of attendance. This expectation insures the safety of and prompt medical attention for every child. The Preschool also reports compliance with county immunization regulations, which require that the information be up-dated each year.

Immunization forms from last year for returning students are not acceptable to meet Lane County regulations.

All children of preschool and school age are particularly vulnerable to any communicable **illness** circulating in the classroom during the first year of attendance, prior to building immunities to the more common colds and viruses. To prevent the spread of illness, children are not permitted to attend class if the staff member greeting each child considers him or her to be ill. Children are returned to parents or guardians if they show signs of diarrhea, vomiting, fever, rash (unless parent brings a doctor's note certifying that the rash is not contagious), pink eye, and/or head lice. **Please do not bring children with these symptoms to Preschool in the interest of protecting other children and the staff from illness.**

Children are sent home if, in the opinion of the staff, a child is too ill to remain at Preschool. Symptoms considered serious enough to send the child home include those described above, and/or extreme congestion or other signs of a bad cold, extreme fatigue, or spiking fever. (Children with fever should remain home for 24 hours after their temperature returns to normal.) The parent or guardian is called, and must arrange for the child to be picked up within 20 minutes. Your child is attended to privately until you or your designee arrives for pick-up. Parents who disregard these expectations will not be permitted to maintain their child's enrollment in the program for the remainder of the year.

We realize that this policy may be difficult for some parents, but our responsibility is to reduce risks of exposure to illness to other children. In addition, we appreciate if parents whose children have contracted communicable or contagious diseases or illnesses (e.g., chicken pox, lice, etc.) notify the preschool coordinator so that parents of their classmates can be informed for their own youngster's welfare.

We are not authorized to administer medication of any kind – over the counter or prescribed -- to children at Preschool. Do not send such medications with your child.

Accident and Emergency Care

In the registration process, parents must complete all forms related to health, accident and emergency care. This includes people who can be contacted to pick up your child in such an event. No child may attend the Preschool without the names, addresses, phone numbers (including the child's physician) and parent signatures required on these forms.

Although infrequent, accidents and emergencies do occur despite close adult supervision of all indoor and outdoor activities. On these occasions, the following procedures are followed:

- Minor accidents or injuries such as bumps, bruises or cuts that seem not to require stitches or further medical care are treated by staff. They offer comfort, wash wounds, and apply band-aids as necessary. These incidents are also reported in writing to the preschool coordinator and to the parents on an “ouch” report.
- Parents and guardians, or persons listed on the emergency medical care permission form are called for accidents requiring further professional medical attention. The person contacted is requested to pick up the child for further assessment by a physician. Examples of such injuries include deep cuts that potentially require stitches, uncontrollable nosebleeds, large bumps or bruises (particularly to the head), and possible fractures. The assigned teacher also completes an accident report for the preschool coordinator and parents.
- In emergency situations (e.g., broken bones, unconsciousness, extreme fever large or deep cuts, and head injuries followed by dizziness or vomiting), staff call for ambulance service and an adult accompanies the child to the hospital. The parent, guardian or emergency care person and the child’s doctor are immediately informed. The Preschool staff person remains with the child until a parent or designated adult arrives on site. These incidents, including treatment and prognosis, are recorded and filed with the preschool coordinator.

Child Abuse Reporting Requirements

The Northwood Christian Church Preschool upholds the Oregon child abuse regulations which legally require staff to report any suspected abuse of children to the proper authorities. Therefore, it is Preschool policy that any staff person who suspects that a child has been abused and/or neglected must report that information to the Preschool Coordinator. It is the duty of the coordinator to review the basis of the report and, if appropriate, inform the Senior Associate Pastor of the Church and local authorities by telephone within 24 hours. The coordinator must also document that same information in writing, and cooperate fully in an investigation of the reported incident.

Children’s’ Rights and Responsibilities

At Northwood Christian Church Preschool, we are committed to upholding the **rights** of all children to:

- Be cared for in a safe, stable, and nurturing environment;
- Use all equipment, space and materials on an equal basis;
- Be treated respectfully by teachers, volunteers, and one another;
- Experience guidance that is fair, consistent, and equally applied;

- Express feelings (frustration, disappointment, anger, joy, excitement and exuberance) and opinions in an appropriate manner;
- Receive encouragement in learning, especially when trying a new task or expressing creativity; and
- Experience a wide variety of learning experiences and exercise choice in pursuing them.

Our staff is dedicated to uphold these rights by caring about and for the children entrusted to our care, enjoying their company, fostering their growth and development in every dimension, and implementing a program suited to their interests and needs. To this end, we strive to teach them **responsibility** for:

- Understanding the consequences of their actions;
- Respecting rules that guide them during their preschool day;
- Not willfully destroying or harming any equipment or property owned by others or in the building;
- Sharing equipment and facilities with all children in the program;
- Remaining with staff at all times and notifying that person if they need to go to another area;
- Dressing appropriately, such as wearing a coat and proper shoes on a cold day;
- Returning materials and equipment to the place they belong; and
- Completing self-selected activities.

We are glad to respond to your inquiries regarding your child's understanding and exercise of these rights and responsibilities. In the next section of this handbook, we address directly the importance of a strong preschool-home connection to promote each child's adjustment to and success in the group setting.

Opportunities for Parent Involvement

Preschool-Home Connection

As has already been emphasized, interaction between the preschool and parents is critical to children's success in school at all levels. Cultivating the school-home connection is sometimes challenging as families differ in composition and size, work and other commitments of parents in and outside the home, the presence of other caregivers in our children's lives, and many other factors.

To encourage the preschool-home connection, the staff communicates at some level with parents and caregivers as children arrive and depart from school each day. The drop-off and pick-up procedure is designed to allow for even the simplest communication between staff and parent. Be sure to check your child's

cubby or backpack each school day, as staff often leave notes, newsletters or flyers there for your information.

Classroom and Field Trip Activities

After children's initial adjustment to arriving at and engaging in preschool activities, parents are welcome to participate in classroom activities, especially those requiring additional adult supervision. Parents are also recruited to provide transportation and supervision for field trips. You will complete a field trip permission form on which to indicate your interest in driving or accompanying the children on field trips. This form is also used for all parents to give permission for children to participate. **This form must be on file for each child before s/he will be permitted to attend any field trip.** In addition, drivers for field trips must also complete a form regarding car insurance and seat restraints before the event.

Occasionally, the preschool children may be taken off school grounds for neighborhood walks. If you object, please contact the preschool coordinator or classroom teacher in advance.

Parent Meetings

As parents express interest in holding parent meetings for a variety of purposes, Preschool staff and the ministry team hold meetings to address their interests, including assessment of parent satisfaction in the Fall and Spring of each year. The preschool staff also offer at least one class per quarter as part of the church's Wednesday evening G.O.L.F. program. These events may be informational, social, or educational in nature. These classes are open to both preschool families and others who attend Northwood Christian Church with children from birth to 8 years of age. Another activity that may appeal to some parents is book study of a book of interest related to child development, parenting, spiritual formation, and/or the teaching-learning process in early childhood. Please let us know if any of these parent activities are of interest to you, or topics you would like us to collectively address. Child care is provided for parent meetings and G.O.L.F. classes, but we must know in advance if you will require it.

Fundraising

Every year, Northwood Christian Church staff and parents engage in fundraising activities that allow us to make capital purchases of equipment, materials, and supplies. This is not only necessary to offering a quality program, but also fun for parents to plan and execute together on behalf of their children. One event held annually is staffing the All-American Booth at two UO home games. Your

participation in fundraising ideas and events is an important contribution to the Preschool.

Enrollment, Tuition, Routines and Parents' Rights and Responsibilities

Registration

Enrollment in the Northwood Christian Church Preschool occurs according to policies established by the Preschool Ministry Team as follows:

1. Enrollment is first open to children enrolled previously in the 3-year-old class and/or siblings currently enrolled, and members of Northwood Christian Church. This enrollment priority extends for a two-week period prior to open enrollment for the general public.
2. A parent or legal guardian must register the child.
3. The following forms must be completed and returned before the child may begin classes:
 - Registration form and fee
 - Child's student profile
 - Child's immunization form
 - Field trip permission form
 - Parent field trip driver form
 - Signed tuition agreement
4. Northwood Christian Church Preschool admits students of any race, color, or national and ethnic origin, and extends all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students of the preschool. It does not discriminate in the administration of its educational, admission or other policies and procedures.
5. Enrollment is on a first-come, first-served basis. When maximum enrollment is reached, a waiting list will be made according to the date of application and receipt of registration fee.
6. Any child three or four years of age may enroll at Northwood Preschool. Children must be toilet trained and able to handle bathroom procedures with little or no assistance. Staff will work privately with parents whose children are identified as having special needs.
7. All children enrolled are monitored for a one-month period for adjustment to the group setting. Staff will work privately with parents whose children are having difficulty adjusting to the group setting.
8. Northwood Christian Church Preschool is open for the months of September through May from 8:45 a.m. to 11:15 a.m., Monday through Friday except for holidays on the Springfield Public School schedule. We do not follow the public school "late start" schedule.

9. Parents must pick up their child(ren) promptly. In case of emergency, parents must contact the Preschool staff or coordinator.

Registration Fees and Tuition

A registration fee of \$100 per child must be paid for registration to be complete. \$50 of this fee is non-refundable and dedicated for purchase of nonrenewable materials and supplies for the program. The remaining \$50 is applied to the June tuition of the current academic year. Children are covered by a limited accident insurance policy while they are involved in Preschool activities.

Tuition payments are due on the first day of each month. Payments should be made with cash in a marked envelope (child's first and last name, month of tuition, and amount of tuition printed clearly on the envelope), or by check made out to Northwood Christian Church Preschool with your child's name clearly printed on the check's note line. Should a check be returned from the bank for insufficient funds, only certified check, money order or cash will be accepted as payment thereafter.

It is the responsibility of the family to contact the preschool coordinator or bookkeeper to make arrangements for late payments. Every effort is made to accommodate family circumstances so that children may continue attending class, including application for a partial scholarship (\$25 per month for two months) for families in need. However, parents should know that the preschool operates on a zero-based budget; that is, tuition revenue does not exceed expenses. Families failing to make tuition payments for 60 days will meet with the Preschool financial officer and coordinator to discuss options for resolving the debt.

Check-In/Check-Out Policy

Each school day, the parent or adult caregiver of each child signs in and out on the Northwood Preschool Sign In/Out sheet. This is essential to maintaining security for each child in each classroom. If the parent/caregiver removes the child from class and returns while class is still in session, s/he must sign in and out each time.

Children and parents enter and exit the Preschool through the main doors of the Church. Please accompany your child to the Preschool classroom through the Fellowship Hall for sign-in each morning. At the end of each class session, parents may drive up to the Church doors and staff will walk each child to the car for sign-out. Alternatively, parents may park their cars and walk to the door to receive their child(ren), and are thereafter solely responsible for the welfare of

their youngster(s). Staff remain with children until they are released to parents or other authorized persons.

Custodial parents are welcome to visit the preschool during the time their child is in class after the first week or so of his/her adjustment to the group environment. (Please inform us if non-custodial parents are also permitted to visit your child's classroom. This is not permitted without written consent of the custodial parent.) Informing staff in advance of your intent to visit is helpful so that they can incorporate you into the class session's activities. Our goal is that all adults in the classroom actively participate in the learning community.

Preschool class time is often convenient time for parents to visit with the preschool coordinator. It is helpful, but not necessary, to schedule that time in advance. Occasionally, other things may be on her calendar, including substituting for staff in the classroom. You may be assured of discretion and confidentiality on the part of all Preschool staff with the concerns you bring to them.

Inclement Weather/Emergency Policy

When Springfield Public School (specifically, Page Elementary School) is canceled due to inclement weather or an emergency situation, Northwood Christian Church Preschool does not hold classes. Parents are encouraged to monitor school closure announcements on television or radio to be informed about closure during inclement weather. Springfield Elementary School conference days are also conference days for preschool parents who request such a meeting with the Preschool Coordinator and/or classroom teacher.

Parents' Rights and Responsibilities

Just as we clearly articulate children's rights and responsibilities at Northwood Preschool, we do so for parents as well. Our staff and ministry team are committed to the following ***rights of parents*** to:

- Know that their children are in a safe environment in which they are free to select from a variety of activities;
- Know the programs and activities planned for their children and are invited to offer input on the kinds of experiences their children enjoy;
- Share concerns with the staff or preschool advisory board about anything they do not feel is in the best interest of their child(ren);
- Know when their child's behavior is unusual or problematic, and collaborate with staff to arrive at a satisfactory resolution;
- Be fully informed about field trips away from the Preschool building;
- Voice special concerns and considerations not covered in this handbook and discuss special cases where exceptions may be made from policies set forth herein; and

- Enter and inspect the facility in which their child is receiving educational experiences, without advance notice to the Preschool.

Similarly, **parents are also responsible** for insuring the quality of their child's Preschool experience by:

- Informing the staff when their child(ren) are absent;
- Informing the staff when another authorized person is picking up their child;
- Observing the policies and procedures of the Preschool program set forth in this handbook and other policy notices;
- Sharing concerns with staff members and the ministry team if the program is not meeting their child's needs;
- Engaging in problem-solving with staff with regard to disciplinary problems in the event they arise;
- Replacing equipment that their child has damaged, destroyed, or otherwise rendered unusable;
- Paying tuition and/or fees on time;
- Keeping their child's records current with changes in address, phone number, and other vital information.
- **Picking up their child on time.**

Conclusion

We are thankful for your choosing Northwood Christian Church Preschool as your child's early education provider. Our Ministry Team and Preschool staff recognize that serving your child and family is a privilege, and bring to their work a servant heart. Your input and feedback is critical to a successful experience for all. We invite your thoughtful input and frequent interaction to insure that your child and family have a great school year. We also invite non-members of our congregation to attend at least one worship service this year to get to know how God is working in and through the church. ***So welcome to Northwood – a great place to call home!***