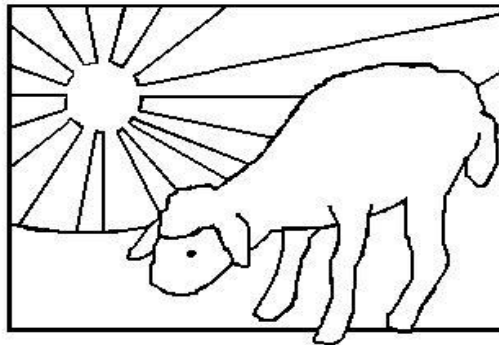


# Preschool in the Valley

at the Great Valley Presbyterian Church  
2025 Swedesford Road  
Malvern, PA 19355

## Parent Handbook



Preschool Office: 610-540-0234

E-mail: [gvpcpreschool@comcast.net](mailto:gvpcpreschool@comcast.net)

Preschool Website: [www.preschoolinthevalley.com](http://www.preschoolinthevalley.com)

Church Website: [www.gvpres.org](http://www.gvpres.org)

Church Office: 610-644-1995

*“Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them;  
for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”*

*Mark 10:14*

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## **A. General Information**

### Statement of Purpose:

We believe that each child is made in the image of God, and should have every opportunity to develop physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. In accordance with the mission statement of Great Valley Presbyterian Church, we are called to ministry, caring for children, showing concern for families, and providing support and nurture for our congregation and surrounding community. We admit students of any race or creed. The preschool is an avenue whereby our church can live out the message of God's love expressed through Jesus Christ, who said, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Mark 10:14, NIV).

### Statement of Philosophy:

We believe that all children learn through play, and seek to provide a child-centered, developmentally appropriate curriculum, which focuses on the growth of the whole child. We offer a variety of learning experiences – sensory, motor, perceptual, and language skills. The social skills of listening, speaking, following directions, cooperation, and problem solving are also emphasized. Most of all, we want to help children experience and learn about the good news of God's love as shown through His Son, Jesus Christ.

## **B. General School Policies**

### Parent Communication

Communication from both the school office and/or teacher is sent home in the student folder. Parents should likewise place any notes for the teacher or school office in their child's folder. e-mail reminders and updates are also used and therefore e-mail addresses on file should be kept up-to-date. Staff phone numbers are not distributed to parents. The office will gladly relay messages to the staff.

It is the policy of Preschool in the Valley that all parent contact information is used only for school communication purposes. This would include phone, mail, and e-mail use by the school administration, staff, and parents.

### Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled in January with an updated assessment in May. Twenty minute child care is provided for all Preschool students and siblings. A parent may request an additional conference at any time throughout the school year.

### Parent Involvement

Parent participation and class visits are encouraged throughout the school year. Sign-ups for volunteer opportunities are available on Open House Night. It is also the school's desire to have an inter-generational volunteer force. Grandparents are always welcome! All volunteer visits must be pre-arranged with the classroom teacher.

### Grievance Procedures

Preschool in the Valley has an open-door policy and appointments with the director or teacher should be made at any time to discuss any grievances or concerns. Grievances are documented and kept on file. Following the spirit of Matthew 18, a parent should first discuss an issue with the teacher. If the issue is not resolved, the issue may be taken to the Director or Preschool Committee if necessary.

### Emergency Procedures – School Closing

Preschool in the Valley is located in Chester County and follows the Tredyffrin/Easttown School District school closing notifications. The website for Tredyffrin/Easttown is [www.tesd.net](http://www.tesd.net).

If Tredyffrin/Easttown schools close for the day, all Preschool in the Valley classes will be cancelled. If Tredyffrin/Easttown schools have a delayed opening, Preschool in the Valley will open at 10 am (one hour delay). If Tredyffrin/Easttown schools close early, Extended Day will be cancelled.

Alternate Advisory: Tredyffrin/Easttown hotline (610-240-1970). In addition, Preschool in the Valley will notify parents timely using the e-mail contact information provided. Parents are responsible for communicating any changes in contact information.

### School Closings – Community Danger

**Shelter in Place:** If the local police inform the school of community danger (weather or hazardous materials), the building will be in lock-down mode. The children and staff will shelter in place in a safe zone in the building. There are snacks and water available in the Preschool wing of the building. There is emergency lighting in the building. During a shelter in place, communication with Preschool staff will be available via Preschool phone (610-540-0234), Church phone (610-644-1995), e-mail, and/or cell phones.

**Intruder Alert:** Teachers will account for the children in their class. Teachers line students up in each classroom. Children can be evacuated through one of the two doors in each classroom if necessary.

**Evacuation:** Should the building need to be evacuated, we will move all children to the hill behind the church or to another location inside the church (e.g., the gym, the fellowship hall, or the sanctuary) depending on the reason and location of the cause for evacuation. Teachers would take their class roster and emergency forms. The Director would make sure that the building was evacuated and also carry an Emergency Folder with him or her. The class would stay together under the teacher and aide's supervision until each child is picked up by his/her parents. Further instructions would come from emergency personnel. Each classroom has an evacuation map posted by the door.

Details will be e-mailed as appropriate.

**Preschool in the Valley – 610-540-0234**

**Great Valley Presbyterian Church – 610-644-1995**

## Emergency Procedures – Medical Emergencies

**Personal medical emergencies** are assessed and communication with parents is attempted. 911 will be called immediately. Church staff will be alerted to direct emergency personnel to the proper area and assist the Preschool staff as needed. Descriptive injury reports, emergency forms and the child's medical form will be given to the Emergency Medical personnel. The school director or staff member will accompany the child and stay with them until a family member arrives. Staff members are trained in CPR & First Aid.

## Child Abuse

Professionals in the field of education are mandatory reporters and are required by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect. In general, the law also provides immunity from civil and criminal liability for professionals who file a report in good faith in accordance with their professional judgment. **Childline: 1-800-932-0313.**

## Fire Drills

Drills will be conducted on a semester basis. There are two fire drills to accommodate both the 2-day and 3-day classes. All lights, windows, and doors are shut and the teacher takes her Attendance List and Emergency folder with her. Teachers will take all student Emergency Forms outside. Teachers walk their students around the building to the hill behind the church. Students return to the building when instructions are given by the Director.

## School Security

- Preschool in the Valley is locked during school hours including the hallway doors and doors to the outside
- Staff have access to the building from any entrance using their keys
- The building will be open during arrival and dismissal times. At all other times, parents and visitors will have to knock.

## **C. Admission Policies**

### Enrollment Periods

Admissions will be offered in the following sequence and subject to the director's discretion. Preschool in the Valley has two different enrollment periods: a) Priority Registration; and b) Open Registration. For each enrollment period specific guidelines apply.

### Priority Registration

Current & former preschool families, preschool committee members, preschool staff, church members & wait-listed families are part of the priority registration. The registration process, date, and deadline are clearly outlined in materials sent home with the student. Families should contact the office if they would like to submit an application for a younger sibling. Registration materials are mailed mid-January.

### Open Registration

Open registration begins on the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday in February. Registration will be closed when all applications have been processed and all classes are filled.

### Age Requirements to Determine Class Placement

- Two year olds – Age 2 by September 1
- Three year olds – Age 3 by September 1
- Pre-kindergarten - Age 4 by September 1

## Bathroom Training

We encourage families to have children toilet trained before entering school but recognize that children learn this skill at different times. The preschool staff will work with the child and their family if toilet learning has not been mastered. While all children will be taken to the bathroom during the session, it is assumed that younger children will require assistance from the staff. Though frequent monitoring is not part of classroom procedure, necessary changes will be made if child needs reminding and more frequent bathroom trips are necessary. If you would prefer that staff do not assist your child with toileting, please inform the teacher. In that case, we will call you and ask you to come to the school to assist your child. Please help us by having your child use the bathroom before school and by sending your child to school in clothes that are easy to manage. Shorts, sweatpants, and other loose garments make toileting easier. A change of clothing for each child is required to be kept at school in case of accidents.

Two-year-old students do not need to be toilet trained. Teachers will change diapers as needed. Parents of the two-year-old students should provide diapers that are kept in students school bag. Teachers will support the parents in toilet training when the child is ready.

## **D. Financial Policies**

### Tuition and Fees

All school tuition and fees are reviewed and approved by the Committee on an annual basis.

### Registration Fee

A non-refundable registration fee is due with each child's application along with September's tuition as a check or cash payment. For children placed on the waiting list, the registration fee will be returned. This fee will be due should the child be enrolled into the school.

### Withdrawal Fee

The expenses of the school do not diminish with the departure of a student during the course of the school year. Therefore, when a family signs the Registration & Enrollment Agreement they are obligated to pay the fees for the full academic year or until your child's spot is filled. Rarely, an exception could be requested and is subject to the discretion of the Preschool Committee (i.e. permanent move out of the area). If the Preschool Committee does make an exception, a withdrawal fee (per child) will be charged.

### Tuition Payments

Preschool in the Valley uses an automated clearing house (ACH) payment method starting the first of October - May. Each year families will complete an ACH form that will authorize Preschool in the Valley to withdrawal the monthly tuition from the family's specified checking/savings account. Parents need to inform the preschool director if their banking account for the ACH payment will change.

### Early Care & Extended Day Payments:

Early care extended day costs will be paid for by check or cash. A registration form will be sent home that will cover a few months at a time. Families can pay in advance for a few months or if space is available can pay as needed. It is important to email the director 24 hours in advance of needed early or extended care to confirm space and proper staffing.

### Financial Aid Policy:

Preschool in the Valley offers financial aid. Families need to complete the Financial Aid Form and make a request to the director for financial aid. Each request is evaluated by the preschool committee. The maximum amount of aid that maybe awarded is 50% of the least number of days for and age group. For example, the 2s and 3s classes have the least number of days being 2 days. Therefore, the amount of aid would be 50% of the cost of the 2 day option. The least number of days in the 4s classes is 4 days so the amount is 50% of the cost of 4 days.

## **E. Student Policies**

### Storing and Administering Medication

By State Law, the school may only administer first aid. In case of an accident or illness parents will be notified immediately. If neither parent can be reached, the first name on the emergency form will be called. Medications will not be administered in school with the exception of certain emergency allergy medications. A detailed emergency plan must be in place for at risk students. Parents consult with the Director to complete the Emergency Care Plan.

### Food Allergy Policy

Preschool in the Valley has established food guidelines for foods brought in for snack time during school. Only fruit and/or vegetable and water are allowed. Students are also encouraged to bring in re-usable water bottles and cloth napkins. Preschool will provide a cloth napkin to each new student that the beginning of the school year.

No peanut or tree nut products are allowed at any time including – classroom snacks, birthday parties, lunch, or parent programs. This restriction includes any processed food items that indicate they were processed in factories where peanuts or tree nuts were processed. Any items brought to school with these ingredients will be brought to the office for storage until dismissal.

All children who have a food allergy must complete a Food Allergy Action Plan with the Director. Procedures for Epi Pen storage will be provided to the parent at that time. Staff are instructed regarding Preschool Food Allergy policy/procedures and use of Epi Pens. Preschool in the Valley does not however guarantee that a student could not be exposed to these products.

## Illness

A child should not be sent to school if he/she is ill, uncontrolled coughing, sneezing, or has runny nose. If student has fever, is vomiting, or has diarrhea, please wait 24 hours after symptoms subside before returning to school. Please call the school if your child has an infectious disease, other than a cold, so that steps may be taken to protect other students in the school if necessary. It is particularly important that you immediately report cases of head lice, so that a general outbreak does not occur. Below is a guide to follow for some common diseases to determine how long your child should remain at home.

<b>Disease</b>	<b>Incubation Period</b>	<b>Exclusion from School</b>
Chicken Pox	14-21 days	6 days from last Crop of Vesicles, scabs must be dry
Conjunctivitis	24-72 Hours	Until eyes are free of discharge
Covid-19	2 – 14 days	5 days, onset of symptoms or positive test, 24 hours fever free without medication & improved symptoms
Scabies	7 days	24 hours following treatment
Scarlet Fever	3 Days	24 hours following treatment
Strep Throat	3 Days	24 hours following treatment
Staph of the Skin	1-3 Days	Until skin is clear, or treated for 24 hours
Impetigo	4-10 Days	Until skin is clear, or treated for 24 hours
Lice	2 weeks	Two days treated and free of lice and nits (must be seen by a professional before returning to school)
Pinworms	None	Until first dose of Rx is given
Ringworms	4-19 days	Until skin is clear of all scabs and crusts
Undiagnosed rash	4-19 days	Until diagnosis is made or symptom free for 24 hours.

## Immunizations:

In August families will receive a welcome packet in the mail. Included in this mailing is the **Emergency Contact and Medical Information Form**. There is space at the bottom of this form to show your child's immunization history. Parents can attach their child's immunization record from their pediatrician to this form. A physical examination is not required but the immunization record is necessary before the beginning of school.

### PA Schools Vaccination Requirements:

- 4 does of tetanus, diphtheria & acellular pertussis (usually given as DTP, DTaP, DT or Td)
- 3 or 4 doses of polio depending on child's age
- 3 doses of hepatitis B
- 1 or 2 doses of measles, mumps, rubella depending on child's age (usually MMR)
- 1 or 2 doses of varicella (chickenpox) depending on child's age or evidence of immunity

## Communicable Disease & Blood Borne Pathogens

(a) A child identified with a communicable disease or infection shall be isolated from the rest of the school. The parent is called and asked to pick up their child. The parent is required to inform the school of the physician's diagnosis. Re-admittance is based on the physician's note and the understanding that the child is no longer considered a threat to the health of others (See 55 Pa Code 3280.137). The notification shall be retained in the child's file.

(b) The school will inform parents when there is a suspected outbreak of a communicable disease or an outbreak of an unusual illness that represents a public health emergency in the opinion of the Department of Health (see 55 Pa Code 3280.136).

(c) Universal precautions are taken in the cleansing and sanitizing of areas that are contaminated. Gloves are used and all waste is secured in plastic bags and disposed of separately in an enclosed container. This would be the procedure for any illness or accident involving blood borne pathogens.

(d) School families in the same class and/or school are notified by letter and e-mail. Information, signs and symptoms pertaining to the disease are highlighted. Incubation periods and exclusions from school guidelines are noted in the Parent Handbook.

(e) Discrimination based on Illness: We do not discriminate against serving children who have an illness which is not transmitted by casual contact.

## Discipline Policies

Preschool in the Valley desires that each child experience success. Discipline is the process of providing encouragement and training to help children develop godly life patterns. Proverbs 22:6 says: "Train a child in the way he or she should go, and when he or she is old he or she will not turn from it." We strive for a classroom setting that provides children with opportunities to explore their environment within consistent, age-appropriate limits. In this atmosphere, most behavioral issues are prevented.

However, if behavioral issues occur, we will use the following positive guidance techniques as part of the children's training in problem solving skills and taking responsibility for their choices. Our desire is that each child will begin to develop proper respect for God, others, and oneself.

1. Ignoring. Some negative behavior is produced by a child to get attention. It can be stopped when he/she does not get the attention desired. We will use this technique unless a safety issue is involved.

2. Redirection/Distraction. We offer alternatives to children engaged in undesirable behavior by presenting a different toy, suggesting a new activity, engaging the child in an activity with a teacher or another child, or encouraging independent play.

3. Verbal Intervention. The teacher explains to the child that his/her behavior is inappropriate and proceeds to show/assist the child in making it right. The teacher explains that God wants us

to be obedient, respectful, and kind. The child is encouraged to apologize. The teacher will tell the child he/she is forgiven and loved.

4. Logical Consequences. The teacher helps the child understand the logical consequences of his/her actions by removing the object or activity. The child is encouraged to make things right by cleaning up the mess, returning the toy, and apologizing to his/her teacher or friend. Although the apology may not be genuine, it is a model of correct behavior that will one day come from the heart.

5. Better Choice Chair. The child is separated from the group to allow him/her to relax and calm down. This also avoids peer pressure. The child may or may not have access to activities and will be supervised. The child may return to the group as soon as the negative behavior stops or is significantly reduced. If a student refuses to safely go or stay in the Better Choice chair the student will be taken to the Director's office and the parents will be notified. If student is put in the Better Choice Chair **two or more times in one day, the child's parents will be notified**.

If these **positive guidance techniques** are not working effectively and inappropriate behavior persists, we will use the following **progressive procedures**.

1. We will observe and record the child's inappropriate behavior and what we have done to try to change the behavior.
2. Parents will be asked to participate in a parent/teacher conference in which a specific action plan will be developed to address the behavior. The action plan will outline all the steps the staff will take to try to change the behavior, all the steps the parent(s) will take, and the steps toward removal from the school if the behavior persists.
3. Our staff may suggest outside resources to parents and will work with any outside resources for further guidance in responding to the child's behavior.
4. If the inappropriate behavior continues, the parent(s) will be asked to keep the child home for a day of school.
5. If the behavior continues after the child is kept home for two occasions, we will request that the parent(s) withdraw their child.

**We may immediately withdraw** any child whose behavior creates a significant risk of harm to the health or safety of other children or staff, without following guidance steps outlined above.

**We do not permit the following forms of discipline:** corporal punishment, punishing a child for lapses in toilet-training habits, withholding food, ridicule, embarrassment, or humiliation. Gentle physical control will be used when it is deemed necessary for the protection of the child or others from harm.

### Confidentiality of Records

It is the policy of Preschool in the Valley that all students' records remain confidential and are not released to any organization or institution without written parental permission. Any request for a copy of a child's records should be accompanied with a signed Release of Information form.

Confidential information is placed in a sealed envelope within the student folder.

### Transportation of Students

Preschool in the Valley does not transport students. Transportation of students is always provided by parents. Preschool in the Valley does not own any vehicles. Parents should inform the preschool director and classroom teacher about alternative child pick ups using the Alternative Pick up Form or emailing both director and classroom teacher.

### Preschool Student Arrival/Dismissal

Arrival/Dismissal – Parents may use the carline or park and walk their children to their classrooms. For morning programs, back doors open at 9:00am. For dismissal, back doors open at 11:50am. For afternoon programs, front doors open at 12:00pm. For dismissal, front doors open at 2:50pm.

### Carline Service

Parents may drive around to the back parking lot for arrival or dismissal. All cars must post an 8 ½ x 11" sign in the passenger side window with child's name on it, printed in bold lettering that can be read at a distance. The first car in line should pull all the way to the end of the playground fence. Parents should not get out of the car. If you need to enter the building, park the car in the designated lot first. The carline service is offered at 9:00 - 9:15am and 11:45 - 12:00pm for dismissal.

**Please note that if a parent is late for pickup (after 12:00pm sharp), the child will be sent to extended day care and will be charged the hourly rate.**

### Clothing

Our day includes outdoor play, so make sure your child is in play clothes, even if the weather is iffy. Children should wear clothing that is appropriate, comfortable, and promotes independence in the restroom (no zippers). Sneakers or other rubber-soled shoes prevent slipping and are safer than flip-flops, Crocs, or sandals. Please consider that wood mulch from the playground gets into open shoes which often makes preschoolers upset and uncomfortable. An emergency change of clothing, socks, and underwear should be brought to the school in a labeled Ziploc bag. Please label all outerwear. When the weather changes, please transition the type of clothing available to your child in the Ziploc bag.

### Calendar

A yearly calendar is distributed to parents. This calendar contains dates and information regarding all school events and school closing dates. The school calendar is also posted on our website at [www.preschoolinthevalley.com](http://www.preschoolinthevalley.com) and in the preschool hallway.

### School Bags

All children must bring a school bag, a lunch bag, and a water bottle to school each day. All new students are provided at no cost a school bag and snack bag at visitation before the start of school. If a returning student needs new bags they are available for sale. Contact the preschool director to purchase new bags. The use of backpacks is not recommended.

### Photo Release

Parents are given the photo release form before the start of school. The school office maintains the list of any child whose photograph may not be used for school promotion.

### E-Mail Address Release

Parents are given the e-mail release form before the start of school. The school office maintains the list of any family whose e-mail may not be distributed to other families in the school. It is expected that the school, staff, and parents will use any family contact information, including e-mail for school-related communication only.

## **F. Curriculum Objectives**

Our curriculum objectives are based on providing our students with the following opportunities:

*To know themselves as persons with strengths and weaknesses*

- Having the ability to use body and mind to do many things
- Developing motor skills and learning to control body movement
- Having systematic experiences with math and language activities, learning the vocabulary and information for science, social studies, history, and literature in ways appropriate to the age and developmental skills of the learner

*To know the balance of independence and interdependence*

- Developing a degree of independence and self-confidence appropriate and reasonable for the age
- Developing an appreciation for home, school, church, and community, recognizing their responsibility as well as their dependence on others

*To know themselves as part of a group*

- Making and enjoying friends
- Finding pleasure in giving and receiving
- Learning to recognize the needs and feelings of others
- Learning courteous and thoughtful behavior which comes from within
- Learning to think before acting
- Learning to use words to express feelings and solve problems
- Appreciating and sharing their own cultural or ethnic heritage while learning to accept and appreciate the heritage of others
- Learning to share responsibility for the care of the world we live in, as a steward of God's gifts and co-owner of the resources God has given us to share

### *To know themselves as children of God*

- Accepting God as Creator and sustainer, revealed through creation, through Jesus Christ, and through the church community
- Participating in the life and work of the church, now and in the future

Our curriculum objectives include identifiable and measurable goals in each of the following areas.

#### Language and listening skills

- Each child will hear grammatically correct language used by teachers and will be engaged in individual and group activities to develop listening skills and use of language.
- Vocabulary building will be part of every activity with new words introduced in a context which gives meaning and understanding.
- Each child will participate in exercises to develop concepts of color, size, shape, position, location, relative number terms, relative weight and sizes, classification skills and substance,

#### Math skills

- Each child will be encouraged to sort, classify, and measure during both planned and unplanned activities in the school day.
- In order to provide understanding of math concepts and skill in solving problems, each child will be given many opportunities for concrete experiences with math, using objects which can be touched, moved, and manipulated.

#### Science and the natural world

- Each child will have opportunity and encouragement to explore the world around us.
- Each child will be encouraged to use the scientific method of discovery identify the problem, set up and test the hypothesis, interpret the findings, reach a conclusion, and experiment further to test the conclusion.

### Health concepts (nutrition, exercise, safety)

- Each student will be introduced to eating a healthy snack and balanced diet.
- Students will be given daily opportunity for large motor development at gym and recess and understanding of playground rules
- Basic fire safety will be discussed and fire drills rehearsed. • Basic hygiene will be taught, modeled and practiced.

### Creative Art

- Each child will have the opportunity to manipulate, explore, and create with a variety of art materials.
- Each child will be encouraged to create from his/her feelings and observations rather than from models provided by a teacher.

### Music

- Each child will have opportunities to hear many kinds of music and to sing, move, relax, or respond in other ways to music.
- Musical activities will be used to teach concepts, reinforce learning, and develop skills in addition to enjoying music for its own sake.

### Dramatic Play

- Each child will be encouraged to play both informally in learning centers and outdoors and more formally in story time and group activities.
- Each child will have opportunities to use puppets, costumes, and other props to identify with people, times, and places in a make-believe world.

### Motor development

- Each child will have opportunity to develop motor skills through use of appropriate equipment and will be observed by teachers who can encourage and supervise development of these skills.
- If a child shows signs of difficulty with motor development the teacher will contact parents to discuss concerns and parents will be given resources for professional testing and remedial work.

### Social skills

- Each child will be helped to relate with others in ways that are fair and satisfying for all.
- Rules for living together in the classroom will be based on biblical principles of peace and justice and will be taught and enforced in ways that help children internalize them as guiding principles.

### Spiritual concepts

- Each child will hear Bible stories, verses and concepts appropriate for the age and taught in stories, songs, games, dramatic activities, and other ways that make the stories meaningful in the here and now.
- Everyday experiences will be interpreted in ways consistent with the theological position of the church.

### Sense of self in relationship to God and others

- Each child will know his/her name and information about self and family.
- Each child will have opportunity to develop gifts and talents individually as well as leaning to work within the group.
- Each child will be helped to learn appropriate behavior for a variety of situations.
- Each child will have positive reinforcement to help him/her feel capable and lovable.
- Each child will be able to verbalize the concept "God loves me."

## **G. Preparing Your Child for Separation**

The process of separation occurs in all phases of human life. Separation experiences require individuals to leave the familiar and move to the unfamiliar. At times, this movement may create feelings of loss or anxiety.

Starting school is rarely a child's first separation experience. Young children learn about separation in the routines of daily life. Going to sleep, moving from one part of the house to another, or watching a parent leave for work are all examples of separation. Many children have successfully stayed with a babysitter, relative or neighbor. Some children have attended playgroups, Sunday school or birthday parties without parents.

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to give your child a kiss or hug, say good bye, and leave. This brief transition offers children a strong message of confidence in their ability to cope. Once parents leave the classroom, teachers will interact with children and help them settle into an activity of choice.

It is our school policy to contact parents if a child cries for an extended period of time or is not comforted by staff members. During the first or second week of school, plan to be available via home, work or cell phone. This will facilitate our ability to contact you if necessary.

The school director is available to work with families who experience unusual separation difficulties. Individual plans will be developed to help children or parents.

How children deal with early separation experiences will affect their ability to cope with challenges later in life. The following suggestions offer ways you can make the separation process easier.

### *Be honest about leaving:*

Parents may be tempted to leave children without saying good-bye. Assure your child that you will return shortly. Some children like to know what parents will do during the school session. You might emphasize specific tasks such as making beds, making telephone calls, doing laundry, volunteering or working.

### *Help your child know what to expect:*

Young children like to know what a new situation will be like. From time to time, drive past the school and remind your child that this will be his/her new school. Explain what kind of activities the school day includes. Children look forward to playing on the playground, painting, building with blocks, singing, eating snacks, and listening to stories. Assure your child that the teacher will take good care of him/her.

### *Permit the use of security objects (for a time):*

Some preschoolers find comfort in bringing a favorite stuffed animal, doll or photograph in their book bag. Encourage your child to show these special objects to the teachers. Shortly, these objects are likely to remain in the book bag.

*Expect some rough spots:*

It is not unusual for children to cry, whine, or cling when they return from school. Some preschoolers may return to younger behaviors such as thumb sucking, or wetting. Keep in mind that children use extra energy to behave and cooperate at school. They may need to fall apart in the safety of home and family. If such problems are regarded as temporary signs of the separation process, these behaviors are likely to disappear after a couple of weeks at school

*Share your concerns*

Our staff regards parents as partners in the learning process. If you are worried about your child's adjustment to school, please ask the teacher to call you. Many parents are surprised to hear that their child is happy and making a good adjustment. This knowledge may permit you to relax and worry less.

*Books about Starting School:*

Many young children enjoy hearing stories about other children's early school experiences. Parents may wish to read one or more of the following picture books. These selections are available at area book stores and libraries:

The Berentstein Bears go to School, J. & S. Berenstein

I don't want to go to school, E. Bram

Will I have a friend?, M. Cohen

Meatball, R. Hoffman

Come with me to Nursery School, E. Hurd

Willy Bear, M. Kantrowitz

My Nursery School, H. Rockwell

What Mary Jo shared, J. Udry

Timothy goes to school, R. Wells

Bety's first day at Nursery School, B. Wolde

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