Triangle Grace Preschool

Handbook

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Triangle Grace Preschool Handbook

Mission Statement

Triangle Grace Preschool supports the whole child and their family in a gentle Christian environment using the principles of Conscious Discipline and a play-based approach to education.

I. PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of Triangle Grace Preschool is:

- To provide a Christian atmosphere where our children can grow and develop at their own level of maturity and ability.
- To offer parents an opportunity to work with their own and others' children in a school setting and to provide an atmosphere where the parent can become an active part of the child's learning.
- To lay a sound foundation for social and spiritual growth.
- To foster the development of motor, intellectual, emotional, and social skills, each skill being equally important.
- To foster the development of these skills with a "learning through play and experience" approach.

II. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of Triangle Grace Preschool are:

- Using the principles of *Conscious Discipline®* we strive to create a gentle environment in which parents can work with their own and others' children under the guidance of a trained teacher who brings consistency to the program.
- To provide you and your child with opportunities to learn and grow in a loving and encouraging atmosphere. Research and experience indicate that young children learn and develop best in small groups with hands-on opportunities.
- To operate a school at a reasonable cost consistent with the maintenance of a quality program.
- To provide the community with a not-for-profit program for the benefit of young children and their families.
  ***Conscious Discipline® is a comprehensive self-regulation program that integrates social-emotional learning and discipline. (http://consciousdiscipline.com)

III. ADMINISTRATION

- **Triangle Grace Church Session**
  Triangle Grace Preschool is an entity of Triangle Grace Church. Ultimate oversight of the school lies with the session.
- **Triangle Grace Preschool Board**
  Policy decisions about the school are made by a committee (drawn from church members and former preschool parents), chairperson and/or co-chairs, director, Director of Children's Ministries of Triangle Grace Church and a teacher representative. The Triangle Grace Preschool Board meets regularly year-round.
- **Director**
  The director reports to the Triangle Grace Preschool Board year-round. The Director is on-site Monday through Friday.
- **Staff Members**
  Staff members are hired by the school and the church to be responsible for the educational development and well-being of the children. The adjustment and development of a child are matters of private concern between the child's parents and the child's teacher. Staff members are responsible to and work in conjunction with the
  Director.

IV. PARENT PARTICIPATION

1. Classroom Participation

Set up a regular time with the teacher to volunteer in the classroom and/or sign up to help with special classroom/school events. Our school enjoys celebrating your child's birthday. Coordinating with your teacher, plan to come to class on or close to that date. If your child has a summer birthday, please discuss a "birthday day" with the teacher.

2. Snack Time

All children bring their own water bottles labeled with their name. If your child is in our preschool program, please pack a nutritious snack for your child. If your child is in our 2-year-old class, parents may be asked to provide a nutritious snack for the whole class on a rotating schedule.

Snack suggestions are listed below:

Drink-WATER ONLY

Food-fresh fruit pieces (apples, oranges, bananas, pears, strawberries, cantaloupe, watermelon), unsweetened cereal, muffins, bagels, quick breads without nuts, string cheese, cheese cubes, crackers (Goldfish, graham, Ritz, animal, etc), pretzels, vanilla wafers, raw vegetable strips (carrots, cucumbers, celery).

Triangle Grace is a peanut free school. Parents of students with food allergies are responsible for providing an alternative snack if necessary and/or working with the classroom teacher for a safe solution.

3. Parent Volunteer Positions:

Each year, a parent must fulfill a job volunteering to help with a special activity during the school year. Areas to volunteer may include the following:

- Room Parent (Includes Staff Appreciation)
- Picture Orders
- Scholastic Book Orders
- Garden Committee
- Adopt an outdoor classroom or area on church grounds.
- Playground Crew
- Fundraising Committee
- Prayer Team

Signups will be through the website "Signup Genius". You will also receive email reminders throughout the year.

4. Field Trip Responsibilities

- Every parent will drive his/her child or decide with another parent to take his/her child on the field trips. Sign a blanket permission form at the beginning of the school year.
- Triangle Grace Preschool reserves the right to cancel any field trip.
- Occasionally provide payment for your child if additional fees are required. The field trip budget amount is only used for enrolled children. Parents, siblings, friends, and grandparents will be charged to attend field trips.
- If there is an additional fee at the venue, parents, siblings, friends, and grandparents will be charged to attend field trips.

V. NON-CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION

1. Orientation

In late summer, you will be notified of the date and time of the MANDATORY parent orientation meeting. General policies and procedures will be explained, and volunteer opportunities will be discussed. The teachers will be introduced and be available to discuss questions and concerns. It is recommended that children not attend this meeting.

2. Parent/Teacher Conferences

Individual teacher conferences are scheduled in the fall (telephone or face to face conferences) and late winter (face to face conference) for school classes. Please remember it is difficult and often inappropriate to discuss your concerns with the teacher during the school day (including just before and after school). Other appointments may be scheduled with or by the teacher or Director as desired or as necessary.

3. Helping Your Child Adjust

Approach your child's school experience POSITIVELY! Focus on the exciting things to be learned and the new friends to be made. It is usually best NOT to remain with your child; leave promptly after a kiss and a smile. Let the teacher know if your child is showing signs of unhappiness or if a problem occurs which may affect the child's behavior. There may be days when your child does not want to attend, but it is best to stay with his/her routine. Continue to be positive during these times. If there is a problem, it usually works out in a few days!

VI. DISCIPLINE PROGRAM

Conscious Discipline is a comprehensive self-regulation program that integrates social-emotional learning and discipline. (http://consciousdiscipline.com). Our teachers incorporate "The School Family" model into their classrooms and throughout the school.

- The School Family builds connection between families and schools, teachers and teachers, teachers and students, and students and students to insure the optimal development of all.
- The School Family is created through routines, rituals and structures.

At Triangle Grace we recognize that part of what preschoolers learn at school is how to get along well with others. This includes learning positive behaviors and that as part of the learning process mistakes will be made. Therefore, developmental stages are considered when reviewing unacceptable behaviors.

A child who exhibits unacceptable behavior will first be redirected into positive behavior by gaining his/her attention and eye contact. Should redirection be unsuccessful in terminating the unacceptable behavior, the child will be directed to the Safe Place for self-regulation, such a break will be utilized at the sole discretion of the teacher. If the child does not respond to redirection, the Safe Place or a break; or if the child is a threat to other children, the teacher or if the child is a serious disruption to the classroom, the following steps will be taken:

1. A conference between the parents, the teacher(s) and the Director will be called with written documentation of the problem(s) and the action plan to address those problems created at the meeting.
2. The teacher and/or the director will send a letter to the parents two weeks after this initial conference informing the parents of improvements or regressions.
3. The teacher will be in contact with the Director.

4. A follow-up conference will be held not more than four weeks after the first meeting should the child's behavior not improve.
5. Every reasonable effort will be made to resolve the situation within the context of the school; however, the school reserves the right to dismiss the child should these efforts, in the sole discretion of the Triangle Grace Preschool Board, fail.

When children learn self-regulation, they learn to be loving and kind to one another and most behavioral challenges are minimized.

It is our desire to work closely with each family. Our teachers and Director are available and will help in any way possible. If you desire pastoral counseling, our pastors will be happy to meet with you.

VII. Special Needs/Developmental Issues

If a teacher believes that one of her students may need professional evaluation, the teacher, after consulting with the Director, will document the child's behavior over a period of at least two weeks and review the documentation with the Director. If the Director and teacher believe professional evaluation is necessary, they will meet with the parents to discuss the matter and, if necessary, share the documentation with the parents. After receiving the parents' input, the director and teacher will propose a preliminary plan of action including, if necessary, retention by the parents of an appropriate health care professional to evaluate the child. The parents shall contact the health care professional within one week of the meeting and schedule an evaluation appointment as soon as possible. The parents will promptly notify the director of the date of the appointment. The parents are responsible for paying all costs associated with any professional evaluation or related services.

In cases where professional evaluation is required and during the interval while awaiting the evaluation results, Triangle Grace Preschool, at the discretion of the Director, may attempt to accommodate the child if this can be done without imposing an undue burden (e.g., a significant expense, disruption) or safety threat to the school program.

When a professional health care evaluation (including classroom recommendations and related information) is completed, the evaluation and related information shall be promptly provided to the Director and will be placed in the student's school file. At the Director's discretion, a summary by the health care professional of the evaluation and recommendations may suffice. Once the evaluation and related information is received by the school, the director and teacher involved will review the information. The evaluation and related information and school documentation will be confidential, subject to review only by appropriate school staff and officials.
Following any evaluation review, the Director will determine if the school is in a position to retain the child in the school program, with or without modifications, considering the impact on the school program. If additional staff assistance or other accommodation is required to serve the child, the parents may be required to seek and/or pay for such additional assistance or accommodation. In some cases, Triangle Grace Preschool may not be able to accommodate the needs of the child.

If the parents choose not to release the health professional evaluation and related information, to pay for necessary additional assistance or accommodation upon request, or to comply with any other related requirement or request, the Director reserves the right to discontinue the child's enrollment.

If the director determines the child cannot be accommodated or that the child must discontinue enrollment at the school, the parents may request review of such determination by the Triangle Grace Preschool Board. To do so, the parents must submit, within seven days of the determination, a written request for review to the preschool Board and provide a copy of such request to the Director. The decision of the Triangle Grace Preschool Board shall be final.

VIII. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. Security

Arrival and Dismissal

The director will greet you at 8:55 at the Welcome Center entrance to the church, allowing folks with strollers or handicap needs easier access to the building.

Doors/entrances are locked at 9:15 am for safety purposes.

To gain access to the school after this time, enter the preschool entrance where the camera and buzzer system will be utilized. You will be asked to state your name before being buzzed in.

At the end of the day, the doors to the Welcome Center entrance will reopen at 11:55 am and the director/staff member will greet you.

Helping Hand Procedure

There will be those days when one child is sick, an appointment is scheduled, a meeting or work event beckons, mobility issues happen, siblings multiply and other situations where you just need a helping hand.

Contact your teachers and director and write **Helping Hand**.

Arrive at 9:15 am

***other arrangements may be made in advance

Drive through the second tiered parking lot and continue around the curve until you reach the HELPING HAND area near the Welcome Center ramp.

- Park in a designated spot with the bright yellow sign.
- Please get out of the car and assist your child out of the vehicle.
- Check that the child has following items: water bottle and snack, backpack (if applicable).
- Stand with your child (ren) at the end of the Welcome Center ramp.

Either your child's teacher or the director will greet you and your child then escort your child to class. At the end of the day, park in the same designated area and your child's teacher or director will bring your child to you.

<u>We ask that you not bring anyone sick into the building or leave children unattended in the vehicle.</u>

"Triangle Grace Preschool Security Codes"

- "Code Weather"- all staff and children will meet in the back hallway and bathrooms
- "Code Yellow"- There is a lock down as there is something that is going on outside the building. Everyone remains in the building
- "Code Red"- There is a lock down and someone is in the building. Everyone locks their classrooms and offices and remains there until further notice.

B. Background Checks

We perform background checks on our parents because they serve within the classroom. Your registration fee covers the cost of two background checks for the parents of the enrolled child. If there is another adult who will assist within the classroom (aunt, uncle, grandparent, and/or childcare provider) you will have to pay an additional fee to cover additional background checks.

C. Health and Sickness Policy

Triangle Grace Preschool requires all children to have "full, up-to-date vaccinations according to current Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines" for enrollment. A child who has not been immunized and/or has not turned in a completed Triangle Grace Preschool Medical Form will not be admitted to Triangle Grace Preschool. There will be no exceptions to this policy. All students must submit a medical form each year.

If your child has a medical concern that may require *emergency attention*, you must submit both a signed Medical Action Plan from your child's doctor as well as the Triangle Grace Preschool emergency medical form before the child may attend school.

Triangle Grace Preschool is a peanut/nut aware school. Parents of students with food allergies are responsible for providing an alternative snack if necessary. Please visit: http://www.peanutaware.com/awayfromhome.html **for more information.**

If your child needs medication during the school day, it is your responsibility to administer this medication. Neither the teacher nor the assisting parent will administer medication. If your child is on medication that may affect his behavior, please note this on the daily log.

The teacher reserves the right to send a child home from school or not admit him to class on any given day. If in doubt, please call the teacher prior to school as this might save you an unnecessary trip. If your child will be absent, please notify your teacher.

The **Wellness Guidelines for Triangle Grace Preschool**

DO NOT bring your child(ren) to school with…

- Fever in the last 24 hours (temperature over 99.5) or chills
  ***All children must be fever free for a full 24 hours (without medication) prior to joining class.
- Productive cough and/or green or yellow nasal discharge.
  ***A clear runny nose is okay, a colored discharge is not.
- Questionable rashes (not excema)
- Vomiting more than twice in the previous 24 hours.
- Diarrhea or increase in loose stools.
- Chickenpox, mumps, or measles
- Pink Eye or conjunctivitis with discharge
- Any contagious disease

The teacher reserves the right to send a child home from school or not admit him to class on any given day. If in doubt, please call the teacher prior to school as this might save you an unnecessary trip. If your child will be absent, please notify your teacher.

Temporary exclusion is recommended when the child has any of the following conditions:

- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities.
- The illness results in a need for care that is greater than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
- An acute change in behavior - this could include lethargy/lack of responsiveness, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, or having a quickly spreading rash.

D. Diaper Changing Procedure

Children in the 2-year-old classes who wear diapers or pull-ups will be changed on an as needed basis by the teacher. Please be sure to keep spare diapers in your child's backpack.

Children in our 3's, 4's and 5's classes must be toilet trained and diaper free. However, toilet accidents do happen. These incidents are handled on a case-by-case basis and we encourage parents to talk with the teacher if you have any concerns.

E. Emergency Procedures

A first aid kit and CPR reference guide are kept in each classroom and taken on all field trips. If your child becomes ill during the day, you will be contacted and asked to pick up your child as soon as possible. If your child needs immediate medical attention, emergency assistance will be requested by calling 911 and you will be notified as soon as possible. Parents of children with special medical considerations should contact the Director to schedule an appointment to educate Triangle Grace Preschool personnel about the child's specific needs. Remember to **update your emergency contact form when information changes.**

G. School Operation Policies

Our classes meet 9:00 am – 12:00 pm.

- The 2-year-old class meets Tuesday/Thursday and Monday/Wednesday.
- The 3-year-old class meets Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday
- 4 and 5-year-old class meets Monday-Thursday

Please contact your child's teacher and Director if your child is going to be absent.

1. Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Arrival: School begins at 9:00 a.m. for all classes. Please do not bring your child to school before then as the teacher is preparing the classroom and will not be available to greet your child. If your child is riding home with someone other than yourself, let your teacher/director know. We DO NOT take the child's word in this important matter, nor do we allow a child to leave with people other than those approved if the teacher has not been notified.

Dismissal: School ends at 12:00 p.m. for all classes. If your child is enrolled in one of our classes, a parent/adult must accompany your child out of the school building. If your child is riding home with someone other than a parent, the teacher will release the child only to the person designated by the parent/guardian (see Arrival Procedures).

2. School Closings and Delays

For weather-related events, Triangle Grace Preschool will be CLOSED if the Durham Public Schools are closed. If DPS is closed for non-weather-related events, has a delay or multiple consecutive closings, the director will make the decision whether to open. Email will be used to notify parents of closings and early dismissals.

Triangle Grace Preschool will not make up days or offer a tuition rebate because of school closings.

H. Non-Conformance Policies

In the rare event of nonconformance, Triangle Grace Preschool has established, and will enforce, the following policies:

Late Tuition Payment:

If tuition is paid monthly, it is due on the 15th of each month. If the payment is not received by the 15th, a late fine will be assessed. Payment must be made by the 15th, or the child will not be re-admitted until the tuition and late payment are paid in full.

In case of short-term difficulties, parents are urged to make private arrangements with the Director.

If tuition is outstanding for 30 days, the contract with the school will be terminated.

Returned Checks:

A fee will be charged for all returned checks, consistent with the fees charged to Triangle Grace Preschool by the bank. All future payments must then be paid by money order payable to Triangle Grace Preschool.

I. Channels of Communication

Parent concern about class/classroom activity:

Triangle Grace Preschool teachers strive every day to work closely with parents to ensure that both the child and the parents are having a great experience at preschool. Triangle Grace Preschool asks parents to immediately address any concerns about the classroom **with their child's teacher**. If, however, the parent feels that a concern is too sensitive to discuss directly with the teacher, then they should request a meeting with the Director in writing, stating the nature of the concern, so that the Director can be prepared to address any concerns at that first meeting. If the parent reasonably believes that his/her concerns have not been adequately addressed by the Teacher and/or the Director, then the parent should contact the preschool Board Chair with his/her concerns.

Parent concern regarding registration, enrollment, or contract commitment:

Any concerns about the foregoing topics should be addressed directly to the Director of Triangle Grace Preschool. If the parent reasonably believes that his/her concern has not been adequately addressed by the meeting with the Director, then he/she should take his/her concern to the Triangle Grace Preschool Board Chair. If the parent reasonably believes that his/her concern has not been adequately addressed by the meeting with the Triangle Grace Preschool Board Chair, then he/she should take his/her concern to the Triangle Grace Church Session for resolution thereof.

J. Enrollment Policy

Triangle Grace Preschool Board has set the following priority for admission into the school:

1. Returning students
2. Siblings of current students
3. Church members
4. General public

Triangle Grace Preschool will have an in-house registration day early in the second semester, for returning students and siblings of current students. Please see "Tuition and Fees" for details on enrollment and/or waiting list fees.

K. Visitor Policy

Please talk to the teacher in advance about the best time for an adult family member to visit your child's classroom. They must stop by the Director's office, sign in, and receive a badge.

L. Clothing Policy

Please dress your child comfortably for play. Clothes that are easily handled during bathroom time are appreciated by the teacher and child. Shoes with non-slip bottoms should be worn by all children to avoid accidents. Slick-soled shoes and flip-flops are dangerous on tiled floors and the playground. Mark all outer clothing for identification. We use washable paints and smocks but not all colors come out of all fabrics. Please dress your child in washable clothing. Please send a change of clothing (including socks and underwear) in the bag provided for your child. A reminder to change to seasonal clothing will be given.

M. Lost and Found Policy

Teach your child to recognize his/her own things. Please label all outerwear, backpacks, and items brought in at the request of the teacher. Check with your child's teacher if an item is lost.

N. Referral Forms

If you need a referral form for your child's application/admission to another school, please be advised of the following:

- Each teacher will complete ***one form per child per year*** at no charge. You must include a pre-addressed, stamped envelope for the form to be returned. Please allow **ONE WEEK** for the form to be completed, plus mailing time.
- Each additional form (beyond the one free per year) may be requested at a cost of $25 per form, payable directly to the teacher at the time of the request. Pre-addressed, stamped envelopes for the forms to be returned and one-week turn-around time are also requested.

O. Request for Legal Intervention Policy

Legal situations such as marital separation, divorce, child custody, etc. will not involve the Triangle Grace Preschool staff unless the mental or physical well-being of a student is in jeopardy.

If testimony from a staff member is required, the preferable format would be:
1) A notarized statement, 2) an audio taped interview, 3) a videotaped interview.

Should it become necessary for a staff member to appear in the courtroom, the attorney requesting the appearance will be responsible for all necessary expenses including travel, lodging, meals, salary payment for the time away from school, reimbursement for a substitute to fill the vacated position, and any other expenses incurred by the staff member. The Director is available to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about these policies and procedures.

P. Lunch Bunch Procedure and Sign Up

Lunch Bunch is an optional after school program available to students of Triangle Grace Preschool classes (3 years and above). Students participating in the program bring their own lunch and stay for an extra hour. Pick up time for lunch bunch is 1 p.m. Each month an email invitation will be sent through "Signup Genius" to register your child. Please indicate the dates that your child will attend lunch bunch and pay via invoice. Refunds are only given in the event of school absence or cancellation.

Please follow these guidelines when sending in lunch:

1. Include an icepack if perishable items are included.
2. Provide napkins and any utensils needed (plastic is fine).
3. We will not allow sharing of food due to potential food allergies.

IX. PARENT - SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

A. Email

Email is our primary method of communication. Please check your email regularly for information and updates from teachers and the director.

B. Daily Log Sheets

A daily log sheet is posted on a clipboard beside each classroom door every day. If someone other than yourself picks up your child or you would like the teacher to know something pertinent about the day (alternate phone number, medication that may affect behavior, etc.), please make these notations on this log. This is your morning communication channel with the teacher that will allow her to devote her attention to your child's needs as he or she arrives in the classroom.

C. Cubbies/Backpacks

Each child has his or her own "cubbie" that will accommodate the child's outerwear, completed projects, backpacks and all written communication to you from the school (including assisting schedules and monthly newsletters). **It is important that your child bring a backpack to school each day for transportation of his/her art projects and notices. Please check the backpack every school day since timely reminders may be inside and remove all items**. Please check with the Director before placing anything in student cubbies.
No items should be placed in cubbies without the Director's permission.

X. TUITION AND FEES

Tuition is calculated by the number of class sessions per year and divided into ten equal payments. One month's tuition is due on **May 15th** for all students to remain registered. This payment is **non-refundable** and must be submitted to hold your spot for the school year. After May 15th, the first payment is due with the supply fee and submitted with enrollment packet.

Tuition payment options

- The remaining total payment is due August 15.
- The remaining 9 payments are made August – April by the 15th of the month.

You will receive an invoice for payment and the option of setting up recurring tuition payments.

If you need a receipt for your tuition payment, please email the Director (alana.scott@trianglegracepreschool.org).

If for any reason the parent wishes to break the contract with Triangle Grace Preschool, a 60-day written notice must be sent to the Director. Again, no portion of this tuition payment will be refunded for holidays, absences, or school closings.

<u>Supply Fee:</u>
To accept the class placement, a **one-time non-refundable** supply fee is due and paid via invoice.

<u>Waiting List Fees</u>:
There is no fee to be placed on our waiting list.

XI. Fire Drill & Emergency Procedures

Fire Drill Procedures

1. When the fire alarm goes off, line up the children to the closest exit.
2. Count the children.
3. Check all bathrooms, closets, behind doors, etc. for all children.
4. Exit the building.
5. If you are missing a child, let the parent locate the child. The teacher should continue to get the children out of the building.
6. Count the children again.
7. Move the children as quickly as possible to the top parking lot on the south end of the property.
8. Count the children again.
9. The Director will check the building before joining the classes and call 911 if there is a fire.
10. Wait until you get word from the Director before entering back into the building.

Emergency Procedures

Poison Control Center – Push line 1, 2, or 3, then dial 1-800-848-6946

"Triangle Grace Preschool Security Codes"

- "Code Weather"- all staff and children will meet in the back hallway and bathrooms
- "Code Yellow"- There is a lock down as there is something that is going on outside the building. Everyone remains in the building
- "Code Red"- There is a lock down and someone is in the building. Everyone locks their classrooms and offices and remains there until further notice.

In case of serious medical emergency during school**:**

1. Push Line 1, 2 or 3, and then dial **911** with location information below.
2. Pull the child's emergency form from the preschool file located in the Directors office in room 106. This may contain information emergency personnel need.
3. Have someone contact the parents as soon as possible. (Phone numbers are also on the emergency form. Check the daily log for alternate numbers).

Triangle Grace Church
5001 Tudor Place
919-544-2872

Located off Hwy.54 near Spring Hill between Homestead Market and Woodcroft