

# **WESTMINSTER PRESCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK**



**2008-2009**

## PARENT HANDBOOK VERIFICATION

Parents, after reading the handbook please sign and return this page to a Preschool Staff person. This is due before the child attends the center. Please feel free to ask a teacher questions about any of the policies in the handbook.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Parent Handbook for Westminster Preschool. I agree to follow all policies outlined within.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of parent/guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Date

**Westminster Preschool**  
**2 West Hunter Street, P.O. Box 833**  
**Logan, Ohio 43138**  
**(740) 385-2242**

## INDEX

Welcome to Westminster Preschool. This handbook contains information regarding our preschool. It is very important that you read this handbook and keep it handy as long as your child is enrolled in our program. It will answer many questions you might have about Westminster Preschool.

### **PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS**

Westminster Preschool is an outreach program of the First Presbyterian Church. Starting our 27<sup>th</sup> year, our goal has been to help preschool children develop to their fullest potential in a child centered, developmentally appropriate learning environment. The staff of Westminster Preschool recognizes the importance of balanced growth for preschool children. Therefore, the curriculum provides daily opportunities to nurture mental, physical, emotional, and social development through a variety of creative experiences. It is our belief that the link between home and school is vitally important to the educational process. Parents will receive a monthly newsletter and calendar, which outline our weekly themes and provide important information. We hope that our program and the information that we provide will be a resource for parents in assisting them to understand the developmental needs of their preschool child. We are pleased that you have chosen to include Westminster Preschool as part of your child's early learning experiences.

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## **APPROPRIATE CLOTHING/SCHOOL GEAR**

Please send your child in comfortable, easy to clean play clothes. Your child will be using various art materials, playing on the floor, and be engaged in gross motor tasks which require ease of movement. Rubber soled shoes (NO cowboy boots, party shoes, or clogs) which tie or buckle help your child to use our gross motor equipment and negotiate our brick floors safely. Students wearing boots find it difficult to sit on the floor during group times. Clothing that your child can take off and put on all by him or herself for restroom use provides your child with the ability to be self-reliant. Pants with buttons and belts and overalls are too difficult for some children to manage. Preschool children experience a sense of accomplishment when they can do things independently. Please practice at home putting on and taking off jackets, coats, and sweaters. Again, roomy and easy to slip on items give your child a sense of accomplishment. Please label all outer clothing and backpacks or tote bags.

We ask that each child bring a backpack or tote bag to school every day so that he/she can easily carry treasures and important papers home from school. The backpack should be large enough to hold a piece of paper without folding it. It should be easy for your child to open and close by him/herself. Please take time each day to look in your child's backpack and discuss work that comes home. Also, look for a newsletter/calendar monthly. If you have not received a new one, see us!!

We ask that children leave all special treasures/toys at home, except on show and tell days which will be on the calendar. Our classroom is quite large and we would like to avoid the disappointment of individual toys being lost or broken while at school.

## **LICENSE**

The facility is licensed to operate legally by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. This license is posted in a conspicuous place for review.

A toll-free telephone number is listed on the facility's license and may be used to report a suspected violation of the licensing law or administrative rules. The licensing law and rules governing child care are available for review at the facility upon request.

The administrator and each employee of the facility is required, under Section 2151.421 of the Ohio revised Code, ORC to report their suspicions of child abuse or child neglect to the local children's services agency.

Any parent, custodian, or guardian of a child enrolled in the facility shall be permitted unlimited access to the facility during all hours of operation for the purpose of contacting his/her child, evaluating the care provided by the facility or evaluating the premises. Upon entering the premises, the parent or guardian shall notify the Administrator of his/her presence.

Rosters of the names and telephone numbers of the parents or guardians of the children attending the facility are available upon request. The parent roster will not include the name or telephone number of any parent who requests that his/her name or telephone number not be included.

The licensing inspection reports and complaint investigation reports for the current licensing period are posted in a conspicuous place in the facility for review.

The licensing record including compliance report forms, complaint investigation reports, and evaluation forms from the building and fire departments are available for review upon request from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

It is unlawful for the facility to discriminate in the enrollment of children upon the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, or disability in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 104Stat32,42 U.S. D. 12101etseq.

### **ADMISSIONS**

A child is considered enrolled in Westminster Preschool only after the registration fee and registration form have been received. Any change to this information must be communicated to the school immediately so that current information is always on file. This is for the safety of your child. A medical form signed by a physician or certified nurse practitioner is required to be submitted within 30 days of admission. The medical form must be current for the entire school year. A child enrollment and health information form must be completed on both sides and signed by the first day that the child attends school.

### **HOURS AND DAYS OF OPERATION**

Westminster Preschool will be in operation Monday - Wednesday - Friday from 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. and Tuesday - Thursday mornings from 9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. The school year begins the Tuesday after Labor Day and concludes after the second week in May.

three days without instructions from a physician.

### **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

Parents are encouraged to visit and participate in the program at Westminster Preschool. We have an "open door" policy on visitation. We request that parents not visit the first weeks of school to allow children to acclimate to preschool. Parents may wish to assist with field trips, special events, or simply be a part of the daily fun at preschool. Over the years, we have observed that when too many "Big People" are in the classroom, things can get overwhelming for the children. Therefore, if you plan on spending a day with us, we ask that you schedule your visit in advance so that no more than two extra adults are in the classroom at a time.

If a parent or staff member has a problem or concern at any time, it is recommended that the following chain of command be used until an answer or solution is found.

1. Child's teacher
2. Administrator
3. Pastor of First Presbyterian Church
4. Session of First Presbyterian Church

However, due to staff responsibilities and schedules, parents are asked to make appointments with staff when it is necessary to engage in lengthy conversations. Teachers want to be able to focus on you and your child at these times.

Please feel free to bring concerns up when they occur. Often they can be addressed when they are little problems, before they grow into bigger problems. Staff fully realizes that you trust us with your child and we want our relationship to be a positive one.

- Vomiting more than once or when accompanied by any other sign of illness
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing

Any child demonstrating signs of illness not listed above will be isolated and carefully observed for symptoms. The parent will be notified. If a child does not feel well enough to participate in the school activities, the parent will be called to pick up the child. Anytime a child is isolated, he/she will be kept within sight and hearing of a staff member. The cot and linens used will be washed and disinfected before being used again.

A sign beside the door will notify parents if children have been exposed to a communicable illness. Children will be readmitted to the school after at least 24 hours of being free of fever and other symptoms. If he/she is not symptom free, a doctor's note will be required stating that the child is not contagious.

**MEDICATIONS**

The school will administer medications to a child only after the parent completes a Request for Medication form. All proper sections must be completed and the medication handed to the teacher each day. Medications will be stored in a designated area inaccessible to children. Medications may NOT be stored in a child's cubby or bookbag. Prescription medications must be in their original container and administered in accordance to instructions on the label. Over the counter medications must also be administered in accordance to label instructions. If parents request any different dosages, a physician must provide written instructions on the Request for Medication form. Over the counter medications will not be administered for more than

Westminster Preschool will not be in session the following days: \*subject to change

September 11 & 12	Fair Days
November 11	Logan-Hocking Schools out
November 27, 28, & December 1	Thanksgiving Break
December 15-January 4	Christmas Break
January 19	Martin Luther King Day
February 13	Logan-Hocking Schools out
February 16	President's Day
April 6 - 10	Spring Break
May 14	Last Day of School for Tues./Thurs. Class - school day will end ½ hour early
May 15	Last Day of School for Mon./Wed./Fri. Classes - school day will end ½ hour early

**STAFF/CHILD RATIOS AND MAXIMUM GROUP SIZE**

Westminster Preschool will not exceed the state required ratios for programs which service preschool and school age children. Two qualified teachers will always be in the classroom to insure that the children are safely attended to. We are licensed to accommodate 22 preschool children and 5 school age children. Class sizes normally range from 20-23 children with two staff members present at all times.

**DAILY SCHEDULES**

Westminster Preschool will follow a daily schedule, as we believe that routines provide young children an element of comfort and reassurance that the day has a beginning and an end. However, the schedule will be flexible enough to provide adaptability when necessary but structured enough to provide predictability for the children. We want the children to view their school as a

safe and comforting place where they know what to expect and when to expect it.

A typical day for a three day a week preschool would include:

<u>A.M.</u>	<u>P.M.</u>	<u>Activity</u>
9:00-9:45,	12:00-12:45	Learning Centers/ Small Group Work*
9:45-9:50,	12:45-12:50	Clean Up Time
9:50-10:05,	12:50-1:05	Circle time
10:05-10:15,	1:05-1:15	Calendar
10:15-10:20,	1:15-1:20	Restroom Break/Wash Hands
10:20-10:35,	1:20-1:35	Snack Time
10:35-10:45,	1:35-1:45	Books/Manipulatives
10:45-11:00,	1:45-2:00	Movement
11:00-11:20,	2:00-2:20	Literature/Story time/ Review the Day
11:20-11:30,	2:20-2:30	Dismissal

A typical day for a two day a week preschool would include:

<u>A.M.</u>	<u>Activity</u>
9:00-10:00	Learning Centers/ Small Group Work*
10:00-10:05	Clean Up Time
10:05-10:20	Circle time
10:20-10:30	Restroom Break/Wash Hands
10:30-10:40	Snack Time
10:40-10:50	ABC Rug Time (We will transition to Books/Manipulatives)
10:50-11:05	Movement
11:05-11:20	Literature/Story time/ Review the Day
11:20-11:30	Dismissal

## **MANAGEMENT OF ILLNESSES**

Westminster Preschool provides children with a clean and healthy environment. However, we realize that children become ill from time to time. If this is your child's first group care experience, it is possible that he/she may experience more frequent illnesses at the beginning before his/her immune system becomes more active. We observe all children as they enter the room to quickly assess their general health. We ask that you not bring a sick child to school. They will be sent home!!! Please also plan ahead and have a back up care plan in place if you are not able to take time off from work/school.

A child with any of the following symptoms will be immediately isolated and discharged to the parent or emergency contact:

- Temperature of 100 degrees F, in combination with any other signs of illness
- Diarrhea (more than three abnormally loose stools within a 24 hour period)
- Severe coughing (causing the child to become red in the face or to make a whooping sound)
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Redness of the eye, obvious discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching
- Untreated skin patches, unusual spots or rashes
- Unusually dark urine or grey or white stools
- Stiff neck with an elevated temperature
- Evidence of untreated lice, scabies or other parasitic infestation

and periodic tornado drills. Should we need to evacuate due to fire or weather conditions, or the loss of power, heat or water to the center, our emergency destination is the Bowen House across the street. A sign will be posted on the Market Street Westminster House door if we evacuate to the Bowen House. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible to come to pick up their child. If a parent cannot be reached, we will contact the emergency contacts as listed on your child's enrollment information.

There is always one staff member present that has received training in First Aid/Communicable Diseases and CPR. In the case of a minor accident/injury, staff will administer basic first aid and TLC. If the injury would be more serious, first aid would be administered and the parents would be contacted immediately to assist in deciding an appropriate course of action. If any injury is life threatening, the EMS will be contacted, parents will be notified, and a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital with all available health records. Staff may not transport children in their vehicles. Only parents or EMS will transport.

An incident/injury form will be completed and given to the person picking up the child on the day of the incident/injury, if any of the following occur: the child has an illness, accident, or injury which requires first aid; the child receives a bump or blow to the head; the child has to be transported by emergency squad; or an unusual or unexpected event occurs which jeopardizes the safety of the child. If a child requires emergency transportation, the report shall be available within twenty-four hours after the incident occurs.

Children in a two day a week program will transition to the schedule of a three day a week program as the year progresses.

\* During small group time the class is divided into small groups, each with an adult leader. Group time lasts about 15 minutes depending on the activity. Group time provides children the opportunity for instructions in a wide variety of areas including the use of classroom materials, strengthening of general readiness skills such as color and shape recognition, counting, sorting/classifying tasks, and small motor tasks such as cutting, drawing and general art skills.

### **TUITION/FEES AND PAYMENT POLICIES**

Westminster Preschool provides an affordable, yet high quality private preschool experience for area children. Yearly tuition covers all of the costs involved in providing the services and materials needed to provide the quality instruction we have been proud to offer for many years.

Yearly tuition for the Monday-Wednesday-Friday classes is \$720.00 while the Tuesday-Thursday class is \$630.00. Three payment options are available to families: yearly payment paid once in August, three quarterly payments, or nine monthly installments. Quarterly tuition payments for all classes are due August 15, November 15 and February 15. Quarterly payments for the three day a week classes are \$240.00 each and the two day a week class are \$210.00 each. If a parent chooses to pay in monthly installments, each payment is due the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. The first tuition payment is due August 15 and the last payment is due

April 15. Monthly payments for the three day a week programs are \$80.00 while payments for the two day a week program are \$70.00. Yearly tuition includes days missed due to inclement weather and days your child is absent. The Federal Tax ID number is available upon request.

We prefer payment with checks. All checks are payable to Westminster Preschool. Please include the child's name on the lower left-hand corner (memo section) of the check. Tuition may be mailed to the school or placed in the tuition basket on the teacher's desk.

Late Pick Up Charges: If a parent realizes that circumstances beyond his/her control are going to delay pick up, a phone call is requested. This is important as many children fear they have been forgotten when parents do not arrive at their usual time. Parents or Caregivers who are late more than 3 times within the school year will be charged a late fee of \$1.00 per minute per child after 11:35 (A.M. Classes) or 2:35 (P.M. Class).

### **Registration Fee**

An annual, nonrefundable registration fee of \$35.00 is charged. This fee is for each child enrolled. A child is not considered enrolled until the registration fee is received.

### **Withdrawals**

When a child is enrolled in Westminster Preschool, it is for the entire school year (September through May). Please notify us in writing two weeks prior to withdrawing your child from school.

### **Inclement Weather**

On rare occasions, it may be necessary to close school

"Pinwheels" made with tortillas spread with cream cheese or peanut butter and jelly  
Muffins  
Peanut butter sandwich (½)

### **Drinks:**

Milk  
100% juices only  
Apple Cider (must be pasteurized)

One week prior to your child's snack day, please notify us and let us know what you are planning on sending. We are now required to post a "menu" of what is being served for one week at a time.

### **BIRTHDAYS**

Birthday certificates will be given to each child on the day he/she attends school which is closest to his/her birthday. On the last day of school, all children with summer birthdays will be honored.

Children may bring birthday party invitations to school to hand out *only* if invitations are provided for all children in the class.

### **ACCIDENTS/EMERGENCIES**

Westminster Preschool has devised several procedures to follow in the event that an emergency would occur while a child is in the center's care. In the event of a fire or tornado, staff would follow the written instructions posted in each classroom, describing emergency evacuation routes, and the procedures to be followed to assure that children have arrived at the designated spot. In order to prepare children for the unlikely need to evacuate, the center does conduct monthly fire drills,

Only full strength (one hundred percent) fruit or vegetable juice shall meet the fruit or vegetable requirement for snacks.

When your child is asked to bring snack, please send simple snacks from the suggested snack list along with one gallon of milk or juice. If a dairy snack is chosen, it must be sent with fruit juice. If a fruit snack is chosen, it must be sent with milk. Loose snacks like pretzels should be put in a snack size baggie for individual use. Please do not send individual juice boxes or individual drinks. The center will provide cups and napkins.

The following is our list of suggested snacks and drinks. These are items which we know children like to eat at snack time and follow the state guidelines. If you have other ideas or suggestions, please consult one of the teachers.

**Snacks:**

- Peanut Butter crackers (2-3)
- Popcorn (½ cup)
- Graham crackers (1-2)
- Cheese and crackers
- Pretzels (5-10)
- American Cheese - 1 slice
- String Cheese
- Juice stick popsicles (must be 100% juice)
- Trail mix (no nuts please)
- Individual yogurt, applesauce, or fruit cups
- Washed, cut up fruit (bananas are a favorite - only 1/2 per child needed or grapes - 5) or vegetables (kids like carrots, 2-3)
- Small boxes of raisins
- Summer sausage or meat sticks

due to poor weather conditions. If the Logan-Hocking schools close due to inclement weather, Westminster Preschool will close. *However, if the Logan-Hocking Schools operate on a delay, we will remain open with regular operating hours.* Watch television station Channel 6 or listen to radio station WLGN 98.3 for information about school closings. We will not make up snow days at the end of the year as sometimes the public schools are required to do. Yearly tuition includes days missed due to inclement weather.

**SUPERVISION POLICY**

A major responsibility of the staff is to ensure the health and safety of each child entrusted in our care. Staff persons are alert to the safety needs of their children, anticipate possible hazards, and take necessary appropriate precautionary and preventative measures.

**Arrival/Departure**

To insure that each child arrives and departs safely from our school, the following safety practices will be implemented. We are responsible for your child after his/her arrival at our facility and until we have released him/her to you or the person(s) you have authorized at the end of the day. Please assist us by following the following guidelines.

1. Please phone the church office (385-2242) prior to the beginning of a school day to inform us if your child is ill or will not be attending school. Please advise us in writing if your child will miss school due to vacation or time away from school.

2. Parents need to park on the street to escort their child into the classroom. Parents or childcare providers are

required to bring their child (children) into the classroom and assure that a staff member is aware of the child's (children's) presence. Any special messages, special pick up notes, etc. are to be given to the teacher. Children may not be dropped off at the entrance of the building or be sent outside alone.

3. At dismissal time, the children will be dismissed from the Westminster House door (on the north side of the building next to the alley).

4. Parents in vehicles are asked to form a line in the alley beside the Preschool facing Market Street. Preschool teachers will dismiss children to the cars nearest the alley first. Parents are asked to get out of their cars and escort their child from the Westminster House door closest to Market Street and proceed to their vehicle. After the first group of children are safely in their seat belts and the vehicles have left the alley, the next group of cars should move up in the alley and continue the same process.

5. Children of parents who are parked on the street or who are walking will be dismissed to their parents or authorized person from the Westminster House door.

6. We ask that all children be closely supervised after their release from us during the dismissal process to insure safety.

7. Parents who pick up their child before the regular dismissal times will be asked to make contact with a teacher before departure.

### **Supervision of Preschoolers**

At no time will a child be left unattended. Staff will

the door left open so that a teacher can work with the child and help the child to regain self control.

If a child demonstrates behavior that requires frequent attention from the preschool staff, the parents of the child will be contacted for a parent conference to discuss the child's behavior.

If a situation arises in which a child is consistently endangering himself/herself, peers, or staff, or constant misbehavior is requiring one on one attention of preschool staff, it may be necessary to disenroll the child. Every attempt will be made to work with parents to correct the behavior of a child who is having difficulty. However, the safety of children is always our primary concern. The administrator will be in communication with parents prior to this occurring. Specifications of Rule 22 apply to all employees of the center.

### **SNACKS**

Periodically each child will have the opportunity to bring snack to school for the entire class. Notice of when your child is to bring snack will be on the monthly calendar. We will comply with the guidelines of our licensing agency, The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services which are as follows:

A snack shall provide nutritional value in addition to calories and contain at least one food from two of the four basic food groups. The basic food groups are:

- (a) Meat/Meat alternate
- (b) Bread/grains
- (c) Fruit/vegetable
- (d) Dairy

Children are limited when:

- They infringe on the rights of others.
- They are endangering themselves or others.
- They are misusing materials or equipment.

The methods of discipline used at our school include:

- Positive reinforcement (commenting on children doing the "right" thing).
- Positive redirection (removing the child and giving him/her an appropriate activity).
- Physically stopping the behavior when necessary - when the child is endangering his/herself or others.
- Supporting the child's feelings while helping the child to understand why his/her behavior was not acceptable.
- Helping the child (children) to verbalize the issue.
- Helping children to understand and see that they are part of the consequences -
  - Communication with the other person
  - Care or repair of space and equipment
  - Inclusion in deciding a problem.

A child may be asked to sit in a chair for a short period of time to give the child a chance to regain control if he/she is having a difficult time and/or the previously mentioned methods of discipline have not been successful in managing the child. A teacher will take time to discuss with the child why he/she is sitting in the chair so that the child understands what behavior correction needs to be made. "Time outs" will be age appropriate in duration and handled within the classroom if the child is cooperative and not causing a disruption.

However, if a child's behavior is causing disruption to the class, the child may be taken into the coat room with

supervise children at all times. If a child becomes ill, he/she may be isolated in a section of the room not in use, but within sight and hearing of a staff member.

### **Release of a Child**

Staff will release children only to persons on the release form provided by parents. If an emergency arises, the parent must either provide a written signed note giving the person permission to pick up his/her child or give authorization over the phone to a staff member. Staff will check ID's of anyone they do not recognize. Please let people know about this ahead of time so they bring a picture ID and they are not offended. The children's safety is our priority!

Staff will not release children to anyone, including parents, who appear to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Emergency contact will be called to transport the child home. Police will be notified if necessary.

### **Custody Agreements**

When you enroll your child in Westminster Preschool, you are representing to us that you have the authority to enroll your child and that you have legal custody of your child. Our primary goal is to teach and nurture children. We have had the unpleasant experience of being caught between feuding spouses or other relatives (all claiming to have the authority to enroll a child and/or pick up a child at the end of the school day). Therefore, we must insist that you notify any interested relatives and/or custodians that we will only allow you (as the legal guardian) or any responsible person designated in writing by you to pick up your child. If

there are custody issues involved with your child, you must provide the center with court papers indicating who has permission to pick up the child. We feel it is unfair to ask our teaching staff to read and/or interpret complex Court documents and to become involved in a dispute between parents and/or other family members. Please also consider that a child observing or experiencing a dispute between loved ones is probably not experiencing the love and concern that a child needs.

### **Child Abuse Reporting**

All staff members are mandated reporters of child abuse. If staff have suspicions that a child is being abused or neglected, they MUST make a report to the local children's services agency. The safety of the children is always our first concern.

### **FIELD TRIPS/TRANSPORTATION OF CHILDREN**

Westminster Preschool will not transport children in emergency situations. If a child requires transportation, the parent or emergency squad will be contacted.

#### **Field trips**

1. Throughout the year, we will be taking walking field trips to various places around Logan which are within close proximity to the school. Parents grant permission for these walking trips on the registration form. The church office staff will be informed of our departure from the building for routine trips. Before departing from the center, a count will be taken of all of the children, and they will be marked on a separate attendance sheet, specifically for the trip. Upon arrival

at the destination, another count will be taken to assure that all of the children have safely arrived. This process will be repeated upon leaving the destination, and returning to the center. During the course of field trips, each staff member will have specific children that they're responsible for supervising.

2. Written permission will be obtained for scheduled special outings which extend beyond walking trips in the vicinity of the Preschool.

3. The following shall be available on all routine and special outings:

- a. First Aid Kit/Cell phone
- b. Emergency Contact Information for each child
- c. Health record of any child who has allergies, a handicap condition, or health condition which requires special procedures during the course of the trip.

4. A person trained in First Aid and CPR shall be present on all-routine trips and special outings.

5. The maximum number of children per child/staff member shall be met on all field trips.

### **GUIDANCE POLICY**

Westminster Preschool believes that helping children learn to develop self-control is a very important part of their development. Our hope is that each child will learn self-discipline through careful guidance from preschool staff. It is our belief that any discipline technique is most successful if used without judgment of the child and without anger. If teachers model respect and love, the children in turn learn to respect their friends and the teachers.