

Chestnut Grove Preschool



2026-27 Handbook

(434) 978-3819

550 Buck Mountain Road

Earlysville, VA 22936

www.chestnutgrovebaptist.org

Come Learn, Play and Grow with us!

Chestnut Grove Preschool Parent Handbook

PHILOSOPHY

Chestnut Grove Preschool is operated as a ministry of Chestnut Grove Baptist Church. The mission of the Preschool is to provide a moral, loving, supportive environment for preschool-aged children. Understanding that each child has differing physical, mental, social and emotional needs, caring and well-educated teachers facilitate growth by providing creative, stimulating, educational and age-appropriate activities. By following the examples of Jesus, the Preschool staff will love, support, and nurture each child as they prepare the children for Kindergarten and encourage a life of commitment and service to Christ.

PROGRAM

The Chestnut Grove Preschool three and five-day program includes Christian Education, Science, Math, Language Development and Literacy, Music, Art, and Social Sciences. Play is the manner in which children learn best in early childhood and play is an important element in the Preschool program. Individual and group activities will provide an atmosphere for learning and growth. Math and language skills are further developed through the use of games and circle time activities. Daily music and art projects foster creativity and imagination. Bible lessons and Chapel Time broaden Biblical understanding and provide a Christian faith foundation.

CURRICULUM

Curriculum development is a continuing exploration and growth process taking new methods into consideration and implementing them into a constantly improving program. The Preschool is committed to combining Christian values with the best curriculum available.

REGISTRATION, ADMISSION AND WITHDRAWAL

Registration for Chestnut Grove Baptist Church members and current students begins in February. Application forms will be available through Brightwheel and priority will be given in the following order: 1. Chestnut Grove Baptist Church members, current students, Siblings of current and previous students, 2. General public.

To enroll in the 3-year-old program a child must be 3 and toilet-trained. To enroll in the Pre-kindergarten program a child must be 4 by September 30th. To enroll a child in the Transitional Kindergarten program the child must be 5 by December 31. The Preschool Committee must approve any exceptions.

All applications are reviewed on a first come, first serve basis. There is a non-refundable application fee of \$100 due with your application form. Upon acceptance, an enrollment form will be sent to confirm your child's place in our program. At that time, we require a deposit of 1 month's tuition which will be applied toward your child's May 2027 tuition. This tuition deposit is non-refundable after May 31, 2026. If it is necessary to withdraw your child before the start of the school year, please contact the director as soon as possible and follow-up with written confirmation.

Your child is not guaranteed a place until his/her Application Form, Enrollment Form, and fees have been collected.

If you are interested in enrolling your child in our program or you have questions, please contact our Director, at 434-978-3819 or by email at preschool@chestnutgrovebaptist.org. The Director will keep a waiting list of prospective students.

To withdraw from the program during the school year, written notice must be given to the director 30 days (equal to one month tuition) in advance. A telephone call will not substitute for written notice. Pre-paid tuition will not be refunded.

TUITION

3 day programs meet on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings.

The tuition rate for the 2026-27 school year is \$350 per month.

5 day programs meet Monday through Friday mornings.

The tuition rate for the 2026-27 school year is \$445 per month.

Tuition is due the 1st day of each month. Payment may be made online through Brightwheel or by personal check. Checks should be made payable to Chestnut Grove Preschool and may be placed in the box provided at the Preschool, or mailed to Chestnut Grove Baptist Church, Attn. Preschool Director, 550 Buck Mountain Rd, Earlysville, VA 22936. Full tuition is due monthly regardless of a child's absence, weather related closures or holidays. There is a \$20 late fee for tuition paid after the 10th of each month. There is a \$25 fee for returned checks. Any family may petition the Preschool Committee for leniency in the case of overdue tuition or fees if special circumstances exist.

Scholarship opportunities may be available under certain circumstances. Please contact the Preschool Director for more information. Sibling discounts available for monthly tuition and before/after care.

BEFORE AND AFTER-SCHOOL CARE

Pending sufficient enrollment, Chestnut Grove Preschool will offer Before and After-School Care for the 2026-27 school year. Before-School Care will be offered from 8:00-9:00 am. The fee for Before-School Care is \$12 per day for students After-School Care will be offered from 12:30 – 2:00 pm. The fee for after-school is \$15 per day for students.

SCHOOL CALENDAR & SCHOOL CLOSINGS

We attempt to follow the Albemarle County Public Schools calendar as closely as possible. Please check the Chestnut Grove Preschool 2026-27 school calendar for days of operation. We are closed on Good Friday, even if Albemarle County Public Schools are open.

During inclement weather, we follow Albemarle County Public Schools schedule for closures. When Albemarle schools are delayed 1 or 2 hours, our school will open at 10:00 A.M. When Albemarle County schools are closed, we will be closed for the day. ***Before-school care will NOT be offered when there is a delayed opening.***

The possibility of make-up days will be determined once the Albemarle County Public School calendar is made official.

BEFORE SCHOOL BEGINS/REQUIRED INFORMATION FOR STUDENT'S FILE

The following forms must be completed and on file with the preschool prior to your child's first day:

Enrollment form, Health Information and Certification of Immunization Forms, copy of your child's birth certificate.

Please feel free to contact the Director for any questions regarding completing these forms.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Unless participating in before or after-School care, Preschool classes will begin at 9:00 A.M. and will end promptly at 12:30 P.M. Please accompany your child to and from his/her classroom and sign-in/out through Brightwheel. We ask that arrival and pick-up of your child be on time, so the program runs smoothly without interruption and your child profits fully from his/her experience. Please keep in mind the teachers are only on official duty with your child from 9:00 A.M. until 12:30 P.M. For the safety of your child and the staff, the doors to the Preschool building will be locked at 9:15 A.M. and reopened at 12:25 P.M.

Pick-up will be made at the classroom door. Teachers will dismiss your child to the parent/guardian or carpool driver from that point. Parents/guardians or carpool drivers and siblings will not be invited into the classroom at this time as it causes undue disruption. If a parent requests a private conversation regarding their child, this may be done after all children have been dismissed

Please contact the Director by 9:00 A.M. if your child will not be attending that day.

In the case of an early pick-up of your child, please contact the Director indicating the time of pick-up. The Director or teacher will let you in to checkout your child.

A Transportation Information form with permanent carpooling and/or childcare provider arrangements must be on file with the Director.

For the children's safety, the Preschool reserves the right to refuse to release any child to someone other than the child's parent/guardian or carpool driver. If your child is to be picked up by anyone other than his/her parent or guardian or normal carpool driver, we ask that you inform the Director **in writing** that morning at drop off. In the event of an emergency preventing normal pick-up, phone notification by the parent/guardian to the Director may be made during school hours. However, if the child appears to be uncomfortable with the pick-up arrangement, the teacher or the Director may refuse to release the child. Identification will be required for pick-up in these situations.

Except for emergencies, there will be a charge of \$10 per occurrence for repeated late pick-up of your child.

HEALTH ISSUES

Each student is required to have on file:

- Part I of the Commonwealth of Virginia School Entrance Health form completed by the parent/guardian.
- Part II, the Certification of Immunization, of the Commonwealth of Virginia School Entrance Health form, signed by your medical provider. A parent may request an exemption from immunizing their child based on religious tenets/practices. Please contact the Director for that form.
- Part III, the Comprehensive Physical Examination Report, completed and signed by a licensed physician or nurse practitioner.
- A signed Chestnut Grove Preschool Administration of Medication Policy Form.

All health forms must be on file at the school before a child will be admitted into the classroom. Any changes during the school year should be promptly reported in writing.

Teachers will perform a visual health screening each morning when your child arrives. The screening is designed to alert the teacher to the signs and symptoms of any illnesses. If the teacher and Director feel a child should not attend that day, you will be asked to take your child home. If a child has a fever or is visibly sick, he/she should not be brought to school. Children with a fever should not attend school until they have been free of fever for 24 hours. Outside playtime is scheduled most days. If for any reason you feel your child should not play outside, he/she should not be brought to school. If the child begins to feel sick while at the Preschool, he/she will be removed from the classroom and the teacher will immediately contact the parent to pick the child up as soon as possible.

Per state guidelines, if a child comes to school with a communicable condition such as chicken pox, head lice, impetigo, conjunctivitis, etc., he/she will be kept in a separate room from the other children until a parent can pick them up from school. The Director will notify the other parents as soon as possible by a letter sent home with each student regarding any exposure to a contagious illness or health concern. Parents are required to notify the Director whenever their child has been exposed to or has contracted a communicable condition as described above.

Certification in both First Aid and CPR is required of all Chestnut Grove Preschool teachers and the Director. The staff will not administer any prescription or non-prescription medication to any child. If medicine is required to be taken during school hours, the parent must come to the school to give it to their child. The only exception is in the case of emergency treatment of asthma or an allergic reaction where the use of an inhaler or Epipen would avoid a life-threatening situation. If a child requires an inhaler or Epipen, it must be provided by the parents, and accompanied by a signed letter from the child's physician with specific instructions for use.

Allergy Policy

If there is a student with a peanut allergy, Chestnut Grove Preschool will strongly encourage parents of that classroom to refrain from including peanut products in lunches and snacks. Parents must label lunch boxes that include foods containing peanuts using the labels provided and available at the Preschool Office.

FIRE DRILLS AND EMERGENCY EVACUATION

A fire drill is performed once per month from September through May. In the event of an emergency evacuation, fire drill policy will be followed and parents will be notified immediately. In the event of a weather-related emergency, such as tornadoes or hurricanes, all children and staff will move to the Church basement into areas away from windows. Parents will pick up children at the Old Fellowship Hall entrance during an emergency when possible.

ACCIDENTS

Minor accidents may occur during a school day. If your child is involved in an accident of a more significant nature, you and/or your designated emergency contact will be contacted as quickly as possible. If an accident or injury occurs, which the Director deems serious, she will immediately call 911 for assistance.

OPEN HOUSE AND ICE CREAM SOCIAL

The week before school starts, students and their families are invited to tour their classroom and meet their teacher. If there are no public health restrictions this might be in the form of an ice cream social. Otherwise we will send information regarding times and procedures to visit.

ORIENTATION

We want our students to have a positive, happy introduction to their first school experience. During the first week, we will orient your child at a pace that allows him/her to integrate into their new environment slowly. This will help your child feel comfortable with his/her new surroundings. and give the teacher more one on one time with each child. You will receive details of this orientation process in your August packet.

NECESSITIES

- Book Bag
- Lunch Box/Bag
- Change of Seasonally Appropriate Clothing (to be kept at school)
- Water bottle

SUPPLY LIST

A favorite activity in preparing for school is shopping for supplies. A short Supply List will be sent in your Welcome Letter in August.

DRESS

Please dress your child appropriately for the season. Clothing should be comfortable and easily managed by your child. Tennis shoes or other soft soled shoes are safest for your child. Shoes and clothing should be suited for outdoor play and creative projects. Please be certain all removable clothing such as coats, sweaters and boots are marked with your child's name.

SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE (schedule may vary by classroom)

9:00 Arrival

9:00 - 9:35 Free Play/Dramatic Play/Child's choice of center

- Blocks, Puzzles & Games, Book Corner, Puppet Theatre, Dramatic Play

9:40 - 9:55 Morning Meeting

- Prayer Share, Bible Verse, Calendar, Weather, Bible Story, Show and Tell, Special Music Time

10:00 - 10:15 Morning Snack

10:15 - 10:30 Math/Science/Literacy Groups (Monday/Wednesday/Friday)

10:15 - 10:30 Chapel (Tuesday/Thursday)

10:30 - 11:00 Recess

11:00-11:30 Center Exploration/Free play/Large Group time

11:30-12:00 Small group, Art, Letter Writing, Zoophones

12:00-12:20 Lunchtime

12:20 - 12:30 Review of day

12:30 Dismissal

LUNCH & SNACK

The Preschool does not provide lunch. We ask that your child bring a healthy lunch each day. The Health Department has suggested that lunches contain a cold pack. Lunch is eaten at approximately 12:00 P.M.

Your child will be provided a snack each morning. This will usually consist of crackers, pretzels or other finger snacks. Please let us know at the time of application if your child has any food allergies. This should also be included on your child's medical history form.

HAND WASHING POLICY

Hand washing is the most important means for interrupting the transmission of infection among staff and children. Children will be instructed to wash their hands with soap and water upon entering the classroom, after using the toilet, before eating and after eating, and upon returning from outdoor play. Staff will wash their hands after assisting a child with toileting, when exposed to any body secretions and before and after handling/preparing food.

BIRTHDAYS & CELEBRATIONS

We invite you to provide a treat on your child's birthday or a special occasion. Please let the teacher know you would like to bring something and the ingredients in the treat. If your child has a summer birthday, and you would like to celebrate in May, please arrange this with your child's teacher. Parents wishing to donate a small gift to the child's classroom should inquire about the teacher's wish list. **Invitations to private parties should not be distributed in the classrooms or in students' cubbies.**

TOYS FROM HOME

Toys from home are not allowed unless used for Show and Tell activities.

VOLUNTEERS

Parent volunteering in the classroom will be at the discretion of each teacher. Organized programs are encouraged to minimize classroom disruption. Some examples: Guest Reader, Career Day, Celebrity Day, etc. Parents are encouraged to make the teacher or Director aware of an interest in volunteering.

CULTURAL ENRICHMENT

Families are invited to share special skills, musical or artistic talents, special knowledge or interests with the students. Arrangements may be made with the teachers and approved by the Director for any appropriate classroom presentations by parents, families and/or friends of the school.

FIELD TRIPS

The Preschool may arrange occasional field trips. We try to keep them as close to the school as possible. The Preschool has established a strict Driver Policy. Children will be transported using parent carpools or by the child's parent. No Staff member will transport any child. The children are required to use the proper child restraint as required by Virginia State Law. The parent is required to provide the child restraint and secure it in the appropriate vehicle on the day of the field trip. If a child restraint is not available, your child will not be able to leave the preschool and arrangements for immediate pick-up must be made. All emergency forms and information are carried on all field trips, along with a first aid kit.

The Director should be informed in advance of any child not returning to the school from the field trip site. The child will be released only to the parent/guardian.

Parents may be invited to attend the field trips. Siblings may attend appropriate field trips but are the sole responsibility of the parent. The Director shall make the final decision as to the number of parents and siblings allowed and the age-appropriateness of the sibling.

COMMUNICATION

An important component of any educational program is open communication between parents and staff. Brightwheel messaging provides instant communication between parents and our staff. The Director may also be reached at 434-978-3819 or by email at preschool@chestnutgrovebaptist.org.

A newsletter and calendar will be sent home monthly to help keep you up-to-date with the exciting things happening at school.

Each year a survey is distributed for parents to make suggestions and provide feedback regarding the program. The surveys are evaluated in order to enhance and improve our program at Chestnut Grove Preschool. We treasure your children and want to provide them with the best possible preschool experience.

Preschool Committee Members 2026-2027

Amy Gaertner (Chair), Jean Roberts, Shannon Brown, Christi Barker, Elizabeth Valente, and Angie Wharam

PROGRESS REPORTS & CONFERENCES

In February, parents of 3 year old and pre-kindergarten students will receive written student progress reports assessing social integration, small and large motor skill development, academics, and kindergarten readiness for the 4 year olds. Parent/teacher conferences will be scheduled in February to discuss the progress of your child. Conferences may be set up at any other time during the year by contacting your child's teacher. A final progress report will be sent home in May.

DONATIONS

Odds and ends such as "trashables" for art projects are welcomed. Gently used toys or equipment are accepted as donations if approved for use by the Director. The Preschool gladly accepts financial gifts. Donations to the Scholarship Fund are always welcome.

DISCIPLINE/BEHAVIOR

Discipline is always approached in a loving, positive, Christian-based manner. Our staff will interact with the children in a warm, supportive, non-judgmental but firm manner. Our staff will never use corporal punishment. Preparation and organization of the activities and materials by the staff often alleviates the need for formal discipline. Rules of behavior will be explained thoroughly. Redirection to a more appropriate behavior will be used but when necessary a short "time-out" may be employed.

When you come to pick up your child, your child's teacher or the Director will inform you of any incident of concern. We ask for your support to reaffirm the appropriate behavior with your child.

Any persistent discipline problems will be discussed in a meeting with the parents, teacher and Preschool Director, and a plan of action will be determined.

SUSPENSION/DISMISSAL

If it is in the best interest of Chestnut Grove Preschool and the other children, a child may be suspended or dismissed at the discretion of the Chestnut Grove Preschool Committee without a refund of tuition.

Chestnut Grove Preschool may dismiss a child under any of the following circumstances:

- Continued participation is not in the best interests of the child.
- Continued participation is not in the best interests of the other Preschool students.
- Continued participation presents a risk to the safety of the Preschool students, families or staff.
- Parents fail to comply with the policies of the Preschool.
- Parents consistently fail to cooperate with the staff of the Preschool.
- Parents fail to keep their financial commitments to the Preschool.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

Chestnut Grove Preschool is required by the Virginia Code of Compliance to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. Our staff will be trained by the Virginia Department of Social Services to identify the signs of such abuse or neglect.

STATE REQUIRED INFORMATION

Chestnut Grove Preschool is operated under Section 22.1-289.031 of the Code of Virginia as a religiously owned preschool. We are governed by a strict Code of Compliance, a copy of which is available at the school. Under those compliance requirements, we are required to publish the following information.

Our staff must meet specific qualifications, background checks, and experience. Applicants for our teacher positions must have a Bachelor's Degree, preferably in Early Childhood Education or a closely related field. Teachers must also have a minimum of one year of teaching experience to be considered for a position.

The school is located in the education wing of Chestnut Grove Baptist Church. We have five separate classrooms of approximately 525 square feet each. There is access to the kitchen, fellowship hall, and sanctuary of the church. We have a playground that provides many opportunities for gross motor development.

We have a capacity of 50 children and meet the required child/staff ratio as stipulated by the State of Virginia. Our facility meets the applicable fire, health and building codes as stipulated by the State of Virginia.

We will not provide food prepared on school grounds, but we do have a time for lunch. Each child is asked to bring a boxed lunch for this period.

We are required by the State of Virginia to certify that our staff is free from any disability or communicable disease that prevents them from caring for your child.

Chestnut Grove Preschool is covered by public liability insurance which provides coverage in the event someone brings suit for personal or bodily harm suffered during the operation of Preschool as a result of negligence.

(January 2026)

The Chestnut Grove Preschool Parent Handbook is subject to change at any time. Written notice of changes implemented during the school year will be distributed to the current parents of children enrolled in the Chestnut Grove Preschool.