

# Charter Oak Cooperative Preschool Parent Handbook



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## **Welcome to Charter Oak Cooperative Preschool!**

We are a ministry of Charter Oak Church, a part of the Battle Ground community since 1947. Since its founding, the church has maintained a commitment to providing excellence in ministry to children and families through Sunday school classes, Vacation Bible Schools, clubs, camps and much more. With our preschool, we continue this tradition of sharing God's love through practical service to our community.

### **PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT**

We value the uniqueness of each child and family and strive to provide an atmosphere of caring, warmth, and acceptance. It is essential that we see the whole child and support all areas of development. This is best accomplished by providing a variety of meaningful experiences and opportunities as well as freedom and time to explore. Children must be allowed to grow and learn according to their own timetable if they are to reach their full potential. Because children are part of a family and culture, we value the importance of creating partnerships between families and staff to enhance learning, self-awareness, and value for other people. We believe that this will help to equip children to live successfully in an ever-changing world.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- To provide a cooperative preschool experience for children 3-5 years old and their families.
- To promote the development of the whole child through individual exploration and problem solving, group interaction and adult modeling and support.
- To enrich the child rearing experience for families by providing a better understanding of child developmental stages, peer support, and assistance with specific parenting challenges in a safe and caring environment.

### **PROGRAM CURRICULUM**

Our curriculum is based on developmentally appropriate practice in multiple learning domains such as creativity/art, music, problem-solving, science, gross and fine motor development, language development and reading readiness, adaptive skills, social, emotional and spiritual development. The curriculum is implemented through a variety of learning centers, group times, and one-to-one interactions with peers and adults.

### **STAFF/PARENT TO CHILD RATIOS**

Maximum number of children in a class is sixteen with three adult helpers and one teacher.

## **ENROLLMENT POLICY**

Our program is designed for children 3 - 5 years old. Children may be enrolled the month they turn 3 years. Children must be toilet trained (see Toileting & Bathroom Policy).

A completed registration packet, background checks and the non-refundable registration fee are required to enroll in the program. Returning families' tuition payments must be current to register for the next school year. Enrollment is on a first come basis. Once the class is full the preschool will maintain a waiting list of interested families and contact them as openings become available.

**TUITION & FEES** Annual tuition is \$ 720.00 and is divided into nine payments of \$80.00 for your convenience. A \$35.00 nonrefundable deposit and first month's tuition are required at registration to secure your child's place. Subsequent payments are due at by the 5th of each month starting in September and concluding with April. There is a 5% discount for the full year tuition paid by start of school. Families with multiple children simultaneously enrolled in the program receive a 10% tuition discount for each additional child. Payments may be dropped off or mailed to the church office. Please include your name, your child's name and the tuition month with your payment. Receipts for cash payments will be placed in your child's cubby.

**PARENT HELPERS** Parents provide classroom help for three days each month for each child enrolled. Primary parent helpers must attend the orientation program. Other family members (at least 18 years old) may fill in for the primary parent on scheduled workdays. Please notify the teacher in advance. All family helpers must complete a Washington State Patrol Criminal Background Check before working in the classroom. Blank background check forms are available in the classroom or can be downloaded from the state website.

**PARENT HELPER SCHEDULING SYSTEM** The quality and safety of our program requires full parent participation. Each quarter a parent scheduler will post the sign-up calendars in the classroom. Parents **must** sign up for three workdays each month for each child enrolled. Those who haven't scheduled by the second class session of the month will be assigned workdays and notify of the dates.

**If you have a scheduling conflict you must:**

- **Trade workdays with another parent**
- **Change the master schedule**
- **Notify the scheduler of the change**

Call and confirm with the scheduler immediately if you have an emergency that prevents you from working your scheduled day. Do not call the classroom teacher to arrange a sub.

Emergency absence is defined as an unexpected, unavoidable absence resulting from an urgent situation such as illness, accident or automotive breakdown. In the event of a missed workday without notifying the scheduler or obtaining a sub (no show), the parent will receive a warning letter. A second "no show" absence will result in the family being excluded from the program

without refund of registration fee or tuition. The teacher maintains the option of cancelling school for the day if there is not adequate parent coverage.

### **PARENT HELPER DUTIES**

Please arrive promptly at 9:05 on your workdays and plan to be available for cleanup and closing until noon. Check with the teacher regarding necessary setup and preparations for the day. Then discuss with the teacher and other parent helpers where each of you will be focused throughout the day. The teacher will explain the day's planned activities. When working in the classroom, parents are expected to accept direction from the teacher.

Be fully available to interact with the children and facilitate their learning both indoors and out (we try to go outside everyday so please wear appropriate clothing for the weather). Move around the room to monitor children's activities. Play with them; facilitate their play through ideas, materials, etc. without taking over the activity. Join the class at group time when not performing other duties. Refrain from long or inappropriate conversations with other adults that can distract you from you from classroom needs and create an overstimulating environment for the children. Cell phone use should be for emergencies only.

It is important that the children do as much by themselves as possible so allow time for them to problem solve before offering help. Feel free to encourage children's accomplishments with comments that appreciate what they are doing, how hard they are trying, etc. Avoid judgment statements such as "good girl/boy", "pretty girl/handsome boy" about the child or the quality of their work. Include all the children, a few at a time, in the project so that everyone has an opportunity. There may be times when a child chooses not to participate in a particular project. Please honor that choice. They are more likely to participate eventually if they are not pressured or forced. Children are responsible for sorting and putting away toys and activities when the teacher prompts with the cleanup song. Please provide encouragement and help without doing it for them.

Remember that group time is new behavior for many children. It may take them a while to understand the expectation and adjust. They often need adult support during this adjustment. Parent helpers are encouraged to provide this support by quietly redirecting children back to the circle area, sitting near them and even providing a little back rub to help them settle in. It is important that the children focus on the classroom teacher as much as possible during this time so please refrain from giving directions loudly or addressing the entire group as this may cause confusion and further disruption.

Clean up and closing include clearing and sanitizing tables, storing outdoor equipment, washing activity trays and art equipment, emptying hand washing station, taking out the trash, and sweeping the classroom each day.

## **SIBLINGS**

Due to safety and liability reasons, as well as for the overall quality of the program, unenrolled siblings may not accompany parents on workdays. Parent helpers are essential to our program and allow us to provide a high-quality preschool experience for all of the children. A parent who is caring for a younger sibling is not fully available to all the children. The activities and equipment are designed for the safety of preschool age children. They can be unsafe for younger children. Also, very young children, who have not yet completed their immunizations, would be at risk at our facility.

## **STRATEGIES FOR DISCIPLINE**

We teach respectful and cooperative behavior by modeling it ourselves and encouraging the children to:

- recognize and verbalize their feelings
  - use appropriate language to express themselves
  - accept responsibility for their behavior
  - understand the natural or logical consequences of their behavior
  - work out their own differences with each other in a respectful manner
- We use positive discipline only. Punishment, physical or verbal, is not used as a form of discipline.

## **RULES OF CONDUCT**

- respect yourself and others
- respect the school environment
- demonstrate appropriate language and behaviors
- be courteous to everyone.

In the event that a child or family presents an ongoing, serious conduct issue, the family will be asked to participate in conflict resolution. If a solution cannot be found, the family will be excluded from the program.

## **CLOTHING**

Please dress your child in clothing that is comfortable and can be soiled without concern. Creativity often involves messy, wet or sticky substances. Parent helpers should also follow this advice. We encourage full participation, and this often requires you to get up to your elbows in sand, water or even shaving cream! You must dress your child as if he/she will be going outside every day. Bring clothing appropriate to the weather. We try to go outside everyday rain or shine!

## **SNACK**

A simple snack is provided at the preschool each day. Please make sure to inform the teacher of any food allergies your child has. A cooking project is scheduled for once a month and parents are encouraged to sign up to supply ingredients.

## **ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE PROCEDURES**

- Do not bring your child to class before 9:05 unless it is your workday.
- Take care of any toileting needs your child has before entering the classroom
- **All children and parent must wash their hands before signing in.**
- Sign your child in and leave a telephone number where you may be reached in case of an emergency on that day.
- Note on the sign in sheet if someone other than you will be picking up your child after school
- Parents who wish to stay and visit with other parents are asked to do so outside the classroom. This will minimize classroom noise and disruption.
- Please be prompt when picking up your child. Families will be charged a late fee of \$5.00 per minute beginning 10 minutes from class dismissal.
- **Please drive slowly and carefully in the parking lot, keeping watch for children!**

## **TOILETING & BATHROOM POLICY**

A child may still need “Pull-Ups” for an occasional urine accident only. Our program is not designed to have staffing available for diaper changing or handling of bowel movement accidents. Should the need arise; parents will be called to take care of it. Once changed, the child may resume their preschool day. All children must be accompanied to the bathroom by an adult. Children can close the stall door for the sake of privacy if they wish. The parent helper will wait outside the closed door. It is not appropriate for any parent helper or teacher to be in the bathroom alone with a child with the door closed.

## **DAILY SCHEDULE**

The teacher posts a schedule of the daily activities. This will serve as a guide in the classroom, but the program may vary from day to day. The schedule is flexible, and the times are approximate. However, we usually maintain the same order of events so the children have the security of knowing what to expect next.

## **ABSENCES**

Parents should notify the teacher of absences by calling and leaving a message on the church phone. Please notify the classroom teacher of any planned absences.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The preschool will maintain confidentiality concerning any information about the children, their names, their disabilities, medical data/conditions, their families, and the circumstances in which they live.

## **TELEPHONE MESSAGES**

During class time messages for the classroom can be sent through the church office at 360-687-3347. If you have an urgent need, you may call the classroom directly at 360-9537339. Please keep calls as brief as possible as the helpers and teacher are very busy with the children. If you'd like a longer conversation with the teacher, leave a message and she will be call back when class is over.

## **CUBBIES**

Be sure to check your child's cubby for artwork and school information every day. Notes placed in your child's cubby are one the main ways that we communicate information to parents. Also, be sure to check the bulletin boards every time you are in school.

## **PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION**

Good communication between families and the classroom teacher is essential for children to receive the best preschool experience. The teacher is available to briefly discuss anything; ideas, questions or concerns you would like to talk about after class. You may also call the teacher at home to talk or schedule an individual conference where she will be able to give you undivided attention. Approach the teacher if you have a problem regarding the curriculum or management of the classroom.

## **GENERAL PARENT MEETINGS**

We hold two general meetings annually (fall and spring). Each meeting includes announcements, discussions of current school events, and general business. These meetings are essential for the wellbeing of our cooperative. We discuss and decide on school issues, hold discussions on parenting and other topics of interest, and enjoy adult social time.

## **PARENT SHARING**

You will enrich our class greatly if you share your talents, skills, and interests in the classroom. Share your job, your hobby or your musical ability with us. Talk with the teacher about when and how you would feel comfortable sharing and when it would fit into both your plans.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Each month we celebrate that month's birthdays with a class party. Party dates will be announced in the monthly calendar. You are welcome to bring a birthday treat or small surprise to share with the other children as well as photos of your child to be displayed. For safety reasons we ask that you not bring any food with nuts, small/hard candies or balloons. Please discuss what you would like to bring with the classroom teacher in advance to allow coordination with other class birthdays that month.

## **RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS**

Charter Oak Cooperative Preschool is a ministry of Charter Oak Church and as such celebrates traditional Christian holidays such as Easter and Christmas.

## **SNOW DAYS**

School is canceled if any Battle Ground public schools are closed or on a 2-hour late start. Make up days will be scheduled for the end of the school year for up to 3 days. Additional make up days will be scheduled as the calendar allows.

## **VISITORS**

Arrangements may be made for prospective members, teachers from other preschools, or interested persons (including grandparents) to observe the program during regular school hours. Please obtain the permission of the teacher in advance.

## **FIELD TRIP POLICY**

Notice for upcoming fieldtrips will be given to families at least 1 month in advance. All children are to be accompanied by a parent or registered caregiver on fieldtrips and families are responsible for transportation. Carpooling is encouraged and sign-up sheet will be available in the classrooms. Please remember, for the children's safety, each child must be separately buckled into a car seat or booster following the manufacturer's guidelines for proper installation. Children should not be transported in the front seat at any time. The first aid kit shall be taken on all field trips.

## **WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL**

A written notice of withdrawal from the family must be submitted to the church office one month prior to leaving the program. Please include reasons for leaving. Families that drop from the program without giving notice will be billed for one month's tuition. Before leaving, please give opportunity for the children to say goodbye and collect their materials.

## **HAND-WASHING**

Staff and children will wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and running water upon arrival at school, prior to eating snacks, after using the toilet or wiping or blowing noses, and prior to preparing any food. Disposable gloves must be worn when preparing and serving snacks

## **SANITATION**

Tabletops and food contact surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized after each use.

Cloths or paper towels only must be used for sanitation.

Sponges are used for large spill cleanup and not for sanitizing.

Water table and toys used in water tables are emptied and cleaned daily.

All garbage, solid waste, and refuse will be disposed of daily.

Toys and dress-up clothes are cleaned regularly.

## **PLAYGROUND SAFETY**

Children are never to be left unattended.

Playground safety rules must always be observed, even when class is no longer in session.

Children are never to be in the parking lot unless attended by an adult.

## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

Proof of current immunizations must be provided before your child can be enrolled in the program.

## **ILLNESS**

Please keep your child at home if they are not feeling well, so that other children will not be exposed to illness. We will not admit or retain in care, a child who has one of the following symptoms of illness:

- Fever 101.5 degrees
- Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool per day)
- Vomiting
- Nausea
- Severe or persistent cough
- Unusual yellow skin or eyes
- Skin or eye lesions or rashes that are severe, weeping, or pus-filled
- Stiff neck and headache with one or more of the symptoms listed above
- Difficult breathing or wheezing
- Complains of severe pain

A child, who shows signs of illness, as described above, will not be allowed to stay at school. If the child becomes ill during school, he/she will be isolated, and the family will be notified and asked to come pick him/her up from school. Any outbreak of communicable disease or food poisoning at the school will be reported to all families. If your child contracts a communicable illness (other than a common cold or flu), you may need to provide a signed clearance from your medical care provider or the county health department before your child can return to school.

## **HEAD LICE**

If head lice are discovered in the school, the following procedures will be followed: Each child will be inspected upon discovery of an outbreak. All children who are infected will not return to school until they are lice-free and egg-free. The school will be cleaned according to Health Department specification. School will not be closed due to a head-lice outbreak. Please remember that during the course of a child's social life, they are more likely than not to contract head lice at some point. Lice know no socio-economic boundaries. In fact, they prefer clean heads to dirty ones.

## **EMERGENCIES AND ACCIDENT PROCEDURE**

We, as staff and families, prevent accidents at school by keeping a watchful eye on the children. Staff and parents intervene and stop unsafe behavior. If you are unsure as to whether an activity is unsafe, err on the side of caution, and then discuss it with the teacher and other parent helpers. We do always need to respect each other's viewpoints and to work together to keep the children safe.

- All incidents are reported to the teacher. When a serious accident occurs that requires first aid, the teacher, with the help of a witness or a parent helper, will fill out an accident report form. One copy is to be given to parent and one placed in the child's file. The report will include the date, child's full name, nature of injury, witnesses, action taken, and the signatures of reporting staff and parent.
- A first aid kit is in the classroom, on the top supply shelf. It includes Band-Aids, adhesive tape, sterile gauze pads, scissors, disposable plastic gloves, and a sanitary temperature taking device. Ice packs are available in the freezer in the Rainier building. Telephone numbers for fire, emergency medical care, and poison control are posted on the telephone.
- All severe injuries, acute illness, respiratory or cardiac arrest are handled by securing the safety of all children, providing immediate first aid and calling 911.
- The classroom teacher is certified in basic first aid and child/adult CPR and parent helpers are encouraged to receive training as well. Information about local training resources will be made available to families.

## **MEDICATIONS**

Any child with a serious health concern that may require medication or medical intervention must have a physician's written authorization to be on file at the preschool. The physician's authorization is to be signed, dated and must include protocol/steps for all staff and parent helpers to follow in order to meet the child's specific health need. Parents will be notified immediately if implementation of the protocol procedure is required. Medication must be in the original container, labeled with the child's name, name of drug, dosage, date, physician's name, and directions for administering. All medications will be secured in a locked, childproof container clearly marked "Medication" and stored in a labeled cabinet or refrigerator not used by children. A written record will be kept of all medications administered, time of administration, dosage given, person administering, and child's name. Please contact the classroom teacher if you have any questions regarding Health & Safety procedures or policy.

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