

Parent Handbook

GREAT LAKES CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL

4875 King Street, Beamsville, ON LOR 1B6 905-563-5374 (ext.218) FAX 905-563-0818

preschool@glchs.on.ca www.glchs.on.ca

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Our Philosophy

At Great Lakes Christian Preschool we believe each child is a precious gift, created by God. While attending Great Lakes your child will experience a safe, loving and stimulating environment where they are valued and affirmed.

Learning through play is at the heart of the developmental process; therefore, play is an essential component of the preschool program at Great Lakes. Through play, children interact with one another developing friendships and cooperation. Children have the opportunity to explore, question, observe, try new things and take risks through a variety of activities. Great Lakes Christian Preschool follows a learning model whereby the curriculum is based on the stages of development and teachers facilitate the learning. The interests of children are highly valued and the program is developed to provide learning that encompasses these curiosities.

Staff

Heather Moyer (Mrs. Heather) is the Director of Great Lakes Christian Preschool. Her experience with children started in her University years when she worked as a coordinator for children needing summer Head Start programs in Norfolk County and Brantford. Heather's teaching career began in a Grade 3 class in 1985 and throughout her experience she taught every Primary Grade including



Kindergarten. Her very favourite teaching years were those spent in Kindergarten and Grade One where she grew in her understanding of the beginning reading process. Heather also worked as a Music teacher within the elementary school system and has taught private voice and piano lessons.

After the birth of her second child, Heather worked for 5 years as a Director of Children's Ministries in her local church and had the responsibility of coordinating the care and programs of children from infancy to Grade Six. In this role Heather wrote the curriculum for the children's church program as well as arranged and directed musicals for the young children in her congregation.

Heather's church experience paved the way for her to participate in short term mission trips to the Caribbean where she worked in schools, conducted assemblies for children and trained classroom teachers to use a religious curriculum designed for Grade Four students.

Prior to joining the team at Great Lakes Heather worked at City Kidz in Hamilton, Ontario as a coordinator and writer for a Preschool theatre program which impacted over 200 inner-city "Kinderkidz" every week.

In September 2011, after attaining her Registration as an Early Childhood Educator, Heather became the Director of Great Lakes Christian Preschool.

Pauline Lacroix (Miss Pauline) is a Registered Early Childhood Educator whose life has been filled with caring for young children. She is a mom of two boys, who are married to two wonderful girls. Pauline has 8 grandchildren. After raising her own two boys and being a full time nanny for 15 years, she decided to go back to school. Pauline completed her Early Childhood course at Cambrian college in Sudbury in 2007 and began working at Great Lakes soon after.

Pauline loves working with young children and excels at helping them transition to new experiences. She has a strong ability to help very young children develop communication skills which assist them in their social



interactions. She also has a clear understanding of how to bring the right materials into the play environment for optimum learning. Pauline finds it exciting to see young children grow and gain an understanding of how to socialize and negotiate with their peers. She enjoys watching the wonder in their eyes as they explore their world. Pauline's knowledge of child development has made her an expert at helping children grow in areas of social development, self-regulation and forming friendships.

Policies for Volunteers

We welcome volunteers and students in our programs. All students and volunteers are supervised and mentored by teachers. At no time is a student or volunteer allowed to have unsupervised access to children in our program. Everyone working with the children at Great Lakes must have a clear Police Check before becoming involved with the children.

Program

Programs are re-evaluated regularly to reflect changes within the Day Nurseries Act and ideologies on early childhood education. Staff attend workshops provided by the Early Childhood Community Development Centre in St. Catharines and keep updated on changes in the Ministry of Education. Programming implications for both Junior and Senior Kindergarten are taken from the Ministry of

Programming implications for both Junior and Senior Kindergarten are taken from the Ministry of Education's Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program. Jolly Phonics, Guided Reading and Emergent Reading strategies are also used with JK/SK children to promote early literacy skills.

The Preschool participates in the Quality Child Care Niagara Program. QCCN was inspired by a group of early childhood educators who wanted to create a program planning model to strengthen the foundation of quality educational experiences and developmental outcomes of all children enrolled in Licenced Child Care Centres in Niagara.

The staff has been trained to administer the DISC Developmental Preschool Screen (DPS). This tool enables us to screen children with parental consent. We strive to meet the developmental needs of every child and set them up for success.

The Day Nurseries Act gives guidelines about the percentage of children with areas of concern that can be enrolled for each class. Areas of concern may include; speech delay, developmental delays, behaviour issues and autism. Each situation will be assessed and the number of special needs within a class will not exceed 20 percent.

Monthly newsletters and calendars will be sent home informing parents of program content, events and preschool news. Calendars, menus and items of interest are posted on bulletin boards. Schedules, curriculum outlines and program guidelines are also posted on bulletin boards and in classrooms.

Schedule

The Preschool operates 40 weeks from September to June and the program is designed to correspond with the Elementary School Calendar except for PD days. Great Lakes does not include PD days for teachers except for 2 clean up days at the end of the school year.

Classes times are as follows:

Morning Half Day Classes - 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Afternoon Half Day Classes - 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Full Day Classes - 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Class Options are as follows:

Morning Half Day Monday through Friday Afternoon Half Day Monday through Friday Full Day Monday through Friday

Parents are asked to provide a consistent weekly schedule. Half days (\$20) or full days (\$40) may be added if the need arises as long as space is available.

Licence and Ratios

We are inspected annually by a Program Advisor from the Ministry of Education. This inspection ensures that the guidelines in the Day Nurseries Act are followed and proper reporting, logs, documentation and current changes are adhered to. The facility is also inspected twice annually by the Niagara Health and Safety Unit to ensure that proper procedures are taken in food handling, hand washing, cleaning and disinfecting.

Ratios for our age group require that one teacher is assigned to every 8 children. The facility is permitted to have 16 children in each classroom.

Admission

A registration form must be completed and a \$25.00 non-refundable registration fee must be received each time a child is admitted to the Preschool (this includes a child who has been in attendance in the prior year). This procedure reserves your child's space. Registrations will be confirmed, in the order in which they are received.

An orientation meeting will be held on the Tuesday before Labour Day. It is suggested that at least one parent attend this orientation as policies, program information and fundraising details will be discussed. Admission forms, health forms and permission forms will be collected at the orientation meeting.

Written notice of permanent withdrawal must be given two weeks in advance and one month in advance if paying by the preauthorized payment plan. If notice is not received as described above, full program fees will be charged.

A permanent space cannot be guaranteed if you wish to temporarily withdraw your child. If spaces fill up, your child would be placed on a waiting list.

Waiting lists often develop by late September. Children who will be returning for another year should be registered by April in order to avoid disappointment.

Great Lakes Christian Preschool reserves the right to terminate services if policies are not followed, fees are not paid on time or the program is unsuitable for a child.

A note about toilet training: As part of our admission policy we require that children are toilet trained and ready to handle this part of the day fairly independently. If a parent is in the process of training we are happy to receive the registration with an expected date of entry agreed upon by the Director.

Arrival and Pick up

Young children depend on regular routines for security and comfort. It is therefore recommended that you establish a regular routine when dropping off and picking up your child. When your child arrives bring him/her into the play activities and assist with the transition as needed. Ensure that a teacher is aware of any details that may affect your child's day. When picking up ensure that a teacher is aware of your presence and that you are ready to take your child home.

Children will be assigned a hook in the hallway or cloakroom and parents may enter the school at the most convenient door for their child.

Unless otherwise arranged, children will not be released to any person other than those who are specified on the admission form. When arrangements are made for someone else to pick up a child, they may be asked to provide identification. A "Take-Home Authorization Note" may be obtained by parents and used to notify us when a new person will be assisting with arrivals and pick up. Unfortunately during class time messages left on the answering machine may not always be retrieved in a timely manner, however, a teacher's cell number will be provided to help with emergency calls.

The Preschool Program begins at 9:00 a.m. and ends at 11:30a.m./3:30 p.m. There is a 15 minute window before start time and after end time for drop-off and pick-up. If you require different times please make a request as we are able to extend our day from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. when their is a need.

Parking

Please use the parking area by Hotchkiss Hall and the playground. There are times in the school year when events at the High School fill up the parking lot and parents may need to park on the lane ways. We ask that parents use the parking lot with much caution at all times.

Specialized Services

Great Lakes Christian Preschool is an approved integrated centre for children with areas of concern. In addition to participating in the daily routine, children with areas of concern will have individual programs developed by Niagara Resource Consultants or other community service providers. The staff is committed to meet the needs of all students. Parent/teacher meetings should be arranged to discuss the child's needs prior to registration to ensure that the proper accommodations can be made. Meetings may also be arranged as needed throughout the school year.

Full Day Program

The full day program is set up under the guidelines of the Day Nurseries Act (DNA). Children that attend form more than 6 hours in a day are required to be served a catered lunch. We currently have our lunches catered by the High School kitchen. The kitchen is fully inspected and permission for this service has been granted by Niagara Public Health and Safety. The cost for lunches is included in parent fees.

Also required under the DNA, children staying 6 hours or more per day must have a rest time. Children at Great Lakes are provided with a resting cot for 30 minutes after lunch. Rest time is designed for children to sleep if needed but, if a child does not sleep they are encouraged to relax for a for that time period. Soft music is played and children may bring a favourite stuffed toy for the rest time. Cots are disinfected each time they are used and sheets are washed weekly by a designated staff member. Sheets and personal items are stored in sealed plastic bags when not in use.

Nutrition

A nutritious morning and afternoon snack will be provided. Children's special dietary needs and allergies will be posted in the cooking and service areas. Weekly snack menus will be posted in the kitchen and on the bulletin boards.

We like to celebrate birthdays by having a special snack. The guidelines are as follows: The snack must be wrapped, store bought preferably in a local grocery store, and peanut/nut free. Items such as "School Safe", "Bear Paws", Wagon Wheels or any other treat item that is clearly marked with the Peanut/Nut Free Label may be provided for the birthday treat. Teachers will ensure that the item you provide is acceptable. Please note that due to recent changes from the Health Inspector, food purchased by parents will only be allowed for parties and birthday snacks. We are not allowed to serve home baked goods at any time. Store packaged items are the only items we are permitted to serve as long as they are <u>PEANUT/NUT FREE</u>.

We are sorry for the restrictions within this policy but, it is for the safety of every child.

Health and Administration of Drugs

The Day Nurseries Act stipulates, that prior to admission, each child must be immunized according to the local medical officer of health. Great Lakes Christian Preschool requires that a medical form be completed and immunizations are up to date. In the case of a child that does not have immunization due to religious or health restrictions proper documentation is needed by the Preschool. The Health Unit will also require this documentation from the parent. Forms are available through the Town of Lincoln and the MPPs Office. You can also contact your doctor if immunizations have not been done due to health reasons.

The Day Nurseries Act also regulates that time must be spent in outdoor play each day (weather permitting). Therefore, it is our policy that children too ill to play outside must remain at home. If a child becomes ill during the day, temporary care will be provided until you can be contacted and your child can be taken home. Please observe the Niagara Regional Health Unit procedures for keeping children at home during illness. These guidelines will be provided prior to the first day of school.

Great Lakes Christian Preschool will administer both prescription and non-prescription drugs to children, in accordance with provincial legislation. (Eg; asthma medication)

Parents must complete a form for administering medication which includes:

- a) written instruction of the dosage and times any drug is to be given;
- b) **medication in the original container**, clearly labelled with the child's name, date, name of drug, instructions for storage and administration of the drug.

Medication is not to be left in the cloakroom area. Give it directly to a staff member. All medications are kept in a container that is easily accessed by adults but out of the reach of children.

Anaphylaxis and Epi-pens

Child information sheets are posted throughout the building for any child who has sever anaphylaxis syndrome. Staff, supply teachers and volunteers are required to read the information sheets of any child who has an epi-pen. Areas of posting include: entranceways, kitchen, bulletin boards and classrooms. An epi-pen must be kept at the school for each child identified with anaphylaxis syndrome. When the medication has expired it is the responsibility of the parent to provide a new epi-pen. Epi-pens are kept within easy access for staff but out of children's reach.

Clothing and Possessions

Your child should be dressed in clothing that is appropriate for physical activity, messy activities and the weather. A second set of clothes should be kept at the preschool in case of accidents. Also provide indoor shoes or slippers. (Label the bag, clothes and footwear.)

Behavioural Management

Children at Great Lakes are encouraged and loved as if they were our very own. Difficult behavioural issues are dealt with in a positive manner. Redirecting a child to a sensory activity is often the first method used.

It is always the goal of the teachers to promote self-management, ensure the safety of every child and to teach children to respect the rights of others.

Great Lakes Christian Preschool does not permit any form of corporal punishment. Separation of the child is always avoided; instead the teachers provide a quiet place to cool down, a place to relax or have a 'time-in' with a teacher who supports them.

Our Policy Manual outlines behavioural management practices in detail and is available to parents at any time.

Screening and Reporting

Each child in the Preschool will receive the DISC Screening with the parent's consent. This tool will be used after the child is comfortable with daily routines and is familiar with his/her teacher. Scores will be reported to parents. If there are any concerns the parent will be given a private meeting with the teacher.

Daily contact with parents and staff will be supplemented by individual interviews if a request is made. An anecdotal report of student progress will be issued two times a year; at the end of January and June. If any concerns arise, please do not hesitate to call the Preschool.

Seríous Occurrence

Serious Occurrences will be reported to the Ministry of Education. The Serious Occurrence will be posted within 24 hours of becoming aware of the occurrence or when the Director of the Preschool deems the occurrence to be serious. The exception being in the case of allegations of child abuse or unverified complaints. These will be posted at the completion of a follow up investigation.

Serious Occurrence Notification Forms will be posted in a conspicuous place near the Child Care License and Licensing Summary chart closest to the entrances used by parents. Updates will be made by the Director as action or investigations are completed. Notifications will remain posted for 10 business days and remain on file for two years. Forms remain available for prospective parents, licensing and municipal children's services staff upon request.

Field Trips and Guests

Throughout the year, trips are made to special places of interest. A notice will be sent home in advance of the excursion informing you of the destination, time, date and agenda. It will also include a permission slip to be signed and returned. We prefer that parents accompany us on trips whenever possible. We car pool for the field trips and car seats are mandatory. Field trip costs are not included in the school fees. At times arrangements will also be made for special visitors to come to the preschool. We especially invite visits from parents whose job or hobby may be of interest.

Holidays, Inclement Weather and Sick Days

Great Lakes Christian Preschool observes the following statutory holidays: Labour Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Years Day, Family Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, and Victoria Day. There is a 2 week break at Christmas and a one week break in March. These breaks will coincide with the weeks outlined by the District School Board of Niagara.

It is our practice to close the Preschool whenever the Niagara school buses cancel and or the schools cancel due to inclement weather. Should inclement weather occur parents can check the DSBN Website: dsbn.edu.on.ca to see if the schools are closed. Also each parent whose child would attend that day will be notified by an email, text message or phone call.

Student Absence

Please notify the school if your child will be absent and state the reason for the absence. The children develop friendships and ask about their friends when they are not at school. The staff also track sickness in order that parents can be kept well informed should some unusual illness occur.

Fundraising

Fundraisers may be necessary within the year. It is at the discretion of the Director to determine the number of fundraisers that needed. Fundraisers may occur as follows: the first will take place in the Fall/Christmas season and a fundraising company will be used. An ongoing fundraiser for parents to purchase house keeping items on our 'shopping list' as the needs arise. If a circumstance arises, and your family is not able to participate in a fundraiser, you can make a donation of \$30.00 per event. Donations to the preschool are gratefully accepted any time. You will receive a donation receipt for yearly amounts over \$15.00.

Fees

\$95/wk - 5 half-days

\$57/wk - 3 half-days

\$40/wk - 2 half-days

\$120/wk - 3 full days

\$180/wk - 5 full days

Additional days may be requested and may be obtained if space is available. Each additional day is \$20 per half day or \$40 per full day.

Please note: Extended hours starting at 8 a.m. and ending at 4 p.m. may be available upon request.

Fee Payment

Fees may be paid once monthly or twice monthly by pre-authorized payment plan. Pre-authorized payments must be set up a month in advance. Please submit a void cheque, PAP form and make the first payment by cheque or cash.

Fees may also be paid monthly or bi-weekly by cheque. We request that post-dated cheques for the school year be provided at the Orientation Meeting or the first day of school in September. Please make a request if this is not a suitable arrangement for fee payment.

Make cheques payable to Great Lakes Christian College. (GLCC)

There is a \$10.00 charge for each N.S.F. cheque.

In February you will receive an official receipt for your yearly amount of fees, to be used if you are planning to claim for child care on your income tax form.

Please Note: We are unable to provide refunds for any days missed due to inclement weather, family holidays or illness. If a special circumstance arises and a child misses 15 or more consecutive days a written request for refund may be considered by the Business Manager of Great Lakes Christian High School.

Orientation

It is advisable to set up a visit with your child prior to the school start.

An Orientation Meeting, for parents only, is on the Tuesday in August prior to the first day of school. The Orientation Meeting is from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. Attendance is very important even if you are a returning parent.

General Information Regarding Dates and Events

School Starts the Tuesday after Labour Day

Fall Open House occurs the third Thursday in September at 6:30 p.m.

Spring Open House occurs the third Thursday in April at 6:30 p.m.

The last day of school is usually the Tuesday of the last week of June. Graduation is on the Wednesday following the last day.

Teachers have 2 paid clean up days at the end of June.

The specific dates for each school year will be provided at the beginning of the school year.

Contact Information: Great Lakes Christian Preschool 4875 King Street Beamsville, ON LOR 1B6

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