

Cheverly Weekday Nursery

Quality Early Childhood Education
Founded in our community in 1970



Cheverly United Methodist Church
2801 Cheverly Avenue
Cheverly, MD 20785
301.773.2297
301.322.2574
www.cheverlynurseryschools.com

PARENTS' HANDBOOK

This handbook has been carefully prepared to answer your questions and provide needed information to make this a successful year for both you and your child. Please keep it in a convenient spot for future reference.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Weekday Nursery of the Cheverly United Methodist Church provides a comprehensive early childhood program, designed to meet the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual needs of the individual child. Our staff is trained in Early Childhood Education and experienced in working with young children. We hope to provide the child with a place to grow outside his/her home, and to help him/her learn more about himself/herself in relation to other children, to adults other than his/her parents, and to the world around him/her.

The Weekday Nursery, began in 1970, offers four options, a morning session, an afternoon session, a $\frac{3}{4}$ session and a full day program five days a week, nine months a year. The age requirement is that each child be three to five years of age. Occasionally, exceptions are made and younger children are accepted at the teachers' discretion. The Nursery group is limited to 20 children (per session) and will be under the leadership of two adult teachers at all times.

II. GOALS

Our main goal, as educators, is to help children live their third, fourth or fifth year in life in the richest, most satisfying most constructive way possible. To achieve this aim, we have several secondary goals relating to the child's development.

- A. To help the child develop socially and emotionally:
 - 1. To help develop a positive self concept and to gain a sense of self-worth.
 - 2. To develop an awareness of the needs and feelings of others
 - 3. To help develop group skills and cooperation with peers
 - 4. To grow in self-confidence and to help gain independence through making choices and completing tasks
 - 5. To grow in ability to express and communicate ideas and feelings
 - 6. To grow in ability to interact positively with other people; to share socially with others
- B. To help the child develop physically:
 - 1. To provide for large muscle development - coordination, agility, balance, a sense of the child's own body in relation to the world
 - 2. To provide for fine eye-hand coordination through art and certain play activities

C. To provide an atmosphere for intellectual development:

We believe an effective approach to learning in investigations and first hand experience.

1. To develop language skills
2. To develop listening skills
3. To develop visual discrimination
4. To develop beginning math concepts
5. To develop creativity in all endeavors, particularly language, music, movement and art
6. To develop a love and desire for learning
7. To grow in his/her understanding of concepts and relationships of the world in which we live.

III. FACILITIES AND CURRICULUM

The Weekday Nursery consists of a large cheerful classroom, an arts and crafts room, a large muscle activity "rainy day" space, and a playground for outdoor physical development.

In the classroom there are toys, music and science learning centers, dramatic play areas for dress-up and role play, games, puzzles, a water/sand table, a reading nook, equipment, blocks, and other learning tools appropriate to the 3 and 4 year old pre-school child. The art room provides easel painting, finger painting, craft materials and sand table.

Activities alternate between quiet and active ones. Emphasis is placed on decision-making and freedom of choice for each child in selecting his/her activities. Many options are open to the children each day. The staff strives for a balance between freedom and guidance; group and individual activities; flexibility, yet enough structure for each child to feel secure.

Opportunities to develop social skills and other interests are provided through dramatic play, music, social studies, arts and crafts, science, and language arts. The Nursery encourages cognitive development in reading-readiness skills and beginning math concepts through pre-school activities, experiences and games.

We offer each child the chance to expand his/her interests, learn new skill, develop social values, grow in creative expression, and explore his/her environment through observing, investigating, experimenting, and experiencing. Each child may grow according to his/her own abilities within an atmosphere of love, warmth, and concern.

IV. HEALTH

In accordance with state law, each child **must have** the required completed Medical Forms on file **prior** to entering school. In addition, the child's **immunization series must be completed.** The forms must be filled out and signed before the child can be admitted to school.

One of the expected outcomes of a child's first group experience, unfortunately, is greater exposure to illness. This is inevitable and should be expected.

It is true that Nursery can be useful for helping children to build immunities before they go to kindergarten. However, we would all like to keep illness to a minimum. Please do not send your child if he/she is ill.

There are certain basic guidelines that the Health Department recommends. First, please keep your child at home if he/she has a **persistent cough or fever, and for 24 hours after a fever subsides**, or if they are still not feeling up to par. The Health Department also points out that, in certain instances, only a throat culture can definitively determine if infection is present. It's highly possible that children can be carriers of infections while exhibiting mild or no symptoms themselves. If your child has an intestinal disorder, please be sure he/she is fully recovered before returning to class. When resistance is low, it is easy for children to pick up other germs in the air and add one illness to another.

A child whom the teachers judge to be too ill to be in school will be sent home, to ensure the child's comfort and the well-being of the other children. (That is one reason we ask you to give us an emergency number of a local person on your family card.)

It is very important that the teachers know of any **allergies** your child may have, and steps to take should an allergic reaction occur.

Please **do not send any kind of medication** to school. We are not able to administer medication to your child.

V. YEARLY CALENDAR

A yearlong calendar will be sent home at the beginning of the school year. We loosely follow the schedule of other schools with regard to holidays. However, in certain instances, our calendar will differ. Please **keep** your calendar and **consult** it regularly.

Snow Days: If public schools **close**, we **close**. If they open either one or two hours late, **we open at 9:15 am**; just one hour later than usual. If public schools close early, parents will be notified by telephone regarding Nursery School closing. (Official public schools closing are announced on local radio and TV stations as early as 6:00 am, with updated reports hourly.)

VI. DAILY SCHEDULE

The $\frac{3}{4}$ class meets from 8:15 am until 2:45 pm and the full day class meets from 8:15 am until 2:45 pm - Monday through Friday.

Please do not bring your children early to your sessions, and please do not allow them to wait alone in the hallway or on the playground.

The teachers **cannot** provide babysitting before or after class sessions. Kindly arrange to pick your child up precisely at dismissal time. **If there is an emergency that will delay you or your sitter from picking up your child, please call the school at 301.773.2297** so that arrangements can be made for the child's care until you arrive. Drop-ins are available at the aftercare program if needed. **Repeated late pickups will result in a \$5.00 charge for each 5 minutes after the scheduled dismissal time.**

VII. HOME AND SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Communication is a two way process. For a pre-school teacher to be sensitive to an individual child, they must know his/her needs. Please let us know of any major events in your life that may influence your child's behavior or emotional state, such as a new baby, divorce, moving, change in employment, or death in the family.

A. Forms

1. A **Parent Contract** is signed by you and returned to the school early in the year. You will receive a **copy** of the contract the first week of school for your records;
2. **Medical Forms** required by the Health Department are discussed in Section IV of this handbook.
3. **Registration Form and proper fees** are turned in at the time of registration.
4. The **Emergency Information Card** and **Allergy Form** must be turned in before the Nursery opens in the fall. It is **extremely important** for you to submit an emergency number of a local person on your Emergency Information Card.
5. Please notify the staff if home, work, or cell telephone numbers change during the year.

B. Notes

In order for your child to have a successful year in Nursery school, it is vital that parents and teachers communicate closely. We have several ways of notifying you of school activities. The most common method of communication is through written notes sent home by way of your child. These notes will be stapled on top of your child's papers. Be certain you check your child's artwork daily to see if a note is coming your way. **Please** alert babysitters to watch for and ensure delivery of these important notes home.

C. Newsletter

You will also be informed of school activities through a regularly published newsletter, which will be sent home by way of your child, generally during the first week of the month. **Please read it** and make note of the dates it contains.

D. Parent Gatherings

There is always a "Meet the Teachers, See the Classrooms" night early in the fall for parents only. Our parents enjoy special programs and events prepared for them during the year by their children.

E. Conferences

In the spring, school is closed at two different times to provide an opportunity for parent - teacher conferences. The child will not be present during his/her conference. However, if you wish to discuss your child's progress at any time during the year, please feel free to request a conference with the teachers. They, from time to time, also may request a conference with you.

F. Telephone Calls

The telephone remains an excellent form of communications and the Nursery has one in the classroom. Please do not hesitate to use it when you have a question about a school policy or activity or if you are concerned about an issue involving your child. Feel free to call Mrs. McGuirk at school at 301.773.2297, or at home, 301.322.2574. Mrs. Carr is also available to assist you at 301.773.2297 or at home, 301.322.2044. We also provide an "emergency phone list" that enables us, through a list of names assigned to specific callers, in the event that we need to get an urgent message to parents.

G. Website

Please check out our website at www.cheverlynurseryschools.com for updated information, forms, past newsletters, fundraisers and photos. If you have anything you would like posted to the website pertaining to the Nursery school, please let us know.

VIII. PARENT PARTICIPATION

The Weekday Nursery is not a cooperative. However, there are many opportunities for parents to participate if they wish. Once a month parents send snack, drink and pepper products to school. They are needed to accompany and drive on field trips, occasionally to shop for supplies, and are a great resource to call upon for units we are studying. The teachers can suggest many ways to involve yourself in your child's school.

Fundraisers have become a necessary and enjoyable way for parents to participate, learn more about each other, and help the Nursery. Several fundraisers are scheduled each year. We must have active support from all parents for these events to be successful.

IX. TUITION PAYMENTS

Tuition payments are due on the first of each month. Payments can be made in the following manner:

1. Hand carried to the teachers, or
2. Mailed to Carol Hart, Weekday Nursery Treasurer
3416 63rd Avenue Cheverly, MD 20785
Telephone Carol for questions regarding payments at 301.386.4256

No other reminder will be sent home. Payments made after the 10th of each month are considered overdue. A **\$25.00 fee** will be charged. Returned checks will be charged to you at a fee of \$30.00. If a situation arises and you need to extend a morning into lunch time the fee will be \$10.00 from 11:15 am until 12:30 pm.

In accordance with the terms of your **Parent Contract**, tuition is to be paid as follows:

1. Full term payment (August through April)
2. Monthly payments (first payment is due **August 1**; final payment is due **April 1**).

If tuition becomes **one month delinquent**, the child may be removed from the program. If there are more than 2 overdrawn checks, you will be required to pay your tuition with cash or money order. If there should be a problem or crisis, our Treasurer is more than willing to make alternative arrangements with you.

X. ADJUSTING TO NURSERY SCHOOL

Getting a child started in Nursery School without tears or tantrums is an uncertain art. It's easier at four than three, easier with younger brothers and sisters than the first-born. We have also found that it is easier when the children have been in a short-term program (4 hours a week during the year) because they have made friends and are familiar with the Nursery area.

Some mothers are put through a skirt-clutching, "don't leave me" screaming scene when they try to detach their child at the classroom door or put the child in the car pool. But you do much to smooth the transition from home to Nursery by following these guidelines:

1. Help your youngster understand why he/she is going to Nursery School - because he/she will have more friends to play with, because there are more toys and equipment for him/her to use, because it's exciting and fun to learn new things. *Stress that it is for his/her enjoyment* and not for your convenience.
2. Be sure your child *knows what to expect* from the time he/she leaves you until he/she is home again. Children are uneasy if they aren't sure how their bathroom needs will be met, who will answer questions, what will happen if they feel sick or get hurt, and how they will get home.
3. Some mothers find it helps to play-act out a morning at Nursery School, from your matter of fact goodbye or your delighted hug at homecoming.
4. *Give your child a concrete way to measure time* during the morning and to estimate when he/she will be back with you, such as, "After you play with the toys, you will have a snack and there will be time for a story before you go out to play, then when you come back into the Nursery, it will be almost time to come home." Time, as told by the clock, has little meaning for most three and four year olds. They often feel reassured knowing the sequence of events at Nursery.

5. Assure your child *he/she won't be missing anything important at home*. This is especially important if a younger child stays with you. You might explain, "While you are in Nursery, I'll give the baby his/her bath, feed him/her and put him/her to bed. Then, I'm going to iron until you come home," or "I'll be at work."
6. Let your pre-schooler take along a cuddly stuffed animal or a favorite toy if he/she wishes (hopefully nothing really small because such items get lost very easily).
7. Dress your child in *comfortable play clothes* that will encourage their involvement in all kinds of activities.
8. Don't be upset about a few tears the first few weeks. It is as inevitable as the chicken pox. If your child does continue to protest or cry, teachers and parents will evaluate the situation.
9. Please don't infect your child with any uneasy or ambivalent feeling you may have about him/her going to Nursery School. Do not linger for one last hug or goodbye, thereby prolonging the separating. *We find children adapt much more easily if the parent does not get involved walking around the room before leaving. A quick goodbye is easier on everyone.*

XI. BRINGING YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL

The Nursery uses the back door to the church located near the playground equipment, under the metal steps. After 9:15 am and 12:45 pm, for reasons of security, this door will be locked. If you arrive after this, please take your child to the Forest Road door of the church building and ring the buzzer twice for the Nursery classroom.

We ask that you wait outside the outer door of the building or by your car when picking up your child from school. This procedure causes the least amount of confusion during the closing moments of our day.

In inclement, icy weather, when the steps are unsafe, or during thunderstorms or heavy rain, we will bring the children out by the Forest Road side door. During this time, you may bring them in by this door also, and proceed by stairway or elevator to the third floor.

In the interest of safety, we ask also that you park your car on the Church side of the parking lot. If you cannot find a spot there, please walk across and meet your child at the sidewalk. Do not park your care in the Church driveway.

It is absolutely essential that you inform the staff when someone other than yourself or the usual car pool is to pick up your child from the Nursery. A note sent with the child will be sufficient; in an emergency situation please phone the Nursery at 301.773.2297. We can not over emphasize the importance of this last point in helping us to better protect your child. Many parents choose to car pool to and from school. We provide a class list with names, addresses and telephone numbers the first week of school to facilitate the formation of car pools. Please inform the staff when you set up your car pools. Do not allow children to sue the elevator by themselves. Do not park your car in the church driveway or in front of the residences on Legion Drive.

XII. TRIPS

Field trips are socially and intellectually valuable and are an integral part of our curriculum.

- A. They are carefully planned and related to the current unit of study. It is expected that all children will participate in these experiences. Our general policy for field trips is that when they are close by, we go in cars driven by parents and when greater distance is involved, we go by Metro or hired bus. We charge a fee to cover the cost of the Metro fare. Trips **require** parents to accompany. In the interest of fairness, working parents are asked to arrange their work schedule to chaperone at least one trip a year. Seat belts and car seats are **mandatory** for car trips. The current Maryland State law is that all children younger than 6 years old and weighing 40 lbs or less, riding in a vehicle registered in the state of Maryland, must ride in a correctly used child restraint system that meets Motor Vehicle Administrations safety standards.
- B. Trips with **usually** be scheduled for morning. Morning, afternoon and full day students will attend trips together.
- C. After a trip, the half-day class will be dismissed. Full day students may stay for the remainder of the day.
- D. A written permission slip must be returned to school **two days before** the trip in order for your child to accompany the class. A part to indicate your availability to drive or ride along on a trip will also be provided on the permission slip. **If you tell us you will drive or ride, we assume you will be going.** Unless we are notified otherwise (at least a day ahead of time so that we have time to get another chaperone), **we will count on you.** On the other hand, **please do not surprise us by showing up unexpectedly on the day of the trip.** This causes us to have to rearrange parent-child groupings and delays our departure. We would love to have you go with us, but please let us know ahead of time.
- E. No children other than Nursery children may attend our field trips.

XIII. BIRTHDAYS

Generally, young children like to celebrate their birthdays at school. We like to have a **simple** birthday party at snack time. We ask that you limit your party preparation to providing a snack. Many parents include cupcakes, juice and party napkins. If you prefer to provide a cake, please include plates and plastic utensils. You may wish to be more creative in your party food, but check with the teachers first. A note will be sent home a few days prior to your child's birthday to inform you of class size and to set a date for the party. Children with summer birthdays may celebrate an "un-birthday" in the Spring. This will give the child the opportunity to share the birthday with his friends.

XIV. DRESS

The basis of our entire curriculum is **active involvement** and opportunity for creative expression. We find that children are much more comfortable and less inhibited if they come to school in play clothes. We do great many "messy" activities and play clothes definitely allow the child more freedom to be creative. We do provide shirts and smocks for additional protection while painting. Sturdy shoes, such as sneakers are advisable.

We are aware that many children receive lovely clothes from grandparents that they must wear somewhere. If your child does wear such good clothes to school, please impress on him/her that *having fun is more important than keeping clean*.

Each child **must** bring in a change of clothes (shirt, pants or shorts, underwear, and socks) in a plastic bag with their name on each piece in case of accidents. If used, it **must** be returned as soon as possible.

Outdoor play is an integral part of our program. We will play outside unless it rains, or is extremely cold. We ask that you dress your child appropriately for outdoor play. In the Winter, we recommend mittens and hats. We will help zip and button coats. Plastic "baggies" inside boots help the child to put on and remove boots more easily.

XV. FULL DAY CHILDREN

All day children must bring a lunch, including a beverage. Lunches will be refrigerated. A microwave is available for warming food. Please send instructions with lunch for those foods needing to be warmed. These children also need to bring a mat and blanket for resting. A small pillow may be sent also if your child wishes one. If a child happens to fall asleep, we will **not** wake them. We feel they must need the rest. All lunch and rest materials should have their name affixed to them.

XVI. DROP-IN

Drop-in will be available when and if space permits. A drop-in means coming all day on an **occasional** basis. The teachers require a 24-hour notice from parents in order to have a child drop-in. The fee for drop-in will be \$40.00 a day about tuition fee and **must** be paid the day of the drop-in. This service is for those of you that may need assistance in an emergency (i.e. doctor's appointment, shopping or family illness).

XVII. WAYS YOU CAN HELP

1. **We discourage the children from bringing in toys from home. However, if toys or books are brought to school on an occasional basis, please mark all books and toys brought to the school with the child's full name.** The Nursery cannot be responsible for lost items, but if notified, we can sometimes find the lost item. Only **one** toy or book please, to share. Please bring ***no small pieces*** to school.
2. **If toys, parts of games, or puzzle pieces are carried home** by mistake, please send them back to class the following day.
3. **Regular attendance is expected.** However, we understand if a young child needs a "rest day" or is doing a special thing with the family. If your child is out for more than three days, please contact the teachers. We would appreciate knowing about contagious diseases or extended illnesses.
4. **Please write down messages for your child to deliver to the teachers.** If you prefer, telephoning the message is also fine. Verbal messages can lose some of their meaning in translation, so please understand that we can not accept your message spoken through your child.
5. **For various reasons, the Nursery cannot accommodate children other than those that have been enrolled for the full term.** Please do not ask if another sibling, relative, or neighbor can stay for a session with your child.
6. **Show interest in the work your child brings home.** Take time to listen when your child wants to talk, but do not expect him/her to say, "We learned about such and such today." Usually if a parent will listen to the child when he/she plays, the parent can learn a lot more than by asking questions. To encourage your child to talk, you might rephrase a question about his/her painting: "Tell me about your picture", rather than, "What is it?"
7. **Encourage your child's creativity. Don't tell him/her to keep clean,** or to keep paint off his hands. Don't show disapproval or alarm at the occasional blue or green streak in his/her hair that may show up after a session in the art room.
8. The Nursery is well stocked with a variety of toys, so outside toys are largely unnecessary to bring to school. **However, if at any time your child has anything to share** with the other children; he/she may feel free to bring it to class. ***Please no glass or breakables!*** Also on the forbidden list are play guns or knives, or tiny toys and those with many small pieces. Make sure your child brings the object in a bag labeled with his/her full name.
9. **Please do not send invitations to a private home party to school for the teachers to hand out.** For your convenience in helping you make arrangements, we have provided a class list. This list is also very helpful for car pools, Valentines, Christmas cards, and after school play dates.

10. **Children should not bring food to school unless there is plenty to share with every child.** The class enjoys a snack and juice every day provided in turn by each Nursery family.
11. **Please try to bring your child on time to Nursery.** We certainly understand those days when you are running late, or have an early appointment, but we ask that you strive to limit your arrival time to ***no more than one-hour late***. Because our class duration is so short, and we pack so much into our time together, a child benefits little from the experience if he/she is brought to school with only minutes left in the session.

XVIII. EMERGENCY ROOM DRILLS

It has become necessary for us to find a room in the building in case of emergencies. The room is located on the first floor by the Forest Road door. It is not an ideal situation but in an emergency, it will do. There are not windows and it has metal doors.

We will have emergency drills at least once a month so that the children become familiar with procedures. We will also practice fire drills with the children to an outside area.

Each family must bring an emergency kit to school including a blanket, drink or two, non-perishable snack (canned fruit, crackers, raisins, nuts, granola bars, etc.). We will provide flashlights and/or lanterns, extra water, wipes, cups, napkins. There will also be a radio and our cell phones with us. In an emergency **only**, our cell phone numbers are 240.462.7103 and 301.651.4831.

Please be assured we will remain with your children until a family member can come for them. We will do everything we can do to re-assure the children and keep them safe.

