

Family Handbook



the grace school, inc.

Providing High Quality Care since 2003

15448 Lucia Riverbend Hwy
Stanley, NC 28164

The Grace School is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

Welcome to The Grace School!

Thank you for choosing The Grace School for your early childhood education needs. We are dedicated to providing you and your child with high-quality care and early childhood education services in a secure and stimulating environment that encourages each child to explore, learn, and develop at their own pace. We offer early childhood programs for children ages six weeks to five years of age. Our program's curriculum goals focus on developmental milestones at each stage of development and utilize developmental assessment to assure that each child's goals are met. We maintain a low teacher to child ratio in all of our classes and our teachers are required to meet the highest education standards set forth by the NC Division of Child Development. We look forward to working with you and your child as we watch your child blossom and reach their fullest potential!

Amy Simmons

Owner / Director

Operational Procedures

Ages of Children Served

The Grace School accepts and has classrooms equipped and designed to create ideal learning environments for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years old. We have one infant classroom; ages 6 weeks – 11 months, one toddler classroom; ages 12 months – 24 months, one 2-year-old classroom; ages 24 months – 36 months or until completely potty trained, one 3-year-old classroom, and one Pre- K / four year old classroom. Children are moved up based on space availability in the next classroom and developmental readiness.

Hours and Days of Operation

The Grace School is open Monday through Friday from 6:30 am to 6:00 pm, except for the following days where we will be closed throughout the year.

Closed for Holidays

- New Year's Day - January 1st
- Good Friday - Friday before Easter Sunday
- Memorial Day - Last Monday in May
- Independence Day - July 4th
- Labor Day - First Monday in September
- Thanksgiving Day - Fourth Thursday and Friday in November
- Christmas Eve - December 24th
- Christmas Day - December 25th
- One additional day according to the calendar

*If a holiday should fall during a weekend, the closing schedule will be posted in advance of a change.

*****Our teachers are paid for holidays, so full tuition is expected for those weeks.***

Enrollment

Available spots are filled on a first come first serve basis in all of our classrooms. We also maintain a waiting list for each classroom and spots will be filled after those individuals have been contacted. After visiting our classroom, families are given the opportunity to secure a spot for a future date with a \$100 registration fee. There is no charge for the wait list, only if you want to secure a specific start date.

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Additionally, the following paperwork must be submitted prior to your child's first day in the classroom:

1. Child's Application
2. Medical and Immunization Report
3. Completed Parent/Guardian Signature Page
4. Feeding schedule for infant and toddlers 15 months or younger

Classroom Orientation

We encourage families to schedule an orientation time for your child to spend time in the classroom prior to their first day. This gives children and families the opportunity to get used to their new learning environment. Classroom orientation is limited to one day and is offered free of charge.

Parent Communication

All Classrooms use Class Dojo to provide direct communication to your child's teacher. You will be provided with a QR code link for your child's class. Please use this tool to let us know if your child will be absent, if there are any changes to your child's pick up arrangements or if you have any questions. Teachers will also make class announcements and post pictures of activities.

Parent Conferences

We encourage you to schedule time to meet with your child's teacher to discuss your child's development. We will make announcements on Class Dojo when we will be scheduling annual conferences in the spring. Otherwise we are always available to meet with you to address any concerns that you have.

Parent Volunteers!

Get involved in your child's education early!! We have several family events throughout the year and encourage our families to get involved. Please see attached Holiday and Event Schedule. If you have a special talent that you would like to share or would like to sign up to read to your child's class, please let your child's teacher know. We love having parents in our classrooms!!

Cultural Heritage

Please let us know if you have unique culture or family traditions that you can share with our classrooms to help us create awareness and embrace diversity in our early learning community.

Staff Requirements

All of our staff are required to take and pass a criminal background check, be up to date in their medical reports to determine eligibility to work with children, and pass a TB test. Additionally, our staff members are all certified in First Aid and CPR for all ages.

Our teachers are required to meet the highest education standards that are set by the NC Division of Child Development depending on their position and age groups that they work with. Every year, teachers and staff are also required to take a certain amount of hours for training and additional courses to continue their professional development, which has also been determined by the position and the hours they work.

Reporting Suspected Abuse and Neglect Policy

North Carolina law requires childcare professionals to report any instance of suspected child abuse or neglect to the department of social services. Such reports are not accusations but rather requests that the appropriate agency check on the wellbeing of a child. In most cases, concerns would be discussed with families before (or at the time of) making such a report.

Nutrition

Our center is *nut-free* due to some children having severe allergies..

The Grace School provides hot lunch and afternoon snack daily. Each child is encouraged to try new foods as the menu changes periodically with the season. If your child has a food allergy, please make sure that we are aware of this at the time of enrollment. Families may provide substitutes for items that a child is allergic to, or we may discard certain items from the menu completely depending on the severity of the allergy.

We ask families to provide breakfast if your child does not eat breakfast at home. Please send your child's breakfast in a labeled lunch box.

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Illness/Medication

You have the best insight into your child and their health, and we trust that you will recognize when your child becomes ill. Any child who is ill should not be sent to the center. However, if your child becomes ill while in our care, such as they begin to display an unknown rash or they start acting out of character, your child's teachers will consult with the director and you may be called to take your child home. When you are called, you (or an alternate emergency person - whose information should be shared with the teacher or director at the time of notification) are expected to come immediately.

Children who have a fever or symptoms of a contagious disease (such as diarrhea, vomiting, eye redness, eye discharge, scabies, pinworms, or lice), or children who have been exposed to a contagious disease among family members, should not be at the center. Depending on the severity or nature of the illness, a doctor's statement may be required before a child is allowed to return to the center. Parents/guardians should notify the center when their child will be absent due to illness. **In order to return to the center, a child must be fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducers) and must wait 24 hours after the last episode of diarrhea or vomiting before returning to school.**

Below are the guidelines from the North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education regarding health conditions that require children to be excluded from care:

- Fahrenheit temperature over 100 degrees underarm, 101 degrees orally, or 102 degrees rectally
- Sudden onset of diarrhea characterized by an increased number of bowel movements compared to the child's normal pattern and with increased stool water
- Have a red eye with white or yellow discharge *until 24 hours after treatment*
- Have scabies or lice
- Have known chickenpox or a rash suggestive of chickenpox
- Have tuberculosis *until a health professional states that the child is not infectious*
- Have strep throat *until 24 hours after treatment has started*
- Have pertussis, *until 5 days after appropriate antibiotic treatment*
- Have hepatitis A virus infection, *until 1 week after onset of illness or jaundice*
- Have impetigo *until 24 hours after treatment*

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- Have a physician or other health professional's written order that the child be separated from other children

If a physician puts your child on an antibiotic for an illness, ***the child must be on the antibiotic for 24 hours before returning to the center.*** We will administer medication, as long as it meets the following requirements:

- If the medication is a prescription, it must have the child's name on the bottle. ***(Do not bring a sibling's medication.)***
- If the medication is over the counter, the child's age and weight must be on the box. We will not administer any medication intended for an adult or older child to a preschool-age child.
- A medical slip must be completed by the parent/guardian giving specific instructions for administering the medication.

Emergency Procedures

Our center has emergency plans for different situations. We have a fire plan, a severe weather plan, and a lock-down or intruder plan. We have monthly drills for the fire plan and quarterly drills for the lock-down/shelter-in-place plan. During each drill, the lead teachers check to make sure no children are left behind while they are evacuating the building, and they bring the attendance record to the meeting place to ensure all children are there. We do have an emergency response plan, should the need to evacuate the facility ever occur. With this plan, we will evacuate all classrooms and stay at Real Life Church where we will then begin making contact with the families of the children.

Fee Policies

Enrollment Fee

As previously stated, we do have a \$100 enrollment fee to secure a place for your child in a classroom for their age.

Tuition

Tuition is processed weekly, every Monday using Tuition Express. A secure payment draft form will be completed during enrollment. Please be sure to let us know if your account information such as expiration dates change.

If a payment is declined, Procure, the company that manages Tuition Express will charge a \$20 declined tuition fee. We will notify you and let you know that we will process the payment again with the \$20 fee. After two attempts, a cash

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payment will be due on the day that you are notified. Full-time tuition is due every week rather or not your child attends.

Please remember that we depend on your child's tuition payment to meet the expenses of running a high-quality program for you and your child to enjoy, so we thank you in advance for making sure that your payment will not be declined.

Of course, we do understand that occasionally life happens and things don't always go as planned, so please feel free to come and talk with Ms. Amy about any special circumstances as they arise.

Weekly Tuition Rates

Infants	\$350
Toddlers	\$285
Two's	\$275
Threes - Fives	\$260

Late Fees

If you are going to be late in picking up your child without previous notification, you will be charged \$1 per minute after 6:00 pm.

What to Bring to School

Infants:

- Pack and Play size crib sheet
 - One for each day, since dirty sheets will be sent home daily
- Bottles that are labeled with your child's name and the date
- Diapers
- Wipes
- Pacifiers (if needed) - one with a clip and one without a clip
- Change of clothes - at least 2 to 3 complete changes
- Diaper cream
 - Is considered a medication and **must** include a medication slip

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Toddlers:

- Standard size crib sheet for cot
- Diapers
- Wipes
- Blanket for rest time
- Change of clothes - at least 2 changes
 - * Children must wear hard-soled shoes daily
- Sippy cup sent in daily for milk that is labeled with your child's name and the date

Two's:

- Standard size crib sheet for rest time
- Blanket for rest time
- Change of clothes - at least 2
 - * If your child is going through potty training, they may require more changes of clothes and at least one extra pair of shoes
- Diapers or pullups
- Wipes
- Cup or water bottle

Three's and Pre-K:

- Standard size crib sheet for rest time
- Blanket for rest time
- Change of clothes - at least 2

*Occasionally we will ask for water shoes and a hat depending on the weather.

**We ask that children do not bring toys from home as this can cause a disturbance in the classroom, and we do not want to be responsible for broken toys.*

Appropriate Dress and Participation

Please dress your child in play clothes to come to school. Learning can sometimes be very messy. We also ask that children wear ***closed-toe shoes every day*** in order to prevent foot injuries on the playground.

Please make sure that your child has a coat when the weather gets cold. We will go outside unless there is a weather advisory or active precipitation. All classrooms have a weather chart to determine rather it is safe to take the children outside.

Curriculum and Classroom Activities

Our infant and Pre-K classrooms utilize The Creative Curriculum, which is a research-based curriculum approved by the Division of Child Development and Smart Start. The Creative Curriculum provides teachers with the flexibility to develop individualized and group lesson plans in order to meet each child's developmental needs.

Developmental assessments are completed periodically to assess children's needs. Families are encouraged to communicate with their child's teacher regarding developmental concerns.

Our one-year-old through three-year old classrooms utilize Mother Goose Time, which is a play-based curriculum approved by the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education. It provides learning opportunities in all areas of development through a variety of hands-on S.T.E.A.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) activities.

**** None of our classrooms or curricula utilize or send home worksheets, as we believe that children learn best through play and meaningful experiences with their teachers, peers, and materials to help promote their development.**

Outdoor Play Guidelines

Playing outdoors is an exciting part of a child's day. During outdoor time children have the freedom to run, jump, skip, and be as loud as they desire. Depending on weather conditions, we take the children outside two times daily, once in the morning and once in the afternoon.

In addition to playground activities, children take nature walks and play organized sports such as soccer.

Safe Arrival and Departure Procedures

Parents/guardians must accompany their child to their classroom upon arrival and sign their child in every day. They are required to take their child to wash their hands prior to interacting with materials or other children. Please make sure that the teacher on duty is aware of your child's presence in the classroom before leaving.

When arriving to pick up your child, please make sure that you check your child's cubby and classroom communication center for the end of the day information. Parents/guardians must sign their child out prior to leaving. If someone else will be picking up your child, please make sure that they are listed on your child's application,

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otherwise, we will require a note sent from home that indicates the name of the person who will be expected to pick up. In an emergency situation, we will accept a phone call from the family if someone else needs to be sent. We will check identification when someone other than the parent/guardian picks up the child.

Discipline and Behavior Management:

We understand that children are going to display challenging behaviors in a classroom setting. A challenging behavior is one that harms the child, harms another child, harms a teacher or disrupts the classroom.

We work very hard to set up our environment to encourage positive behaviors and avoid conflicts. We model appropriate behaviors and re-direct children using appropriate positive discipline techniques.

Because there are times when a child may show persistent challenging behavior, the following steps will be taken to address such behaviors:

- 1) Family consultation
- 2) Behavior specialist observation
- 3) Referral for intervention services
- 4) Implementation of Individual Behavior Plan

If the above steps do not decrease or eliminate the challenging behavior decisions will be made to exclude a child from care temporarily (suspension) or exclude a child from care permanently.