



little seedlings

Cooperative Playschool

Parent Information Package

(Last revised August 30, 2009)

Sept. 2009

Dear Parent,

Welcome to *your* playschool! In this package we hope to provide you with all the information that you and your child need to get started. This ministry at Fort William Baptist is in its fourth year and we're still learning as we go along. We are a cooperative playschool and so very much welcome your questions and input. We pray that this God-centred, Christ-exalting ministry will be a blessing to you and your child.

Blessings,

Lezlie Gomes
Linda Petteplace
Eleanor Trendiak
Emily Balec
Jess Armstrong

VISION

Our vision is to provide a warm, safe and stimulating Christian environment where children aged 18 months - 4 years can learn and develop through a variety of age-appropriate activities.

We decided on our name, “Little Seedlings Cooperative Playschool” based on the Psalm 92: 12-14, “*The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green...*” We want our children to grow up to be “mighty oaks of righteousness” with a deep-rooted faith that weathers the storms of life and bears fruit for God’s glory. We want to partner with parents to communicate the greatness of God, the glory of Christ, and the power of the Gospel.

The playschool respects and seeks to enhance the parent-child attachment relationship through parental involvement in the child’s playschool experience. Because of the cooperative nature of the playschool, parents have the unique opportunity to watch their children interact both with other children and other caregivers. Further, parents may develop their parenting strategies while serving each other and supporting each other as parents.

ORGANIZATION

The playschool is led by a steering team of parents and volunteers with specific giftings in administration, teaching children, etc. who are affirmed by the eldership of Fort William Baptist Church. Our current steering team is comprised of Lezlie Gomes (Administrator), Linda Petteplace (Assistant), Eleanor Trendiak (Resident Grandma) and Emily Balec (Teacher). The steering team is responsible for overseeing and organizing Christian-based themes/curriculum and stimulating activities, snacks, playroom set-up & take down, duty-parent schedule, etc. We purposefully teach a God-centred and Christ-exalting age-appropriate curriculum. All parents serve as “duty parents”, or teaching assistants. Please see “Expectations for Parents” below for further information on the role of parents in the playschool.

OUR TEACHER

Our teacher is the consistent face your children will see. This consistency and predictability is important for children to feel safe & secure in their environment. The roles and responsibilities of the teacher are outlined below:

- ☺ Conduct “good-morning” circle/prayer time with children
- ☺ Ensure that all children are signed in when they arrive and do not leave until they are signed out by their parent or authorized care-giver
- ☺ Oversee and be available to help duty parents carry out their morning duties at their chosen station
- ☺ Be available to help parents redirect and intervene when children are misbehaving
- ☺ Conduct music/worship times with the children
- ☺ Conduct teaching times using a God-centred and Christ-exalting age-appropriate curriculum
- ☺ Organize playroom themes
- ☺ Organize crafts that correspond with playroom or curriculum theme and coordinate their preparation
- ☺ Be a positive role model
- ☺ Attend steering team meetings
- ☺ Move the children from activity to activity through transitional songs
- ☺ Be a member of Fort William Baptist Church

EXPECTATIONS FOR PARENTS

Assignment of Duty and Reserve Days

As a parent of a preschooler, you are expected to be a “duty parents” on a rotation basis. On your duty days, you will be responsible for supervising various parts of the playroom and intervening with children when needed. Please arrive a few minutes early to help set-up the playroom and choose an apron. Each apron signifies an area of the playroom for which each duty parent is responsible and are located in that particular area (e.g., the “Play” duty parent will wear the “Play” apron, located in the large motor area). Job descriptions are posted near each duty area. You are expected to familiarize yourself with the responsibilities of your chosen area prior to free-play time.

At the end of the preceding month, you or your partner will be asked to sign up for two or three days on which you would prefer to be a duty parent. You will also be asked to sign up for a day on which you will be “on reserve”. Being on reserve means that if a schedule duty parent is unable to make it to playschool at the last minute (e.g., a child has woke up ill, family emergency, etc), the reserve parent may be asked to stay. In this case, the duty parent for whom the reserve parent covering will “owe” the reserve parent a duty day the following month. When on reserve you will be asked to stay until all the scheduled duty parents arrive so you know that you are not needed. If you are unable to make the day on which you have been scheduled for duty, please try to call another parent to switch duty days. The reserve parent should be reserved for last minute emergencies only.

From the sign up sheet, duty and reserve days will be finalized after which a schedule will be posted and also emailed to parents. Sign-up sheets and finalized schedules are located on the parent bulletin board on the grey room divider and also on the welcome table.

If you prefer, grandparents or godparents may act as duty parents. We do ask, however, that only 2 adults/child act as duty parents as we need to provide consistency for all the playschool children.

Police Checks

For the safety of the children, all parents/grandparents/godparents/volunteers who are involved in the playschool program will need to have a police check completed.

Snack

You will also be asked to sign up to bring snack (usually on a day for which you are on duty). For each snack time, children will receive juice, a fruit/vegetable, and a type of carbohydrate (e.g., crackers, pretzels, etc.). PLEASE READ LABELS AND DO NOT BRING ANYTHING THAT CONTAINS NUTS OR MAY HAVE COME INTO CONTACT WITH NUTS. It is also important that fruit is not prepared at home (it is possible that some cross-contamination with nuts may occur). One parent will be assigned to bring snack for each day. Please bring a can/bottle of juice and two fruits/vegetables. An example of a snack served to your child would include: apple juice (the “chef” will dilute with water), pretzels, a whole cantaloupe, and a cucumber.

If your child is having a birthday and would like to celebrate with his/her playschool friends, you may bring in a store-bought cake to celebrate if you wish. McCain’s cakes are safe to bring (e.g., do not contain nuts).

Diapers

For sanitary reasons, we would ask that you take home soiled/wet diapers. Duty-parents will bag soiled/wet diapers and leave them in your child’s basket for you to take home.

Parent Meetings

Because the playschool is cooperative in nature, we rely on parents to help run the program and to give us feedback. Parent meetings will be held throughout the year. Please plan to attend since your input is needed. We will ensure that there are sufficient adults to run the program during the morning meetings so that parents are on duty may attend as well.

Disseminating Information

There are several means by which we communicate information to parents. There is a parent bulletin board on the grey divider in the playroom as well as information on the welcome table. Please check these areas each week for notices, duty schedules, etc. Further, we will regularly post information on our blog (<http://christiancoopplayschool.blogspot.com/>). We may also email or call you with updates or notices of upcoming events. If you feel that you are *not* well informed, please do let us know (or if you feel you are *over* informed, that is useful for us to know as well). Please also see the welcome table each week for crafts/artwork that your child has completed, colouring sheets, or parent information sheets that correspond to our curriculum, etc.

Cost

We ask that parents give \$2.00 a week (\$1.00 for each additional child) for their child's participation in the playschool to cover the costs of playschool supplies (e.g., sand/rice for sensory table, paper & paint for easels, flour/salt for play-doh, etc.) and to save for larger items such as bookshelves and easels. We will not be "collecting" the money, however, there will be a "toonie basket" on the welcome table each week. *If you prefer, you may pay \$25/term if you find this easier than trying to remember to bring change each week.*

Discipline

All parents are expected to help children deal with social conflicts and self-expression appropriately. When a child is hurting him/herself or another child or otherwise misbehaving, please help redirect the child in a firm, but friendly manner to help the him/her reach acceptable alternatives. This should be done in a way that respects the child and demonstrates Christian love. If you are uncertain how to intervene, please feel free to seek out another parent or teacher to help.

Siblings

If you are on duty and have other children who are not preschool-aged (e.g., older siblings who are home-schooled or do not go to school on playschool day, infant siblings, etc.), it is your responsibility to arrange for their care. If you wish to do so, you may bring the siblings to the playschool; however, you and not the other duty parents are responsible for their care. If you wish to bring an infant, you may want to take on the responsibilities of the chef so you may care for the child in the kitchen while preparing and cleaning up from the morning snack.

Courtesy

Playschool ends at 11:15 am, sharp. It is important for you to be on time to pick up your child. Children need to know that their parents will be there to pick them up. If all of your child's friends have already left, s/he will likely become concerned about you. Further, being on time to pick up your child is respectful to other parents and volunteers. If you were consistently late, we would ask that you would take an extra duty day the following month.

Playroom Duties

Each duty parent has specific responsibilities throughout the morning. These job descriptions are posted near the respective stations.

"EASEL" (Easel/Sensory Table Area)

- ☺ Put on children's smocks, roll up sleeves, help to wash hands, take off smocks
- ☺ Label all artwork with child's properly spelled name, class, date and hang to dry
- ☺ Ensure sensory (sand, water, etc) stays on table
- ☺ At tidy up time, put paint lids, containers, brushes and sensory toys into bucket with hand-washing rags and take into kitchen for washing
- ☺ Remove paint trays to wash, wipe up easel and floor area
- ☺ Put paint cups/brushes back in playschool cupboard after they are washed
- ☺ Take the easel outside the double doors so it can be stowed in the closet under the stairs

- ☺ For sand table, cover & put on top of the playschool cupboard
- ☺ For water table, empty water out, dry, & put on top of playschool cupboard
- ☺ Disinfect with bleach spray and wipe
- ☺ Lead children to washroom and assist with hand washing
- ☺ Help serve snack and juice; plates and cups are put in window for the chef
- ☺ Disinfect snack table with bleach spray and wipe, return tables and chairs to positions
- ☺ Sweep floors

“CHEF” (Kitchen Area)

- ☺ Cannot take children to the washroom or do diaper changes
- ☺ Provide towels for hand-bucket at the easel station at start of day
- ☺ Make sure the soap & water spray bottle is full & at the easel station for the start of the day
- ☺ Return any clean, dry toys from kitchen
- ☺ Check with teacher/coordinator about washing toys, filing artwork or assisting with activities
- ☺ Check labels on snack (must be peanut free), log what snacks were served
- ☺ Check for allergies (list in chef book) and prepare individual snack if necessary
- ☺ Prepare snack, place into correct number of bowls and cups
- ☺ Prepare tables/chairs for snack
- ☺ Serve snack and seconds, return unused snack to snack parent
- ☺ Wash dirty cups, dishes and lids & let air dry if time allows
- ☺ Wash used toys, paint containers, brushes and let air dry in racks if time allows
- ☺ Sweep kitchen floor

“PLAY” (Gross Motor Area)

- ☺ Monitor and interact with children at gross motor area, staying at this station
- ☺ Help the children to put activities away at tidy up time
- ☺ Take activities from station (e.g., tricycles, climbers, hoops) and put them outside the double doors so they may be stowed in the closet under the stairs
- ☺ Send children to other areas when tidy
- ☺ Assist easel/chef to clean and prepare for snack
- ☺ Wash children's hands for snack, help with washroom and diaper changes as necessary
- ☺ Help serve snack after grace and help serve seconds

“FLOAT”

- ☺ Assist teacher/coordinator with set-up
- ☺ Help with craft, sensory table or floor toys (teacher/coordinator will direct)
- ☺ Assist children who need to use the washroom or need a diaper change during free-play
- ☺ Help with tidy up, help with circle time (younger class)
- ☺ Assist with serving snack and seconds
- ☺ Help clean up playroom & return all toys & activities to the playschool cupboard or to the closet under the stairs
- ☺ Wash tables after snack and stack them on the side of the room between the classrooms once they are dry

Jobs

You will be asked to sign up for a specific job for which you will be responsible for the year. These may include:

- ☺ Making play-dough
- ☺ Play room set up
- ☺ Play room take down/clean up
- ☺ Washing rags, costumes, etc.
- ☺ Preparing crafts (e.g., cutting out construction paper shapes, etc.)
- ☺ Card ministry coordinator
- ☺ Welcome table/ Prayer coordinator
- ☺ Advertising
- ☺ Newsletter
- ☺ Bookkeeping/financial accountability
- ☺ Playroom resource coordinator
- ☺ Social coordinator

A TYPICAL DAY: WHAT YOU AND YOUR CHILD CAN EXPECT

We have attached a sample schedule for what a typical day will look like for our children. Although the times may be flexible, we will endeavour to keep the routine consistent from week to week so children will know what to expect. Within this schedule, children will have the opportunity to play, learn and interact through both free-play and structured activities.

When you arrive

Please come in through the office doors of the church and go downstairs to the basement. Outdoor clothing may be left on the hooks at the bottom of the stairs. Feel free to bring slippers or indoor shoes for you and your child. As you enter the playroom, there is a shelf on your left. Each child has their own basket in which to leave personal belongings. Baskets will also be used for your child's crafts and artwork, newsletters, and other parent information. Please direct your child to the corner beside the kitchen. If you are on duty, retrieve an apron from the playroom or kitchen and then join your child as he/she waits for his/her friends to arrive. There are lots of books to sit and read with your child as you wait for the morning to begin. At 9:30, we will sing the "Good Morning Song" and find out from each child how they are feeling. After an intro to the day, short announcements for parents and prayer, children may move into free-play in the playroom. At this time, non-duty parents may say good-bye to their children and reassure them that they will be back.

Free-Play

A playroom with different stations is set up each week in the basement of the church. These stations will include easels for painting, a sensory table (e.g., sand, jello, cotton balls, rice, water, etc.), a book rack, books and mats for reading, play dough, an area for pretend-play, a gross-motor area with tricycles, a ball tent, bean bags, etc.

Themes

The playschool has both weekly and monthly themes. The weekly themes correspond with the curriculum (e.g., "God Made Everything") and the monthly themes (e.g., "Winter" for January, "Red" for February, etc.) reflect what our children are experiencing in their everyday lives. Sensory activities, crafts, songs, stories, etc. will be based on these themes. In January, for example, our theme was "Winter" because it something

our children experience each day in January, especially in Thunder Bay! We played with ice cubes and made snowmen with play dough and potato head parts in our sensory area and did finger plays and crafts reflecting snow and winter, all the while emphasizing that God made winter. Our weekly themes are reflected in the story/teaching time, in our worship/music time, in our crafts and in the playroom in general. For example, on the tables on which the children do their crafts and play with play dough are written themes that reflect Biblical truths (e.g., “God is Big”, “God Made Everything”). Children making play dough animals and be reminded by parents, volunteers and parents that “God made all the animals. God made everything!”

Circle/Teaching Time

Our children are taught a God-centred and Christ-exalting age-appropriate curriculum that compliments the Sunday school curriculum at Fort William Baptist. Although the team of duty parents changes from week to week, the teacher’s presence is consistent. This helps children know what to expect and helps them feel safe during their playschool time.

During teaching times, children will be expected to sit with their peers and to participate. We understand that some children are still learning this skill and so teaching times will be age-appropriate in their length and content. Duty parents will help redirect children who are struggling to sit still. This fall, we are going to divide the class by age for the snack and circle times to better meet the needs of individual children and so the teaching may be more developmentally appropriate. Younger children will have their snack and circle time in one of the classrooms while the older children will remain in the larger playroom or in another classroom.

How You May Prepare Your Child for Playschool

Your child will likely adjust to playschool more easily if they know what to expect. To facilitate this, you may want to explain the approximate routine s/he will follow while at playschool:

- ☺ You will take off outside clothes & put on indoor shoes
- ☺ You will play inside with toys, play dough, do a craft or painting
- ☺ Other children will be playing too
- ☺ You will help your friends put the toys away when playtime is over
- ☺ You will join a circle with our friends for Bible/Christian stories, songs & games
- ☺ You will go to the washroom to wash our hands before snack
- ☺ You will sit with your friends, thank God for your food and eat your snack (e.g., crackers, fruit, juice, etc.)
- ☺ You will sing songs

You may find a book at the library or bookstore to read to your child that shows a child’s first nursery or playschool experience.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

- 9:20 am Arrive, take off outdoor clothes, sit in the circle & wait for our friends to arrive
- 9:30 Sing “Good morning” song**, introduce themes for the day, pray
- 9:40 Worship-time
Non-duty parents may leave or wait until after worship time (whichever is less disruptive for their child)
- 9:50 Free-play in the playroom
- 10:35 “Now it’s time to tidy up” song**
Hand-washing/Bathroom (younger children first, then older children)
Float & Younger class teacher take younger children to bathroom & then to classroom for snack while **Easel and Play** duty parents help older children finish tidying the playroom
Easel and Play duty parents take older children to bathroom; **teacher** waits for children and directs them to a seat at the table
Chef/teacher prepare playroom tables for snack (older children)
“Jonny Appleseed” Grace** & Snack
- 10:50 “Make a circle” song**
Circle Time/Prayer Time/Memory work
- 11:00 Stories/Songs/Games
- 11:15 “Good-Bye” Song**, say “good-bye” to all our friends & clean up

**Lyrics included in this information package

REGULAR SONGS

We've included the lyrics for the songs that we do each week so you may both familiarize yourself with them and sing them with your child through the week.

“Good-Morning” Song

Good Morning, Good Morning, Good Morning to you
Good Morning, God's children and how do you do?
Your faces like sunshine, they brighten our day.
Good Morning, Good Morning
We're glad that you came!
Good Morning!

“How are you?” Song

_____ (child's name), _____ (child's name)
How are you?
You are my friend and God loves you!
_____ (child's name), _____ (child's name)
How are you?
Jesus loves me, He loves you!

“Clean Up Clean Up”(from Barney)

Clean up clean up everybody everywhere. Clean up clean up everybody do your share.
Clean up clean up everybody everywhere. Clean up clean up everybody do your share.

“Make a circle” Song (Tune: “Frere Jacques)

Make a circle, make a circle
Big and round, big and round.
Everybody join hands, everybody join hands.
Let's sit down, let's sit down.

“Jonny Appleseed” Grace

Oh the Lord is good to me and
So I thank the Lord
For giving me, the things I need
The sun and the rain and the apple seed.
The Lord is good to me
Jonny Appleseed, Amen!

“Good-Bye” Song

Good bye _____ (child's name) x3, we'll see you another day!