



Little Lambs of Grace Preschool



Parent Handbook
www.littlelambsofgrace.com



LITTLE LAMBS
of Grace
PRESCHOOL

Welcome to Little Lambs of Grace

As the Pastor of Grace Chapel, I am overjoyed with the opportunity to offer to our community a gifted, loving, and caring staff with hearts for children in an excellent facility. The name of the school itself has great significance, originating with my mother's nursery school over 30 years ago. As the original Little Lambs school was steadfastly based on Christian principles, so too is Little Lambs of Grace.

Educational climate today seems to be as fickle as the changing hairstyles of the day. Many of the newer child care facilities have taken on the convenience and departmentalization of the fast food industry. The simple truth is that children need to be loved and to be taught to love others around them. It is in this type of environment that children will thrive. Our children deserve honor and respect. They deserve safe environments in which they can develop and mature – physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Little Lambs of Grace has exceptional teachers in each classroom. Our staff and curriculum focus on offering to the parent a school where children learn basic Biblical principles, strengthen development of the whole child, and prepare children for kindergarten. Thank you for trusting us with the care of your son or daughter. We hope to assist you this year and hopefully make parenting a little easier for you.

Mission Statement

Little Lambs of Grace is committed to excellence in providing a loving and nurturing Christian environment in which children can flourish socially, academically, and spiritually.

About The Program

The program has been carefully planned to aid in the development of the "whole child". The school integrates a variety of activities such as: Bible, crafts, structured play, games, stories, academics and music just to name a few.

Curriculum has been prepared to foster character development and teach essential learning skills including oral language development, math skills, gross and fine motor skills, reading appreciation, as well as beginning phonics in preparation for further education. Parents will be notified in writing of policy changes.

Staff

Little Lambs of Grace has prayerfully selected experienced staff. Our loving employees are CPR and first aid trained and meets all the state licensing requirements. We do criminal history and fingerprint checks on all employees to ensure the safest environment possible. Our staff also receives ongoing training to keep them current on the latest child development research.

Little Lambs employees are not required to have vaccines.

ABOUT THE ADMINISTRATOR

Rev. Mark Gardner is the administrator of Little Lambs of Grace. Mark is an accomplished educator. After serving active duty in the Army he completed an undergraduate degree in English with a Specialization in Spanish at Roberts Wesleyan College in Rochester, NY. Following graduation, he took a position in Claude, Texas as a high school and middle school teacher. One year later he took another position in Magnolia, Texas. For a total of 11 years he taught English, Spanish, and Reading Improvement. In 2003 he completed a Master of Education in Administration with honors from Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas.

Pastor Mark continued in the U.S. Army Reserves throughout his teaching years. He retired as a Chief Warrant Officer 4 (CW4) in 2011 after twenty-four years of service. For the entirety of his career he served in the Military Intelligence Branch as both a Non-commissioned Officer and a Warrant Officer. During his career his area of emphasis was the collection of Signal Intelligence (SIGINT) Information to include Cryptologic communications. He is a veteran of the Iraqi War (Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operations Enduring Freedom).

After his deployment to Iraq in 2003 he left public education; but, not education completely. In 2006, he opened our preschool. Mark is also an ordained minister with the Assemblies of God. In 2004 Mark returned from assignment in Iraq and began to lead our church, Grace Chapel Assembly of God, as the Lead Pastor. In 2014 he received his ordination papers through the Assemblies of God. He also completed a Master of Bible and Theology from Southwestern Assemblies of God University in Waxahachie, Texas. Grace Chapel continues to grow in influence in the community and numerically.

Mark married his wife, Cynthia Akers, in 1984. Together they have two children. Their eldest daughter, Brittini, married Austin Poper and now has two children, Joshua and Judah. Mark and Cindy's son, Jesse, married Jessica French and now has a son and daughter, Hudson and Charlotte. Mark enjoys fishing, football (Texans and Bills), woodworking, and general landscaping.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

The preschool is directed by Gladys Stampley. She has been teaching at Little Lambs since July 2007 and holds a director's certificate since August 2009. Her passion is for preschool education and the development of the whole child- physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Enrollment Requirements

The preschool enrollment is for children age 6 months -5 years. We can accept children up to 12 years of age for before/after care programs or for summer camp.

Little Lambs of Grace makes a conscious effort to provide student to teacher ratios. Additional applicants are placed on a waiting list.

Children enrolling in Preschool must be at least 6 months old. Children enrolling in Pre-K must be 4 years old on or before Sep.1st. We will accept 5-year old's that have not yet entered Kindergarten.

When registering your child, there will be a one-week grace period for holding your child's spot after your enrollment date. You are responsible for the \$75 enrollment fee plus the first week tuition the week after the grace period that is to be paid up front. We will not hold any spots open for more than 1 week without the enrollment fee and tuition for the weeks after your child's first day of school.

Also, it is a requirement that all students who are four years old must have a vision/hearing screening done within 120 days of enrollment in a school or day care center.

Completed enrollment forms must be filed with us. An informal interview with the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and child is requested. It is expected that the child will maintain a weekly attendance.

Summer:

LLOG provides flexible options for families during the summer. Stated on the Financial Agreement before/after care is offered for an additional \$5.50 per hour. Space is subject to availability. For students continuing from spring there is a \$25 registration fee for summer. Families who use LLOG for summer camp must use a minimum of 2 days per summer or a \$75 fee will be applied. Families who do not use LLOG during the summer will be charged the \$75 re-enrollment fee in the fall.

HEALTH RECORDS

The Texas Department of Health requires that each child be current on immunizations. Updated immunization records must be kept on file at Little Lambs of Grace. As of Sept. 2006, it is now required that all students that are two and older must have a Hepatitis-A shot. Immunization records must be stamped or signed by the doctor's office. Effective January 1, 2011 verification of the Hib booster will be required for all children ages 12-15 months, attending child-care facilities. Little Lambs policy is that we only accept children that are vaccinated, and they must stay updated on their immunizations for their duration at Little Lambs. We accept delayed immunizations, but they must be completed and signed by the doctor office.

PreK-Potty Trained

Children must be potty-trained prior to entering the Orange Owl's PreK classroom. Independent bathroom and personal hygiene skills are important developmental milestones for this age group.

A potty-trained child is a child who can do the following:

- 1) Be able to TELL the adult they have to go potty BEFORE they have to go. They must be able to say the words "I have to go potty or something similar" BEFORE they have to go.
- 2) Be able to pull down their underwear and pants and get them back up without assistance.
- 3) Be able to wipe themselves with minimal assistance after using the toilet.
- 4) Be able to get off the potty by themselves.
- 5) Be able to wash and dry your hands.
- 6) Be able to postpone going if they must wait for someone who is in the bathroom or if we are outside and away from the classroom.

Steps to Enrollment

Step 1: Fill out and return the enrollment forms and New Student enrollment fee (\$75) to reserve a spot for your child in the program. These forms include:

Admission Information Packet

- Financial Agreement Packet
- Photo Release Form
- Health Care Professional Statement
- Child Assessment
- Allergy Action Plan
- Vision and Hearing Screening Test Results from child's Doctor (4 year old's only)

Nursery Only:

- All Above Documents (excluding vision and hearing)
- Getting to Know You
- Monthly Feeding
- Safe Sleep

Step 2: Turn in Birth Certificate and Current Immunization Records (must be signed or stamped by the doctor office)

Step 3: Turn in \$25 registration fee for current semester. (An additional \$25 registration fee is required for enrolling in each Fall, Spring and Summer Semester)

Step 4: First day of school!!!! Come prepared to learn and be blessed!!

Note: All forms including the enrollment fee, birth certificate, and current signed or stamped immunization records must be turned in and completed before your child's first day.

Operational Policies

HOURS OF OPERATION

Little Lambs of Grace is open from 7:00 am – 6:00 pm on Monday through Friday.

The preschool and prekindergarten classes are at 9:00 am – 3:00 pm.

Before and after care is offered. Before care begins at 7:00 am. After care is from 3:00 pm -6:00 pm and it ends promptly at 6:00 pm. (A late fee will be accessed of \$1.00 per minute after 6:05 pm.)

-Parents will be notified in writing of any policy changes.

HOLIDAY and VACATIONS

Little Lambs will be closed:

New Year's Day

Good Friday

Presidents Day (Inservice)

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Back to School (Inservice, date TBD)

Labor Day

Columbus Day (Inservice)

Thanksgiving Day

The Friday after Thanksgiving

Christmas Eve

Christmas Day

Little Lambs is closed the week after Christmas. The tuition fee for that week will be waived!

It is our policy to charge regular tuition for holiday weeks. There are no absentee refunds.

BAD WEATHER SCHOOL CLOSING

In case of bad weather, the school will be closed if the Magnolia Schools are closed.

The following radio and TV channels will make announcements and provide information:

AM stations: 740-KTRH

FM stations: 95.7-KHUZ 92.9-KKBQ

TV stations: 2-KPRC 11-KHOU

13-KTRK 26-FOX

Also- www.magnoliaisd.org/schoolclose.htm

In case of emergency, call Gladys Stampley at (713) 494-4968

Inclement Weather

Little Lambs of Grace takes into consideration several factors when making the judgment as to whether we will open late or close early due to inclement weather. We do our own assessment of the conditions including local authority recommendations, local road conditions and forecasted temperatures. Please call Little Lambs, check email, or check our social media for announcements about closings due to inclement weather or other foreseen circumstances.

If Little Lambs must close due to unexpected circumstances, such as inclement weather, then full payment of tuition is required. We reserve the right to close any additional days needed to make sure we can operate in full integrity and full tuition is expected. We will work together with families to make sure our decisions are fair and honorable.

DROP OFF AND PICK UP SAFETY PROCEDURES

Our responsibility for your child begins when you have signed in and placed your child in the care of a staff member of Little Lambs of Grace. Under NO circumstances should a child be sent into the building or walk outside the building alone. We will not release a child into the custody of a parent or guardian who is suspected of being under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or other types of impairment. If a situation arises, the employee will inform the parent that, in the interest of the parent and the child, it would be best for the parent to call another person to pick up the child. If the parent is unwilling, the Little Lambs employee is required to dial 911 immediately and retain custody of the child.

*Any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

* Parents will no longer be able to bring siblings past door when dropping off or picking up their child(ren) that is enrolled in LLOG. This is due to the safety of our students.

*Restrictions: No alcohol or tobacco on campus

Little Lambs of Grace staff will only release your child to persons on your authorized pick up list, unless the parent notifies the school beforehand. In the event of custodial disputes, we must have legal documentation (signed by Judge Court decree) proving child custody. A driver's license or some other type of picture ID will be required for all authorized pickups. If an emergency arises and you need your child picked up by someone not on the authorized pickup list, please call in to the office and give the information to the director.

Financial Policies

NEW STUDENT ENROLLMENT FEE:

There is a one-time nonrefundable fee
\$75 for first child and
\$50 each additional child
\$25 per child registration fee for Fall Semester
\$25 per child registration fee for Spring Semester
\$25 per child registration fee for Summer Semester

Prepaid enrollment fees and *first week's tuition* are nonrefundable and will guarantee your child's spot in the class. Your child's spot is secure for only one week after the enrollment date.

TUITION FEES:

Tuition is tailored to fit your child's needs. Our program is from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. We offer full time or full time (9-3) with extended care (7-6), or a Mother's Day out for 2 or 3 days. Extended care is available for part timers for \$5.50 an hour. A financial agreement is signed at time of enrollment. Any changes made require a new agreement form.

*Before/after care students only will be charged a set amount of \$70 weekly. This applies to school age students only.

Notes:

- Classes are contingent on availability of space.
- Weekly fees do not decrease for holidays.

Little Lambs of Grace requires that tuition be paid for in advance on a weekly basis.

Tuition is due on Friday for the following week.

- Grace Chapel Assembly of God members receive a 10% discount.
- If one sibling is currently enrolled at preschool, each additional child will receive the 15% discount. This applies to older siblings.

LATE FEES:

1. A \$10 fee will automatically be added daily to your account if payment is received after 10:00 am on Monday.
2. There is also a \$25 charge for all returned checks.
3. If your child is picked up after 6:05 pm, there will be late fee of \$1.00 per minute per child.
4. If your child is dropped off before 7:00 am, there will be a fee of \$1.00 per minute per child.

Health and Safety

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

We have regular fire and disaster drills at the center. If there is an emergency or natural disaster, our Emergency Preparedness Plan will be put into effect. You may request a copy of our Plan from the office. In an evacuation from the building, Little Lambs will relocate to the field behind the playground. In an event that this location is unsafe, the secondary location will be Autumn Leaves of The Woodlands located at 10700 Montfair Blvd. This facility is less than ½ mile away. Our emergency preparedness plan is located in the office. Children younger than 24 months of age, children who have limited mobility or

who otherwise may need assistance will be evacuated and relocated to a designated safe area or alternate shelter via all in one roller crib in the event of an emergency. Children older than 24 months will walk to designated evacuation area.

PREVENTING, RECOGNIZING, AND REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

"All Little Lambs of Grace managers and caregivers upon hiring and annually thereafter receive one hour or more of training in prevention techniques for and the recognition of symptoms of abuse and neglect and the responsibility and procedure for reporting suspected abuse and neglect. In order to increase employee and parent awareness of issues regarding child abuse or neglect, including warning signs and prevention techniques, we post on our Parent and Staff Info boards information from the DFPS website "It's Up to You! Preventing Child Abuse & Neglect" and urge staff, parents and others to visit the site also. (www.dfps.state.tx.us/itsuptoyou/default.asp)

HEALTH CHECK PROCEDURE

Little Lambs of Grace Staff performs a health check of the students upon arrival. Health check means: A visual or physical assessment of a child to identify potential concerns about a child's health, including signs or symptoms of illness and injury, in response to changes in the child's behavior since the last day of attendance.

SAFE SLEEP

All staff, substitute staff, and volunteers at Little Lambs will follow the safe sleep recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) for infants to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome/Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome. For all children under 12 months old, you will receive an Infant Sleep Agreement in your enrollment folder that must be signed and turned in.

Parent Participation

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Parent communication is vital to the success of your child's education. Parents will receive weekly reports and newsletters on their child's progress. Newsletters will give detailed information on current curriculum and upcoming activities. Bulletin boards will also be used to display important information.

**LLOG has an open-door policy as long as it does not distract/disrupt the teacher or the class.*

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

At Little Lambs of Grace, we encourage parent involvement. Parents are always welcome to visit the school and to observe their child and the program activities. Feel free to discuss any questions or concerns you have about the policies or procedures of Little Lambs of Grace. Little Lambs of Grace desires to provide a well-rounded program that teaches the "whole child".

MEDIA DISCLAIMER

We do take photographs for yearbook, website, observations and classroom activities. If you do not want your child's picture taken, please let us know. There is a permission form in the enrollment packet.

During programs and special activities pictures will be taken. If you do not want your child's picture taken, your child will not be able to participate. *LLOG is not liable if your child's picture is used on social media resulting to these circumstances.*

PARENT AND DIRECTOR MEETINGS

If at any time you feel that a Parent/Director conference is necessary, please make an appointment with the director.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

If your child wishes to share his/her birthday with the other children, you are welcome to bring treats such as cookies and nutritious snacks such as sliced fruits and veggies, or oatmeal cookies, etc to share with the class/school. The birthday child can have their own cupcake. All drinks must be 100% juice. All food and snacks are subject to our approval. *Please notify your child's teacher/director at least a week in advance before bringing your snacks.* You are welcome to join the school for the party, take pictures and bring party plates and napkins. Parties will be at 2:30pm on the arranged party day so that you are able to attend if you would like. Please be mindful as the party will not be longer than 10-15 minutes. You are able to send outside party invitations for the teacher to pass out but we are not responsible for making copies or getting RSVPs.

Separation Anxiety

Many children are able to enter a new environment with few complications. Others have difficulties. Our staff is trained to help during this transition. Children will usually calm down and begin to interact with other children once the parent has left. You may call for reassurance to see if your child has calmed down.

Personal Belongings

We ask that children please leave personal belongings at home unless instructed otherwise. Comfort items for naps are allowed. Parents should provide a change of clothes in case of an accident. Please label your child's belongings, including sippy cups, blankets and pillows. *No toys, games, stuffed animals, money, jewelry hats, or other small items may be brought to the preschool.*

Meals and Snacks

Students of Little Lambs of Grace need to bring their own lunches and snacks. It is important that your child has healthy snacks and meals. Please keep this in mind when packing your child's lunch and snacks. We discourage sending sodas or candy in the lunches. We are not allowed to cook, (includes macaroni and cheese or ramen noodles). We are allowed to warm food only.

*Little Lambs is not responsible for the child's nutritional value or meeting the child's daily food needs. For nutritional ideas and My Plate materials, visit www.fns.usda.gov/tn/myplate

BREASTFEEDING: Parents have the right to breastfeed their child in the Nursery room or provide breast milk for their child.

Medical/Illnesses Policies

A child may experience more illnesses when first entering a school because of the constant exposure to other children. We will do everything we can to ensure sanitary conditions to help prevent the spread of illnesses. Should your child become ill during the day, we will notify you for immediate pick-up. It is our policy that your child will not attend school when ill.

Please do not bring your child if he/she has any of the following symptoms:

- The child must be fever free 24 hours before returning to school.
- Fever= Oral temperature 101 degrees +
- Fever (rectal temp 102 degrees or armpit temp 100 degrees) and accompanied by behavior changes or other signs/symptoms of illness.
- Two or more intestinal disturbances (vomiting or diarrhea)
- Any undiagnosed rash
- Sore or discharging eyes, ears, or nasal drainage
- Significant respiratory distress
- Head lice: A child with head lice must be sent home. Child cannot return to school until child's head has been treated and there are no live bugs or nits.
- Little Lambs reserves the right to make the decision, if student can or can't be at school, that does not fall under above descriptions.

MEDICATIONS

1. Medications may be administered to a child while at preschool, but the following must be ensured:
2. Parents must sign an authorization form and include times for the preschool to administer each medication according to the label directions.
3. The medication must be in the original container labeled with the child's full name and the date brought to the preschool.
4. The medication must be administered in amounts according to the label directions or as amended by the physician.
5. The medication can only be administered to the child for whom it is intended.
6. The medication must not be administered after its expiration date.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

In the event of a medical emergency, parents will be notified immediately. If the parent is unreachable, Little Lambs of Grace will notify the person listed as "Emergency Contact" on your enrollment form. It is imperative that all phone numbers be up to date. It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the Director of any changes in phone numbers or emergency contacts. If needed, 911 will be called and your child will be transported to the nearest emergency care facility with the director or staff in charge.

Discipline and Guidance

Little Lambs of Grace staff members will provide classroom rules. The goal is for each child to develop self-control and self-discipline. The staff will give your child understandable guidelines and redirect inappropriate behavior. The staff will use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-direction, and self-control. The staff will use the following:

1. Praise to encourage good behavior.
2. Remind a child of behavior expectations by using clear, positive statements.
3. Redirecting inappropriate behavior.
4. Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group that is appropriate for the child's age and development. Time outs are limited to no more than one minute per year of child's age.
5. A parent will be called if the child's behavior does not improve or becomes distracting to another student's ability to learn.
6. A note will be sent home to notify you of any continual behavior issues.

Promotion of Indoor and Outdoor Physical Activity

Little Lambs of Grace strongly believes and supports the need for physical activity each day.

When children participate in physical activity every day, multiple health benefits accrue. Regular physical activity builds healthy bones and muscles, improves muscular strength and endurance, reduces the risk for developing chronic disease risk factors, improves self-esteem, and reduces stress and anxiety. Beyond these known health effects, physical activity may also have beneficial influences on academic performance. In addition, cognitive skills and motor skills appear to develop through a dynamic interaction. Research has shown that physical movement can affect the brain's physiology.

Infants will be given opportunities for physical activity, including supervised tummy time. Toddler age children will participate a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten children will participate a minimum of 90 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

School age children who are in attendance for a full day will participate a minimum of 90 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day. School age children who are only in attendance after-school will participate a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

Opportunities for active play may overlap with outdoor play when weather permits. Little Lambs of Grace will promote all children's active play every day. Children will have ample opportunity to do moderate to vigorous activities, such as running, climbing, dancing, skipping, and jumping, to the extent of their abilities.

All children will participate each day in:

- Two occasions of active play outdoors when weather permits.
- Two or more structured or teacher-led activities or games that promote movement over the course of the day.
- Continuous opportunities to develop and practice age-appropriate gross motor and movement skills.
-

Physical activity may take place in the classroom or on the playground, when weather permits. When participating in physical activity, children's clothing should protect them from sun exposure and permit easy movement (not too loose and not too tight) that enables full participation in active play. Footwear should provide support for running and climbing. Hats may be worn to protect children from sun exposure.

Examples of appropriate clothing/footwear include:

- Gym shoes or sturdy shoe equivalent

- Clothing for the weather, such as a lightweight, breathable jacket without any hood and neck strings.

Examples of inappropriate clothing/footwear include:

- Footwear that can come off while running or that provide insufficient support for climbing.
- Clothing that can catch on playground equipment, such as those with drawstrings or loops.

When weather conditions prohibit outdoor play, physical activities will occur in the classroom during the scheduled outside time. Classroom teachers have activities planned in advance for “rainy days”.

Dismissal

A child is on probation during the first two weeks of enrollment into the preschool. The preschool reserves the right to ask that a child’s enrollment be terminated if:

1. The adjustment to normal everyday activities cannot be made.
2. There is a behavioral problem that cannot be resolved.
3. An account is not paid in accordance with policies.
4. Biting: If your child bites 3 times he/she will be suspended for 3 days. Once the child returns to the preschool, if the behavior continues after the suspension, the child will be dismissed. Our staff makes every effort to correct inappropriate behaviors. LLOG is concerned for the entire student body.

Steps for dismissal of child who develops behavioral problems:

1. Parent will be contacted as needed and given behavioral reports.
2. Parent will be called to come to the preschool to intervene with child or pick child up.
3. After the preceding steps, the child will be placed on two-week probation if behavior has not improved.

EXCEPTION:

If a child’s behavior is so unmanageable that they present a risk to themselves or others, they may be dismissed at any time before or after the two-week probation period.

CHILDCARE LICENSING RESOURCE

The strategy for coordination between Little Lambs of Grace and appropriate community organizations will always be through and upon advisement of the Department of Family and Protective Services and our current Child Care Licensing Representative.

For assistance and intervention, parents and others can contact DFPS 1-800-252-5400 or 1-800-4-A-CHILD or online www.txabusehotline.org

All recent licensing inspection reports will be posted regularly for parental review as well as the phone number for the local licensing office. A copy of the minimum standards is also available upon request.

Child Care Licensing (CCL) & DFPS (Texas Health and Human Services)-

Phone- 713-940-3009

Website- www.dfps.state.tx.us

Child Abuse Hotline-

Phone- 1-800-252-5400

Website- www.txabusehotline.org