

Nikiski Parents Share Preschool

Parent Handbook

2024-2025

This handbook will share all critical information regarding our preschool policies this year.

Our staff this year are: Mary Lowery and Jamie Savely

Classes are offered: Tuesday – Thursday 9:00 – 11:30 AM

Tuition: \$135 / month for 2x per week or \$185 / month for 3x per week

Questions?

Reach out to a board member or email:

nikiskiparentshare@gmail.com

Revision Date: 4/10/2024

Welcome to Nikiski Parentshare Preschool:

We are a group of parents who have organized to create a quality educational program for our preschoolers, based on the idea of a play-based program with a high level of parent involvement.

In addition to the developmental benefits of the parent-involved pre-school, this also helps us keep our operating costs down, as we are a non-profit, 501c3. We work hard to ensure we keep our preschool affordable for the community.

Our Philosophy:

At Nikiski Parentshare Preschool, we believe that children learn naturally through self-directed play. Our curriculum is oriented toward developing social and emotional skills. The environment of our school is carefully constructed to provide spaces for the children to explore and interact with materials and each other in ways that help them grow in their social, emotional and physical development. Fostering social skills, self-direction, problem solving, independence and a love of learning are all goals of our preschool.

Location:

We are located in the Nikiski Church of the Nazarene 44813 Kenai Spur Hwy.

We rent two rooms and outdoor playground space from the church. We are not affiliated with the church in any other capacity than as tenants.

How We Operate:

Our preschool is run by the parents whose children are enrolled in the program.

Role	Overview
Board of Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Parents elect a Board of Directors from their membership to oversee the business of the school and hire a teacher to deliver the curriculum.The Board of Directors consists of elected officials (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer)Parents not on the board may attend meetings and provide feedback as class representatives if they wish to do soElection of officers takes place during October, with a maximum term of office of two years.The Board of Directors works with the classroom teacher to run the cooperative
Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The teacher is responsible for the student program
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Each family is expected to volunteer in the classroom on a scheduled basis in the preschool, which is on average once a month.

Family Responsibilities:

Every family in our Parentshare community helps make our preschool a special place! Here's how families can join in:

Ways to be Involved	Overview
Family Volunteer Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A parent / guardian gets to join in the classroom fun and bring yummy snacks for everyone on average one time per month.
Family Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Some parents become an extra part of our team, helping with important jobs like being on the board or joining temporary committees for specific projects
Group Gatherings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">We have a couple meetings a year to ensure our preschool is running well and give the kids extra time to play with their friends. All board member meetings are open to our members
Sharing the Love	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Families can help us maintain our enrollment numbers by telling friends about our preschool or joining us as part of a temporary committee for a community-based enrollment event.

While there are a lot of ways to be involved, we also understand that families have a lot of responsibilities in their lives. As such, most families in our Parentshare cap their responsibility to the volunteer days – which works great! You will find the kids LOVE sharing their day with their parent / guardian in the classroom and it's a fantastic way to meet the parents of new friends.

Preschool Enrollment Requirements:

Requirement	Details
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Students must be 2.5 (30 months) on or before September 1 and not over 5 years old.
Potty Trained	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Students must be potty trained to attend preschool.A child's readiness for preschool is indicated by his/her reliable bowel control and freedom from wetting accidents. Potty training competency is an important indicator of developmental readiness for the independence experienced at preschool.

Registration Procedures:

Registration consists of:

- Completion of an application form
- Payment of the \$25.00 non-refundable registration fee.

In addition, the following must be provided prior to student attendance (1st day of school):

- A copy of the child's updated immunization record.

- Payment of first and last month's tuition. (Tuition costs are outlined below)

Priority is given to current and returning preschool members, followed by siblings of current students, siblings of alumni and then new members. Spaces remaining are filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Teachers reserve the right to restrict enrollment for the purpose of balancing both boy/girl ratios and ages of children in each class. We do not discriminate based on race or religion.

Membership Fees (Tuition):

Members are expected to pay membership fees (tuition) promptly on or before the first preschool day of the month. Fees are determined by calculating the estimated annual expenses required for operating preschool and then dividing by the number of months in session, so the amount is the same each month regardless of the actual number of preschool days in any given month.

Fees are non-refundable and non-transferable. If a student leaves the school before the end of the school year, unused membership fees are forfeited. As long as a child remains enrolled in the preschool, tuition is due whether the child attends or not, as in the case of illness or family vacations.

Alternate Payment Agreements

If difficulties are encountered with payments, it is a member's responsibility to contact the treasurer as soon as possible. The treasurer will make every effort to assist a member in working out a reasonable payment plan.

Late Fees

It is the responsibility of every family to make timely membership payments. A late fee may be assessed when payment is not received **by the 10th of each month** unless alternate arrangements have been made with the treasurer. Waiver of the late fee may be granted in the case of extenuating circumstances by contacting the treasurer.

Non-Payment

If a member family continually fails to make membership fee payments or abide by alternate payment agreements, the Preschool reserves the right to send the balance owed to collections. Students with unpaid fees may not be allowed to attend.

Confidentiality

The teachers and members of the Nikiski Parentshare Preschool will respect the confidentiality of personal financial circumstances and any other personal information regarding member families and their preschoolers.

Children with Special Needs:

NPP does not discriminate based on a child's disability, however our program is not qualified to provide care for children with significant needs. NPP provides basic preschool programming with no high-risk activities.

Daily Schedule

Arrival:

Children should arrive between 8:55 and 9:00am, when a teacher will be available to greet them. Be aware that earlier arrivals can disrupt preparation time and late arrivals reduce the children's activity time. Clean-up time comes very quickly for a child who has arrived a half-hour late.

Children should not be dropped off at the door. Please accompany your child inside, sign them in and help them remove outerwear and put on appropriate shoes for indoors. Children must wear shoes at all times. On the wall outside the preschool rooms there are coat hooks and inside the door are folders labeled with each child's name for their personal belongings.

Pickup:

Children should be picked up promptly at 11:30. Please call the preschool if you will be more than 5 minutes late. Parents need to check in with a teacher before taking their preschooler home.

Once a parent arrives for pick-up, they are responsible for their child. When other siblings accompany the parent, it is especially important that parents maintain supervision of them and their exit from the preschool. Although this is a wonderful time for parents to socialize, it is important to do so with the understanding that children are no longer under teacher supervision.

Typical Day:

A typical day is divided into several blocks of time. For the first hour children have free choice of the main preschool room in which are set up areas for play with art materials, blocks and building materials, sensory play table, literacy center and science center. Materials are set up for the children to explore which vary daily and follow a loose theme. There may be a cooking or science activity during this time.

At 10:00 we have snack, then after that the Nursery room is opened for the group to enter. This area is our dramatic play area, with a full play kitchen, dress-up area, and big toys. Movement, story play and imaginative play are what happen here until it is time to clean up. This is where we have story time and act out some of our stories, dance, and play pretend.

Preschool Schedule

8:55 – 9:00	Preschoolers Arrive
9:00 – 10:00	Open Centers in the Classroom
10:00	Snack
10:30	Circle time/ Story time/ Free play
10:50	Clean-up Time
11:00	Outside Play
11:30	Preschool Ends

General Policies

Policy Changes

You will be notified of any changes to the below policies at least 30 days before changes go into effect.

Supervision of Children

Children are supervised at all times. One teacher, one aide and one parent volunteer are present during class hours for a class of up to 16 children. The teacher and the aide will be stationed in each preschool room. The teacher and aide will go outside when children go out to the playground and remain on the playground throughout outdoor play time.

Parent volunteers help children in the classroom and are responsible for preparing and serving snack and the cleaning of the preschool.

Teacher is on duty between the hours of 8:50–11:40.

Behavior Guidance Practices

At Preschool, we think of discipline as instruction, training which develops self-control. Our guidelines are:

- Be safe
- Be kind

Children are asked to keep others' bodies and property safe, and learn to consider others feelings. They are asked to stop and listen when asked, and use words to express themselves.

We use the following methods of guidance: redirection, communication, logical consequence (taking away a privilege for a period of time) and positive reinforcement.

Physical restraint or containment of a child will only be applied by the child's parent or NCP teachers except in situations requiring immediate intervention by the nearest adult for the child's own safety or that of others. Corporal punishment is not allowed at any time.

When a child has a pattern of out-of-control behavior, the child may be removed from other children for less than 10 minutes until the child's behavior has stabilized. Additionally, a plan will be developed with the child's parents to address the behavior issues.

Outdoor Play

We believe it is important for children to spend some time each day out of doors and will go out daily unless the following unsafe weather conditions are present: temperature of 10 degrees Fahrenheit or lower, strong winds blowing, unsafe ice conditions on the surface of the play yard. Please dress your child with appropriate weather attire.

Television / Computers / Screen Time

Televisions, computers, tablets or other "screens" are not available for the children's use at NPP.

Clothing at Preschool

- Many of the preschool projects are wonderfully messy. You may want to dress your child in casual, washable clothing rather than party best.
- Each day outdoor playtime is planned. Please have your child bring outdoor clothing (boots, hats, and, when appropriate, mittens, gloves and snowsuits) every day.
- Parents should provide a spare set of clothing (shirt, pants, underwear, socks) in a Ziploc bag labeled with their child's name, to be kept at preschool in case of accidents.
- Please label all outdoor clothing, shoes and boots with your child's name.
- We like to encourage independence. For children who are not yet skilled in tying laces, shoes and boots that slip on or have Velcro closures are easiest for children to put on and take off by themselves.

Absences

If a regular member plans to be absent (i.e. vacation), they are asked to provide advance notice of the dates to the teacher at least one week prior. Membership fees are required to be paid whether the child attends or not in order to hold that position for the child on their return.

Sick Children

Please do not send sick children to school. A child who has a fever over 100 degrees F., vomiting, diarrhea, pink eye or an undiagnosed rash, or has been otherwise sick, should not return to preschool immediately.

Doctors recommend 24 hours free of fever or other signs of sickness before resuming full activity. It is common for a child who has been sick to feel better in the morning, be free of fever, and insist that they are fine. Unfortunately, it often follows that the child's fever returns later in the day.

Parents will be contacted to pick up a child who appears to be ill. Until the parent arrives, the child will be provided a quiet area, away from activities with other children.

In an emergency, if immediate attention is needed, 911 will be called. The staff will then contact the parents or others listed as emergency contacts on the child's medical release form.

All parents will be contacted promptly via a notice posted at preschool if a child in the class contracts a communicable disease (chicken pox, measles, lice, pinworms, etc.)

Medication

Parents are asked not to send medications to school with their child.

Teachers will not administer medication, except in response to an emergency allergic reaction. In which case the teacher/administrator will be the only person allowed to administer emergency aid. For children with severe allergies/conditions requiring the presence of an epi-pen or inhaler, the teacher will be the designated administrator and written permission from the parent must be on file with the preschool.

Potty Accidents

If a toileting accident occurs, the teacher or aide may assist your child in changing their clothing and will aid in clean-up. Soiled clothing will be placed into plastic bags for parents to take home to clean. The child will be changed in the privacy of the preschool restroom, not in the baby changing area of the church nursery.

Closures

The Preschool follows the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District closures for inclement weather. If the Nikiski schools are closed, the pre-school will also be closed. If there is a 2-hour delayed start for the Nikiski schools, the pre-school will be closed for the day. In case of emergencies or unsafe weather conditions, parents will be notified of closures on the parent Facebook page, by text or phone.

The Preschool will begin classes the Tuesday following Labor Day and will consist of 33 weeks in-session classes, ending in early May.

NPP will observe KPBSD holiday closures, (Thanksgiving, Christmas break, and Spring break), but will not observe Inservice or parent conference schedules.

In the unlikely event that the Teacher and Aide are both absent (without advanced notice), the preschool will close. We will do our best to notify parents at least one hour prior to class time.

Substitutes

If the preschool teacher is unable to be present with advanced notice, a substitute teacher approved by the board will teach that day.

Parent volunteers are required to find a qualified substitute parent volunteer (from our roster of volunteers) if they are unable to attend. Please let the teacher know who will be substituting for you.

Visiting

Parents, grandparents and visitors are welcome and encouraged to attend preschool with their child any time to share in preschool activities. You will meet the children your child talks about and learn much about your preschooler's independence at preschool.

Communications

Parents will be notified of changes in preschool schedules, policies and procedures primarily through our private parent facebook group, or occasionally through text or email.

Communication with the preschool teacher, board members or other cooperative parents is available via email or published phone roster for current members only.

Health & Safety

Allergies

If your child has any allergies (food or other), please make sure the teacher is informed and that the scheduler has that information to include as prohibited on the snack schedule. If your child has an allergy, teachers can help your child decide what to eat from the snack provided or you can send a special snack.

Firearms

Firearms are prohibited on the preschool premises.

Non-Smoking

The Nikiski Parentshare Preschool, as well as the entire Church where the preschool is housed, is a non-smoking facility. Smoking is also prohibited on the preschool play yard as well as at preschool sponsored events.

Poisonous Plants

The preschool does not keep poisonous plants on the premises. Any harmful plants brought in for observation (i.e. mushrooms) will be contained and displayed in such a manner as to be kept out of reach of children.

Animals

The preschool does not keep animals on the premises.

Universal Precautions

We adhere to the guidelines for preventing transmission of blood-borne diseases, including proper hand washing, use of disposable gloves, disposable absorbent materials, covering cuts and scratches with bandages, and proper disinfection and clean up of contaminated surfaces. Instruction in these methods will be provided to volunteers during orientation meetings.

Parent Volunteer Days – FAQ's

Who makes the schedule?

There is a calendar on the parent bulletin board for you to sign up for your volunteer days. Please sign up for one day per month and if there are additional days to be filled you may be needed to volunteer again.

How many volunteer days will our family have?

On average you can expect to volunteer once a month. For example, in a class size of 12, there are about 12 volunteer days a year for a full class. If classes have fewer than 12 students there would be more volunteer days.

Who can volunteer?

Parents are required to do at least 50% (1/2) of their volunteer days themselves (unless a consistent alternative is arranged such as a grandparent or close friend), after which they have the option to hire parent substitutes from their class, if any are interested.

What if I can't work on my scheduled day?

If you are unable to work on your day, you need to find another parent to trade days or take your place. If you are unsuccessful, you can contact the administrator for help, but it is not the administrator's responsibility to find a substitute for you.

What if I have an idea for an activity?

Please share your special talents, resources, hobbies, interests, etc. The preschool is non-profit, and is run entirely by parent-power, with the exception of the salaried teacher and aide. Parents and

teachers work together to provide a rich learning environment for the children. If you want to plan a special project, please talk it over with the teacher in advance. There are many activities you can do with a small group of children, such as, presenting an art project, playing a musical instrument, teaching a song, or sharing your hobby. While we like to plan ahead, we also realize that wonderful activities sometimes occur spontaneously.

Parent Volunteer Days

Volunteer parent orientation/training

All adults who work at the preschool are required to read this handbook before their first workday and attend the parent orientation meeting. Immediately before your first workday please re-read the daily schedule, your duties, and emergency procedures.

Snacks

When it is your day to volunteer it is your day to bring snack. The preschool does not have appropriate space to store food items, so snacks must be brought to school daily. The snack parent is responsible for supplying the snack for the number of students in the class on that day. Water, cups, plates and napkins are provided by the preschool. You will usually bring a snack that is fully prepared, unless prior arrangements are made with teachers for child participation in making a snack item. Because we know that children benefit from healthy, natural snacks, we ask parents to keep these suggestions in mind when preparing to bring snack to preschool:

- Snacks should be simple and nutritionally sound.
- It is a snack, not lunch, so 2 items are ideal; additionally, a child will have an opportunity to choose if you bring complementary foods, such as raisins with carrot sticks or cheese with apples.
- Please be sensitive to the fact that many parents limit their child's intake of sweets.
- Allergies- Some children in the class may have food allergies. Be sure to check the allergy list posted on the bulletin board before bringing snack.
- Snack Ideas:

Fresh fruits & vegetables

Cheese sticks, or cut cheeses with crackers

Tortilla/ cheese rollups

Raisins, granola bars

Trail mixes, crackers

Small sandwiches

Muffins or bread

Snack at preschool can be a wonderful time to share and taste new foods. You are welcome to bring something out of the ordinary, an ethnic food, or a family favorite. However, please remember that not all children enjoy new foods - those children appreciate finding a basic food also included at snack.

Cell Phones

Your full attention on the children is needed when you are a scheduled volunteer at preschool. Cell phones should be put away and not used, except in the case of an emergency.

Younger Siblings

Please arrange for other child care for your non enrolled children on your workdays. It is often convenient to trade child care with other preschool parents.

Infants may be brought in a front or back carrier which leaves the adult volunteer's hands free to work with preschoolers.

Parent Volunteer Days: Daily Schedule

8:55 am Arrival

- Prompt arrival ensures that we will be ready when the children come to preschool.
- The teacher/aide will instruct you on the center you will run that day. If there is no activity to run, begin cleaning toys and items from the previous day.

Let the teacher know if there are any preparations you may need to do to serve your snack for the day.

9:00 Preschool Begins

General Guidelines for Working in the Preschool

- Observe the children. A shy child may want to just look around before participating in an activity. Respect his/her decision not to join in right away.
- As children move into and around your station, interact with them, playing alongside or helping with materials as needed. Do not do things for them, rather offer help if asked or prompt play by asking "I wonder" questions.
- The children need your attention and guidance. Limit your conversations with other adults.
- Cell phones should be put away and not used, except in the case of an emergency.
- Remember that minimum adult help assures maximum child growth. Allow the child to work at his/her own pace and level.
- Give choices when appropriate.
- Allow the children to learn by experience. Expect errors in judgment. Encourage children to try out their ideas, even if you know what the outcome will be.
- Suggest what to do, using positive phrases and avoiding negatives.
- Take notice of children's efforts and 'first-time' accomplishments.
- When conflicts arise, safety is a priority. When possible, wait to see if the children can work it out together, if not, alert the teacher or aide if they have not already noticed the issue.
- Make sure limits are clearly defined (e.g. "Sand is for playing with, not for throwing.") If you don't know the limits or rules, ask teachers. Give suggestions to children to help them problem-solve.
- Give verbal alerts to children about transitions (e.g. "We have five minutes before clean up time.") Then, suggest ways that children could wrap up their play or projects.
- Let teachers know if interest was strong enough to warrant extending an activity theme.

10:00 Snack Time

- Snack time is a time for learning and sharing. After they have washed their hands, children can help the snack parent by setting tables with cups, food, etc. Try to save jobs that are good for preschoolers to do.
- Please encourage each child to clear his/her own snack spot.

After snack, the volunteer continues with cleaning and disinfecting the preschool items and space.

Bathroom Breaks

- A teacher or aide will accompany any children who need to use the bathroom whenever they need to do so.

10:50 Clean-up Time

- Singing the clean-up song signals time to clean up and encourages everyone to participate.

11:00 Outside Play

- Children go outside with the teacher and aide while the parent volunteer finishes the cleaning responsibilities. See cleaning checklists posted in the classroom.

11:30 Preschool Ends, Parent Pickup

Nikiski Parentsare Preschool Suspension / Expulsion Policy

The State of Alaska has instructed us to provide you with the following information:

There could be situations that result in the expulsion of a child from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. These situations are unfortunate. We want you to know we will do everything possible to work with you, the parents/guardian, in order to prevent this policy from being enforced.

The following are reasons why we may have to expel or suspend a child from our preschool:

Immediate Causes for Expulsion

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children, staff or himself/herself
- A parent threatens physical or intimidating action toward staff members
- A parent engages in verbal abuse toward staff

Parental Actions for Child's Expulsion

- Failure to pay and/or habitual lateness in tuition payments
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's updated immunization records
- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child
- Verbal abuse to staff

Child's Actions for Expulsion

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time
- Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children

Behavior Plan

Prior to expulsion, if there is a pattern of out-of-control behavior and informal behavior supports have not had any effect, a conference will be held with parents and a written behavior plan outlining positive behavior supports will be formulated.

If, after one or two weeks of implementation, depending on the risk to other children's welfare or safety, behavior does not improve, and the preschool finds that they can no longer accommodate the child, the parent will be asked to remove him/her.

A Child Will Not be Expelled if Child's Parents:

- Reported abuse or neglect occurring at the school.
- Questioned the school regarding policies and procedures.

Click or copy and paste the link below to fill out an enrollment form

<https://forms.gle/XpDNmtzGqBAbWp4t9>