



# “School of Excellence”

## Certification Process

This is your step by step guide to the Weekday Preschool certification process. Please follow the schedule below:

**October 1<sup>st</sup>**, application due to Noonday including fee.

**January 31<sup>st</sup>**, submission of notebook to Noonday for review.

**February/March**, site visit will be scheduled.

**April**, announcement of preschools that met certification requirements.

**July**, recognition of schools achieving “Certificate of Excellence.”

(Announced at Noonday Weekday Preschool Conference.)

Initial certification will be valid for a period of three years at which time your school will be eligible for recertification. Recertification will be required every three years at a cost of \$50. After two recertification cycles or year nine, the school must begin the initial certification process again.

Once the application has been submitted, a notebook should be created and made available for review by evaluators as part of the certification process. The notebook should be kept on file, used as a resource, updated as needed, and will be used during the recertification process.

Recertification will include any changes made to your program since the initial certification along with supporting documentation (updated notebook) and progress of goals set in initial certification.

***Certification Steps:***

Step 1. Application due October 1<sup>st</sup> including application fee to Noonday Baptist Association.

- a. Submit a fee of \$1 per child with the application based on the number of students enrolled at the time of application. Minimum of \$25 fee. Checks should be made to Noonday Baptist Association.

Step 2. Assemble certification documentation and submit to Noonday by January 31st.

- a. Obtain 2 ½ inch, or larger, three ring binder.
- b. Create tabs for each section listed on the checklist.
- c. Behind each tab should be;
  1. Copy of completed checklist for each section.
  2. Documentation to support each guideline listed on the checklist.
  3. Documentation should be in order as listed on the checklist
  4. Documentation may include:
    - a. copies from handbook with section highlighted
    - b. pictures
    - c. forms
    - d. flyers
    - e. calendars
    - f. newsletters

Step 3. Three goals should be written by the Director as listed in School Purpose and Goals section.

Step 4. Prepare for site visit in February/ March. 90% of checklist must be complete in order to qualify for certification.

# Weekday Preschool Certification Expectations

## Faith and Values

1. Clearly defined Mission statement that supports the beliefs of the church.
2. Bible Stories, Bible verses and activities are part of curriculum plan.
3. Bible teaching is communicated to Parents on a regular basis.

## Written Handbook States

1. Personnel Policies
2. Hiring Procedures
3. Job Descriptions
4. Compensation
5. Supervision and Evaluation Standards
6. Discipline and Termination Policies
7. Grievance Procedures
8. Professional Standards
9. Confidentiality and Ethical Conduct
10. Employment Benefits including workman's compensation policy

## Personnel Standards

1. *Staff Requirements*
    - a. Eighteen years of age.
    - b. In good physical and mental condition.
    - c. Clear criminal background check.
    - d. Agreement to uphold the mission statement of school.
    - e. Signed statement that employee has not made any false statement concerning qualifications.
    - f. Signed letter of agreement outlining employment position and projected compensation.
    - g. Maintains CPR and First Aid training certification.
  2. *Lead Teacher, Director, Administrative Requirements-In addition to above requirements*
    - a. Eighty percent minimum must have High School Diploma, GED certificate, or two years' experience working with children.
    - b. Long term goals should include plan to recruit and hire credentialed teachers.
  3. *Training Procedures*
    - a. Preschool's goals and philosophy.
    - b. Employees' job description assigned duties, and responsibilities.
    - c. Personnel, program policies, and procedures.
    - d. Health and safety requirements and procedures.
    - e. Mandated reporter law and twenty-four-hour reporting requirements.
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- f. Grievance policy.
- g. Facility tour.
- h. Employee evaluation.
- i. CPR and first aid requirement within first year and documented in employee file.

#### 4. *Ongoing Staff Training*

- a. Annual ten hours ongoing staff development training requirement (5 hours minimum provided by outside training organization, such as NAEYC, GAEYC, Georgia Preschool Association, Noonday Baptist Association, Bright From the Start, etc.).
- b. Annual 12 hours ongoing staff development training requirement for Director (8 hours minimum provided by outside training organization, such as NAEYC, GAEYC, Georgia Preschool Association, Noonday Baptist Association, Bright From the Start, etc.).
- c. Professional development resource materials are available such as books, DVD's, Cd's, and website information.
- d. Training workshop and seminar opportunities communicated to staff.
- e. Observation of other classes in school or other preschools.
- f. Hands-on workshop classes and child development topics covered in staff development and training.
- g. Evidence of orientation and training document in personnel file and available for review during certification visit. All personnel records are stored in a locked file cabinet or secure location. Personnel file should include: application, training, certifications, evaluations, and documentation of any incidents.

#### 5. *Staff Evaluation*

- a. An annual written evaluation of each staff member by Director.
- b. Employee completes self-evaluation.
- c. Director meets with each employee to discuss evaluation and set goals for future.
- d. Written policies regarding employee evaluations must be presented in advance to employee.
- e. Formal classroom observation annually.
- f. Employees not meeting expectations must agree to a formal, written, action plan.
- g. Staff evaluations should be kept in employee personnel file.

#### 6. *Grievance Policy*

- a. A grievance policy should be in effect for the school. Matthew 18 is an excellent standard.
- b. Director should maintain an open-door policy.
- c. There should be a plan to handle any grievance that may involve director.

#### 7. *Staff Meetings*

- a. Scheduled in advance and occur on a regular basis.
- b. Agenda should include a devotion, administrative business, and on-going staff training.

#### 8. *Staff Benefits*

- a. Available benefits should be listed in writing to all employees.

9. *Substitute Policy*

- a. Must be 18 or older and have a clear criminal record/background check on file.
- b. Must have an employee file which includes; application, emergency information updated annually, statement of agreement to follow policy and procedures of preschool.
- c. A list of approved substitutes and their phone numbers are readily available.

10. *Staff and Administrative Relationships*

- a. The director is present and available to staff during all school hours. A designated replacement is made when the director is unavailable or off premises.
- b. The director meets with staff on a regular basis and shares information in a timely manner.
- c. The director invites staff to share ideas and other input.
- d. The director clearly communicates expectations and verbally encourages staff.
- e. The director listens to staff and acknowledges their concerns.
- f. The director discusses the special needs of specific children and families with the assigned teacher. She assists in solving problems, communicating with parents, identifying procedures for referrals and communicating with resource person.
- g. Policies regarding gossip and confidential information are in place and staff are familiar with and adhere to the policies.

**Curriculum**

1. The program has a curriculum plan that is age appropriate and clearly communicated to all staff. Curriculum reflects scope and sequence that is implemented and appropriate for each age group.
2. Staff is trained and familiar with curriculum plan and goals.
3. Curriculum plan is clearly communicated to parents through newsletters, calendars, social media, etc.
4. Curriculum plan is supported by daily schedule that includes a variety of age appropriate activities. Included should be; alternating active and quiet play, gross and fine motor activities, outdoor play, center-based activities, large and small group activities, and spiritual concepts are age appropriate and taught throughout the day.
5. Materials are age appropriate and support the curriculum.
6. There are clear curriculum goals which include;
  - a. Christ centered attitudes, values, and actions
  - b. Critical thinking
  - c. Cognitive development
  - d. Building self-esteem
  - e. Oral language development
  - f. Social skills and manners
  - g. Self-help and reasoning skills
  - h. Health and wellness
  - i. Gross and fine motor skills

- j. Creativity
- k. Respecting each child's individuality
- 7. The use of technology is age appropriate and used to support curriculum. It should be used on a limited basis.
- 8. Teachers are responsible for following basic curriculum plan but are flexible in adjusting to meet needs of their class.
- 9. Teachers implement transition activities.
- 10. Classroom units reflect ongoing changes that support scope and sequence.
- 11. Classroom is designed to include center-based play, gross and fine motor activities, and imaginative play.
- 12. Each classroom has enough age appropriate materials and toys to be rotated on a regular basis.
- 13. All materials and resources are kept in good repair.
- 14. Books are readily available to all children, rotated regularly, and in good repair.
- 15. Curriculum includes outdoor play activities.
- 16. Curriculum enhancements (specials)

### **Physical Facility**

All school facilities should meet all fire and safety codes and requirements. Insurance guidelines should also be used to help create a safe and well-maintained environment.

#### *1. Outdoor Play Space*

- a. Outdoor play space is safe, enclosed, well maintained, and is free from any hazards.
- b. Outdoor play space is separated by age group or age groups are assigned at different times. Staff should be trained on maximum number of children that may be on playground at one time.
- c. Two staff members are present on the playground (minimum) and basic first aid supplies are readily available.
- d. Playground equipment is properly maintained and regularly inspected for the safety of all children. Playground meets Insurance guidelines for equipment, repair, shade, and fall zones.

#### *2. Indoor Play Space, multi-purpose space and hallways*

- a. A play space is available for inclement weather days.
- b. Halls are free from obstruction to insure proper supervision, emergency evacuation, and to lower risk of accidents. Any obstructions must meet fire safety regulations.

#### *3. Classrooms*

- a. Room size is adequate for number of students in each class.
- b. Outside windows and doors are properly secured and maintained to ensure safety of all students.
- c. Floor surfaces are safe and regularly maintained.
- d. Classroom and equipment are safely secured and well maintained.
- e. Classroom furniture is age appropriate, in good repair, and well maintained.
- f. Classrooms are regularly inspected for safety hazards, well maintained, and cleaned regularly.

4. *Bathrooms*
  - a. Facilities should be readily available for each classroom, well maintained and cleaned regularly.
  
5. *Preschool office and storage space*
  - a. A space is available for parent conferences, staff coaching, and proper storage of all confidential files.

## **Budgeting and Finance**

An annual written plan should be in place detailing income, personnel cost, expenditures, and contingency plan.

1. Budget should include the following:
  - a. Income
    1. Tuition
    2. Registration Fees
    3. Special Fee's (lunch bunch, extra-curricular, activity fee's)
    4. Donations
    5. Fundraisers
    6. Supplement from Church
    7. Other
  - b. Expenses
    1. Personnel
      - a. Salaries
      - b. Benefits (bonus, sick leave, paid holidays, etc.)
      - c. Staff Development
      - d. Substitute Pay
      - e. Payroll expenses (Federal and State with-holding, FICA, Workman's Compensation, payroll service fee's, etc.)
    2. Expenditures
      - a. Equipment purchase & repairs (copier, playground, furniture, toys, games, manipulative's, etc.)
      - b. Curriculum
      - c. Office and Classroom supplies (Paper, paint, etc.)
      - d. Special Events and Programming
      - e. Building fees and utilities
      - f. Professional membership fee's
      - g. Facility Maintenance (cleaning, etc.)
      - h. Liability Insurance
      - i. Other (food, transportation, etc.)
  
2. *Contingency Plan*
  - a. A two-month cash reserve should be maintained at all times.

- b. A school without a two-month financial reserve should have a written agreement with Church leadership that clearly documents the lack of funds.
3. *Budgeting*
- a. Written plan for money received and disbursed is in place.
  - b. Director should review and maintain a written balanced budget.
    - 1. Budget should be based on annual review of forecasted numbers.

## **Health, Safety, and Security**

Each school assumes responsibility for each child from the time of drop off to pick up. Written policies should be in place to cover health, safety, and security in the form of a parent and staff handbook.

Annual training is required of parents and staff to implement and follow handbook guidelines. Preschool has a policy statement regarding the following safety guidelines.

1. *Sickness Policy*
  - a. Sick policy is in place and posted.
  - b. Medical action plan should be on file for each child with allergies and/or medical issues.
  - c. Communicable diseases should be properly communicated to parents along with notification of signs and symptoms for prevention.
  - d. Access to CPR, First Aid, Poison Control emergency procedures.
2. *Food Safety*
  - a. All surfaces are properly cleaned and sanitized before and after snack/lunch/cooking activities.
  - b. Proper handwashing procedures are posted and followed for staff and children before and after handling food.
3. *Accidents*
  - a. An accident form is completed for every accident regardless of severity.
  - b. Accident form must be signed by supervisor, parent, and kept on file in office.
  - c. Insurance policy requirements should be followed regarding all accidents and incidents.
4. *Discipline Policy*
  - a. Under no circumstances will corporal punishment be used.
  - b. A policy is in place concerning biting
  - c. A policy is in place concerning bullying
  - d. Communication steps to parents
  - e. Clear code of conduct and steps if not followed.
5. *Child Abuse*
  - a. Physical, verbal, emotional and sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and neglect are not tolerated.

- b. By Georgia law, anyone who works with children is a mandated reporter and is responsible to follow the guideline in place in each school for reporting suspected abuse or neglect.

6. *Custody Issues*

- a. Legal court documentation is available for all custody issues that involve a parent not being allowed to pick up.
- b. A list of adults who are approved for pick up is available in the office as well as the classroom.

7. *Supervision of Children*

- a. A policy for proper supervision of children should be included.

8. *Diaper Changing and Toileting Procedures*

- a. Staff is properly trained, and a written policy is in place.
- b. Children are never left unattended while having a diaper or clothing change.
- c. Gloves, wipes, and wax paper are used for each child and replaced between each changing.
- d. Changing surfaces cleaned between each use.
- e. Open door and/or another adult present when assisting with restroom or clothing.
- f. Age appropriate help-children are encouraged to do as much as they are able.
- g. Children are guided on proper handwashing steps.

9. *Nap and Rest Times*

- a. Children are always supervised.
- b. Teacher has access to each child.
- c. Children do not have access to cords hanging from windows or other hazardous objects.
- d. Exit doors are not obstructed.

10. *Plant Policy*

- a. There are no hazardous plants near the preschool premises.

11. *Animal Policy*

- a. A set policy regarding animals being in and around preschool premises is in place.

12. *Water Play*

- a. Adult supervision is required for all sources of water play (wading pools, swimming pools, tubs, water tables, etc.) and are not accessible to children outside of planned supervised times of water play.
- b. All water play equipment is sanitized after each use.
- c. Children with open cuts or sores are prevented from participating in water play.

13. *Transportation of Children*

- a. Drop off, pick up and late pick up policies are in place.
- b. Written permission from a parent is required for each child to participate in off-site school sponsored activities.

- c. Schools who transport children have a written transportation plan in place and follow current State of Georgia safety laws.
- d. Vehicles used for transportation are properly maintained and cleaned.

#### *14. Telephone*

- a. A working telephone is available in the preschool area.
- b. The following emergency numbers are posted by each phone:
  - 1. 911
  - 2. If 911 is not available in your county-police department, fire department, ambulance and hospital numbers should be listed.
  - 3. Poison Control
  - 4. County Health Department
  - 5. School address and phone number

#### *15. Alarms*

- a. A working fire alarm is present as required by the Fire Marshall.
- b. A weather radio is available.
- c. Fire drills are conducted and recorded.

#### *16. Facility Safety Features*

- a. It is recommended that the preschool be secured limiting outside access to insure safety of students and staff.
- b. All electrical outlets within reach of children are covered with protective caps to prevent children from placing anything in the receptacle. All outlets, cords and plugs are in good condition and are secured.
- c. Cleaning materials as well as flammable and toxic materials are stored out of children's reach. Children are protected from being able to touch heating and cooling equipment.
- d. First Aid supplies are easily accessible to staff in emergency situations. All medications are kept out of children's reach.
- e. It is recommended that all surfaces and toys be tested for lead.

#### *17. Written Emergency Plans*

- a. Fire
- b. Severe Weather
- c. Medical Emergencies
- d. Loss of water, gas or electricity
- e. Gas or water leaks
- f. Active shooter/intruder
- g. Community crisis situations
- h. Procedures for site evacuation
- i. Procedures for notifying a parent during an emergency

### **Student Related Policies**

#### *1. Supervision*

- a. Teachers are assigned to the same group of children for the entirety of school year.
- b. Safety guidelines are implemented by having two teachers supervising in the classroom at all times.
- c. Teachers supervise children by watching and listening throughout the preschool day. The learning environment is arranged so that children can always be visually observed.
- d. When children visit the restroom teachers, should be in close proximity, so they can hear the child and assist them if needed.
- e. The classroom, if age appropriate, provides a diaper changing area that is not concealed. Teachers/Staff will have another adult and/or an open-door policy when changing diapers or assisting with clothing
- f. No child is left unattended.
- g. Teachers should always be aware of how many children are in their care at all times, routinely conducting a head count.
- h. Current Pediatric guidelines should always be followed with sleeping infants.

2. *Student Information/Records*

- a. Student Information forms should be kept on file and should include the following: name, address, date of birth, emergency contacts, authorized adults that can pick up the child, special needs for allergies or other health care concerns.
- b. Personal Information is confidential and kept in a secure location.

3. *Child to Teacher Ratio*

- a. Appropriate ratios are maintained throughout the school year.
- b. Recommendations for child to teacher ratio are:

0-6 mo.	2 adults	6 children
7-12 mo.	2 adults	8 children
13-18 mo.	2 adults	8 children
19-23 mo.	2 adults	10 children
2 years	2 adults	14 children
3 years	2 adults	15 children
4 years	2 adults	16 children
5 years	2 adults	18 children

4. *Children with Special Needs*

- a. We recommend that each school have a policy for accepting children with special needs.
- b. *School should work with local schools and county services.*

## **Relationships with Parents**

The positive partnership between school and families is a high priority. Parents are encouraged to be involved and should be welcome to visit at any time. Key strategies include:

1. *Welcome and overview of program*
  - a. Parent meeting occurs at beginning of school year.
  - b. Parent/Student handbook is provided to each parent prior to beginning of school.
  - c. Parent and student have opportunity to visit classroom and meet teacher before school starts.
  
2. *Parent involvement encouraged*
  - a. Clear policy that parents are welcome and encouraged to visit school.
  - b. Parents are valued and used as a resource to enhance program.
  - c. Opportunities are available for parents to volunteer in classroom.
  - d. Parent survey offers an annual opportunity for evaluation and feedback from parents and results are readily available for review.
  
3. *Communication between Teacher and Parents*
  - a. Confidentiality is maintained regarding all personal and private information.
  - b. Open communication is a priority between parents and teachers regarding child's growth and development.
  - c. Regular communication including newsletter and calendars are provided to parent.
  - d. Parent is notified in writing regarding injuries or communicable diseases.
  - e. Teachers work alongside family regarding care-giving issues such as potty training, separation, special needs, food allergies, health concerns, etc.
  - f. Families are offered child development assessment and opportunities to meet. Parent/Teacher conference should include supporting documentation.
  
4. *Communication between Director and Parents*
  - a. Regular communication including upcoming events and important information.
  - b. Written Communication regarding:
    1. Injury
    2. Allergies
    3. Permission forms that may include; car line, field trips, handbook receipt, release of Confidential information, emergency medical care, action plans, etc.

## **Church and Community Communication**

The preschool is recognized as an outreach ministry of the associated church with a goal to reach those that are Christ followers as well as un-believers.

1. Church and School have set relationship guidelines with policies and procedures that include; use of space, use of supplies and equipment, on-going maintenance, repairs, renovations, scheduling of events, etc.
  
2. School will follow, train staff concerning, and uphold all church policies regarding child protection, safety, internet usage, sexual harassment policy, etc.

3. School welcomes families of all backgrounds from the community.
4. Efforts are made to partner and develop relationships with other public and private schools and other agencies regarding:
  - a. Placement for students transferring
  - b. Referrals to Babies Can't Wait and other special services
5. School maintains positive reputation with community by providing and utilizing resources such as; field trips, speakers, programs, special events, educational opportunities, and church events.

### **School Purpose and Goals**

The school has a clearly defined, written purpose which includes short term, long term, and emergency plans.

1. School gathers input from parents, staff, and church leadership.
2. Church leadership is kept informed and given opportunity for input regarding goals and purpose of school.
3. A minimum of three specific goals should be set as a requirement for re-certification.

### **Business Standards**

School maintains all required licenses.

1. The following are required:
  - a. Exemption Certificate with letter or License properly displayed. (Available at [decal.ga.gov](http://decal.ga.gov) through Bright from The Start)
  - b. Immunization Form, GA 3231, kept on file for each child and required within 30 days of enrollment or religious exemption signed statement.
  - c. Ear, Eye, & Dental Form, GA 3300, kept on file for each student 5 and older.
  - d. Proof of Insurance, worker's compensation and facility insurance are recommended.
  - e. Required Employment Forms to include at minimum:
    1. Application
    2. Background check
    3. W-4, Federal IRS Form
    4. G-4, Georgia tax Form
    5. I-9, Us Department of Justice
    6. GA New Hire Reporting
    7. Market place Health Coverage Information
2. IRS Form 5578, Racial Non-discrimination
3. Certificate of Occupancy





“Preschool of Excellence”  
Certification Application

Office Use Only	
Received Date	_____
Check #	_____ \$ _____
Checklist/Binder RCVD Date:	_____
<b>Pass/Fail</b>	_____

Name of Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

School Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell # \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please answer Yes or No.**

State Licensed \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Exempt from License \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Letter: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Accreditation: \_\_\_\_\_

Mission Statement of Preschool:

I \_\_\_\_\_ understand that I am submitting an application for certification as a “Preschool of Excellence,” for \_\_\_\_\_ preschool. I agree to submit payment of \$1 per student enrolled at time of application. (minimum \$25) Check should be made payable to Noonday Baptist Association and mailed to 1348 Canton Rd NE, Marietta, GA 30066. I understand that the application fee is non-refundable, and that certification is not guaranteed and will be determined as pass or fail by those representing the Noonday Baptist Association based on completion of requirements as established in attached checklist including site visit.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date