



NOONDAY

Care • Coach • Connect • Collaborate



PRESCHOOL
OF
EXCELLENCE

Preschool of Excellence 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)

A - MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS (Checklist page 1)

1. Eighteen years of age
2. Clear criminal background check
3. 2 adults required in all 3's and under classes
4. Mandated reporter requirements communicated
5. Annual 10 hours of staff development training(see checklist for details).
6. Annual 12 hours of director staff development training
7. Personnel records are stored in a locked file cabinet in a secure location and include appropriate paperwork
8. A written plan for receiving and disbursing money
9. A working fire alarm is present
10. Exemption certificate with letter or license is displayed
11. Immunization Form GA3231 or signed religious exemption form is required and on file for each

PERSONNEL STANDARDS (Checklist pages 2-11)

B-Staff Requirements (Checklist page 2)

1. In good physical and mental condition
2. Agreement to uphold school mission statement
3. Signed statement that employee has not made any false statement concerning qualifications
4. Signed letter of agreement including employment position and compensation

C-Lead teacher, Director, Admin Requirements (in addition to above requirements) (Checklist page 3)

1. Eighty percent minimum must have a high school diploma, GED certificate, or two years experience working with children.
2. Long term goals should include a plan to recruit and hire credentialed teachers (College degree, CDA, or comparable experience)

D-Training Procedures (Checklist page 4)

1. Preschool's goals and philosophy
2. Employees' job descriptions including assigned duties and responsibilities
3. Personnel, program policies, and procedures
4. Health and safety requirements and procedures
5. Mandated reporter law and twenty-four-hour reporting requirements
6. Grievance policy
7. Staff facility tour
8. Employee evaluation
9. CPR and first aid requirements within the first year and documented in employee file

E-Ongoing Staff Training (Checklist page 5)

1. Professional development resource materials are available such as books, DVDs, CDs, and online resources.
2. Training workshops and seminar opportunities communicated to staff.
3. Observation of other classes in school or other preschools.
4. Hands-on workshop classes and child development topics covered in staff development and training.
5. Evidence of orientation and training documented in personnel file and available for review during certification visit.

F-Staff Evaluation (Checklist page 6)

1. An annual written evaluation of each staff member by Director
2. Employee completes self-evaluation.
3. Director meets with each employee to discuss evaluation and set goals for the future.
4. Written policies regarding employee evaluations must be presented in advance to employees.
5. Formal classroom observation annually.
6. Employees not meeting expectations must agree to a formal, written action plan.
7. Staff evaluations should be kept in the employee personnel file.

G-Grievance Policy (Checklist page 7)

1. A grievance policy should be in effect for the school. Matthew 18 is an excellent standard.
2. Director should maintain an open-door policy.

3. There should be a plan to handle any grievance that may involve the director.

H-Staff Meetings (Checklist page 8)

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

I-Staff Benefits (Checklist page 9)

1. Available benefits should be listed in writing to all employees.

J-Substitute Policy (Checklist page 10)

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

K-Staff and Administrative Relationships (Checklist page 11)

1. 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.
2. The Director meets with staff on a regular basis and shares information in a timely manner.
3. The Director invites staff to share ideas and other input.
4. The Director clearly communicates expectations and verbally encourages staff.
5. The Director listens to staff and acknowledges their concerns.
6. 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 persons.
7. Policies regarding gossip and confidential information are in place and staff are familiar with and adhere to the policies.

CURRICULUM (Checklist pages 12-13)

L-Curriculum Plan (Checklist page 12-13)

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 plans and goals.
3. Curriculum plans are clearly communicated to parents through newsletters, calendars, social media, etc.
4. Curriculum plan is supported by a 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
 - Spiritual concepts that 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:

- Christ centered attitudes, values, and actions
 - Critical thinking
 - Cognitive development
 - Building self-esteem
 - Oral language development
 - Social skills and manners
 - Self-help and reasoning skills
 - Health and wellness
 - Gross and fine motor skills
 - Creativity
 - 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 plans but are flexible in adjusting to meet the 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 (Checklist pages 14-18)

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.

M-Outdoor Play Space (Checklist page 14)

1. Outdoor play space is safe, enclosed, well maintained, and free from any hazards.
2. Outdoor play space is separated by age group or age groups are assigned at different times. Staff should be trained on the maximum number of children that may be on the playground at one time.
3. A minimum of two staff members are present on the playground and basic first aid supplies are readily available.
4. 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.

N-Indoor Play Space, Multi-Purpose Space, and Hallways (Checklist page 15)

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

O-Classrooms (Checklist page 16)

1. Room size is adequate for the number of students in each class.
2. Outside windows and doors are properly secured and maintained to ensure safety of all students.
3. Floor surfaces are safe and regularly maintained.

4. Classrooms and equipment are safely secured and well maintained.
5. Classroom furniture is age appropriate, in good repair, and well maintained.
6. Classrooms are regularly inspected for safety hazards, well maintained, and cleaned regularly.

P-Bathrooms (Checklist page 17)

1. Facilities should be readily available for each classroom, well maintained, and cleaned regularly.

Q-Preschool Office and Storage Space (Checklist page 18)

1. Spaces are available for parent conferences, staff coaching, and proper storage of all confidential files.

BUDGETING AND FINANCE (Checklist pages 19-21)

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

R-Budget (should include the following) (Checklist page 19)

1. Income
 - Tuition
 - Registration fees
 - Special fees (lunch bunch, extra-curricular, activity fees)
 - Donations
 - Fundraisers
 - Supplement from church
 - Other
2. Expenses-Personnel
 - Salaries
 - Benefits (bonus, sick leave, paid holidays, etc.)
 - Staff development
 - Substitute pay
 - Payroll expenses (federal and state withholding, FICA, workman's compensation, payroll service fees, etc.)
3. Expenditures
 - Equipment purchases and repairs (copier, playground, furniture, toys, games, manipulatives, etc.)
 - Curriculum
 - Office and classroom supplies (paper, paint, etc.)
 - Special events and programming
 - Building fees and utilities
 - Professional membership fees
 - Facility maintenance (cleaning, etc.)
 - Liability insurance
 - Other (food, transportation, etc.)

S-Contingency Plan (Checklist page 20)

1. A two-month cash reserve should be maintained at all times.
2. A school without a two-month financial reserve should have a written agreement with church leadership that clearly documents the lack of funds.

T-Budgeting (Checklist page 21)

1. Director should review and maintain a written balanced budget.
2. Budget should be based on an annual review of forecasted numbers.

HEALTH, SAFETY, AND SECURITY (Checklist pages 22-37)

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.

U-Sickness Policy (Checklist page 22)

1. Sick policy is in place and posted.
2. Medical action plan should be on file for each child with allergies and/or medical issues.
3. Communicable diseases should be properly communicated to parents along with notification of signs and symptoms for prevention.
4. Access to CPR, First Aid, Poison Control emergency procedures.

V-Food Safety (Checklist page 23)

1. All surfaces are properly cleaned and sanitized before and after snack/lunch/cooking activities.
2. Proper handwashing procedures are posted and followed for staff and children before and after handling food.

W-Accidents (Checklist page 24)

- a. An accident form is completed for every accident regardless of severity.
- b. Accident form must be signed by the supervisor and parent and kept on file in the office.
- c. Insurance policy requirements should be followed regarding all accidents and incidents.

X-Discipline Policy (Checklist page 25)

- 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.

Y-Child Abuse (Checklist page 26)

- a. Physical abuse, verbal abuse, emotional abuse, 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.

Z-Custody Issues (Checklist page 27)

- 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.

AA-Supervision of Children (Checklist page 28)

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

BB-Diaper Changing and Toileting Procedures (Checklist page 29)

- 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 change.
- d. Changing surfaces are cleaned between each use.
- e. Open door and/or another adult is present when assisting with restrooms 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.

CC-Plant Policy (Checklist page 30)

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

DD-Animal Policy (Checklist page 31)

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

EE-Water Play (Checklist page 32)

- 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.

FF-Transportation of Children (Checklist page 33)

- 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.

GG-Telephone (Checklist page 34)

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

HH-Alarms (Checklist page 35)

- a. A working fire alarm is present as required by the Fire Marshal.
- b. A plan is in place to receive weather alerts.
- c. Fire drills are conducted and recorded.

II-Facility Safety Features (Checklist page 36)

- a. It is recommended that the preschool be secured, limiting outside access to ensure 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. All exit doors should be kept free from any obstruction at all times.

JJ-Written Emergency Plans (Checklist page 37)

- 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 (Checklist pages 38-41)

KK-Supervision

- a. Teachers are assigned to the same group of children for the entirety of the 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:
 - i. Name
 - ii. Address
 - iii. Date of birth
 - iv. Emergency contacts
 - v. Authorized adults who can pick up the child
 - vi. 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

5. Children with Special Needs

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

RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS (Checklist pages 42-45)

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 meetings occur at the beginning of the school year.
- b. Parent/student handbook is provided to each parent prior to beginning of school.
- c. Parents and students have the opportunity to visit classrooms and meet teachers before school begins.

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 programs.
- c. Opportunities are available for parents to volunteer in the classroom.
- d. Parent survey offers an annual opportunity for evaluation and feedback from parents; 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 a child's growth and development.
- c. Regular communication including newsletter and calendars are provided to parents.
- d. Parents are 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.
- g. Parent/teacher conferences should include supporting documentation.

4. Communication Between Director and Parents

- a. Regular communication including upcoming events and important information.
- b. Written communication regarding:
 - i. Injury
 - ii. Allergies
 - iii. Permission forms that may include
 1. Car line
 2. Field trips
 3. Handbook receipt

4. Release of confidential information
5. Emergency medical care
6. Action plans
7. Etc.

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION (Checklist page 46)

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 unbelievers.

1. Church and school have set relationship guidelines with policies and procedures that include:
 - a. Use of space
 - b. Use of supplies and equipment
 - c. Ongoing maintenance
 - d. Repairs
 - e. Renovations
 - f. Scheduling of events
 - g. Etc.
2. School will follow, train staff concerning, and uphold all church policies regarding child protection, safety, internet usage, sexual harassment, 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:
 - a. Field trips
 - b. Speakers
 - c. Programs
 - d. Special events
 - e. Educational opportunities
 - f. Church events

SCHOOL PURPOSE AND GOALS (Checklist page 47)

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 recertification.

BUSINESS STANDARDS (Checklist page 48)

School maintains all required licenses.

1. The following are required:
 - a. Exemption Certificate with letter or License properly displayed. (Available at dec.al.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 age five and older.
- d. Proof of Insurance, worker's compensation, and facility insurance are recommended.
- e. Required employment forms to include at minimum:
 - i. Application
 - ii. Background check
 - iii. W-4, Federal IRS form
 - iv. G-4, Georgia tax form
 - v. I-9, US Department of Justice
 - vi. GA New Hire Reporting
 - vii. Marketplace Health Coverage Information
- f. Certificate of Occupancy