



# Preschool Handbook

**UCC Community Preschool**

902 Broad St PO Box Box 322

Grinnell, IA 50112

641-236-3111

641-236-3112-Fax  
[uccprek@gmail.com](mailto:uccprek@gmail.com)  
[www.grinnelluccpreschool.com](http://www.grinnelluccpreschool.com)

The United Church of Christ Congregational, as a service to the community, sponsors the UCC Community Preschool. The school is non-denominational and open to all. The policies of the school are in the hands of the Board of Directors. We are a non-profit agency licensed by the Iowa Department of Human Services. We welcome you and look forward to an exciting year ahead! If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Board of Directors:

Molly Richmond, President  
Joanne Britton, Treasurer  
Chelsey Owens, Secretary  
Tricia Eastwood  
Desiree German  
Holly Kuesel  
Mary Smith

Teachers:

Tammy Jones, Director/Lead Teacher  
Jennifer Gnau, Assistant Teacher  
Jayden Brown, Assistant Teacher

Classes:

Monday/Wednesday/Friday	8:00-11:45 am
Tuesday/Thursday	8:00-11:45 am
Monday/Tuesday/Thursday/Friday	12:00-2:45 pm

Tuition:

Monday/Wednesday/Friday	Tuition covered by the VPP grant for 4-year olds
Tuesday/Thursday	\$80
Monday/Tuesday/Thursday/Friday	\$85/Covered by VPP Grant
5-year olds	\$120

Before and After care are available for all classes for a small monthly fee.

Scholarships are available

## UCC Community Preschool Program Policies and Procedures

### **WELCOME TO UCC COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL**

UCC Community Preschool serves children ages 3-5. It is an opportunity for all children to take part in planned, active learning experiences to build their readiness skills. The program was awarded the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program Grant in 2011. The program's goal is to provide a high-quality preschool program meeting each child's needs, including children with disabilities and those from a diverse background. The preschool provides a rich learning environment that encourages children's natural curiosity and supports them to take risks that lead to new skill development. It is a setting where children feel safe, respected and cared for. The preschool program has adopted and meets the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards administered by the Iowa Department of Education. The Iowa Early Learning Standards are used to guide expectations for the children and instructional practices. The program has received 5 out of 5 stars on the Quality Rating Scale for Early Childhood Education.

### **MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, AND GOALS**

#### **Mission**

Our mission at UCC Community Preschool is to provide a safe and fun learning environment where our children, families and community strive to be life-long learners.

#### **Philosophy**

The UCC Preschool provides a warm welcoming environment for young children to learn. Play is the essential ingredient of our preschool program. Each school day provides opportunity for play and interaction between students, as well as planned activities with teacher guidance. Students are prepared for literacy through reading aloud, song, and

word play. We use the Creative Curriculum for Preschool Children and other resources, which are based on the premise that children are naturally curious about their environment.

### **Objectives of our Preschool Program**

- Help children develop tolerance and kindness towards all people, so they can live happily and harmoniously with those around them.
- Help children make their adjustment to school a happy and wholesome one.
- Help children become aware of, and be interested in, the world around them.
- Give each child a variety of opportunities to work and play cooperatively in small and large group activities.
- Teach children to act and think for themselves and develop age appropriate independence.
- Help children develop desirable speech habits including effective communication skills and increased vocabulary.
- Teach the children to share and take turns and encourage them to use good manners.
- Provide the children with opportunities to work with different creative art media fostering creative expression in music, art and drama.
- Help the children feel a sense of security, belonging and full acceptance.
- Help the children develop coordination and motor control through physical play.
- Create an environment where children can successfully learn to exercise self-discipline and self-control.
- Foster an interest and excitement for reading and writing and gain the skills that lead to literacy.
- Prepare students for success in Kindergarten and grade school.

### **Goals for Children:**

UCC Community Preschool is committed to providing interactions and experiences to help children:

- Become enthusiastic and curious learners
- Become problem solvers
- Develop social/emotional, physical, cognitive and language skills
- Develop good health and safety habits
- Develop conflict resolution skills

**Goals for Families:**

- Families will feel welcome in the classroom and school building.
- Families will work with the school in a meaningful partnership to help their children be better prepared to learn to read and write.
- Families will advocate for their children.

**ENROLLMENT**

**Orientation**

UCC Community Preschool has an application of admission that needs to be filled out by all prospective parents. New families are encouraged to visit the preschool prior to the start of preschool. Upon receipt of the application, a phone call will be made to parents to let them know of their acceptance into our program. In the event a class is full, then a child will be put on the waiting list and will be notified as soon as a spot is available.

**Equal Educational Opportunity**

It is the policy of UCC Community Preschool not to discriminate in its activities based on sexual orientation, race, religion, color, national origin, or disability. The preschool program provides all children, including those with disabilities, a unique learning experience. Modifications are made in the environment and staffing patterns in order to include children with special needs. It is our belief that inclusion in our program will enrich the experience for teacher, students, other children and their families. The preschool facilities meet the Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements.

**Eligibility**

Children in our MWF program must be 4 years of age prior to September 15<sup>th</sup> of the current school year to participate in the 4-year-old Pre-K class. Children in our TTH program, and afternoon program must be 3 years of age by September 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Hours**

Our 4-year-old Pre-K program meets 3 mornings a week. Our 3-year-old program meets 2 mornings a week. Our mixed age program meets 4 afternoons a week.

4-year-old program	Monday, Wednesday, Friday	8:00-11:45
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3-year-old program	Tuesday, Thursday	8:00-11:45
Mixed age program	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday	12:00-2:45

For the morning sessions, doors will be open to drop preschoolers off at 7:45am. If you arrive earlier than 7:45 and need to drop your child off, you will need to sign up for the before/after care (see below). All children need to be picked up by 12:00 pm. If you are later than 12:00, then you will need to sign up for the before/after care. For the afternoon class, the outside doors will open at 11:55. All children need to be picked up at 2:45. If you need before/after care for this class, please see the director. We understand that there are extreme occasions and emergencies. If this is the case, please call the preschool as soon as possible and we will work with you however we can.

### **Before/After Care**

The UCC Community Preschool will be offering before/after school care for the children in the preschool program. This service will be available on school days from 7:30-7:45 and 11:45 – 12:00 each day. It is available for the afternoon class on a need be basis, please see the director. The fee for the Monday/Wednesday/Friday class and afternoon class (if needed) is \$20 a month. The fee for the Tuesday/Thursday morning class is \$10 a month. This fee is due with tuition. Children will not be allowed to stay for before/after care until the monthly fee has been paid. Doors will not be unlocked until 7:45am. Pick-ups after 12:00 or 2:45 may be subject to a \$5 late fee.

### **Transportation**

The Preschool will be offering transportation to preschool for morning classes. Transportation will be offered through the Grinnell-Newburg CSD and will utilize their buses and routes. Children will be able to be picked up at the already established bus stops around Grinnell. Children will be transported to Fairview Elementary where they will then be bussed to the preschool. This will be offered at no cost to the preschool families. Depending on where children are picked up, they may be bussed to Bailey Park or Davis and transferred to Fairview.

### **General Information**

The maximum class size of the 3-year-old class is 18 children based on square footage of the current location. A teaching staff-child ratio of at least 1:8 will always be maintained to encourage adult-child interactions and promote activity among children. The

maximum class size of the 4-year-old classroom is 20 children based on the square footage of the current location. A teaching staff-child ratio of at least 1:10 will always be maintained to encourage adult-child interactions and promote activity among children. The afternoon class will run on a 1:8 ratio and have no more than 18 children in it. The director will arrange for substitute teachers in the event of teacher absences.

### **Tuition/Payment (Tuesday/Thursday)**

Tuition is DUE on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. We are asking that parents pay by check or money order. Please make checks payable to UCC Community Preschool. You can place the checks/money order in the red box on top of the cubbies, labeled tuition. You can send your check in your child's folder if you do not drop your child off. Whichever way you choose, please be sure to get it in the first week of the month.

The operation of the preschool is highly dependent on tuition. If we do not receive tuition in a timely fashion, we cannot pay our teachers. We operate on a pre-payment basis. Parents are responsible for paying for time reserved, not time used. Tuition will NOT be refunded due to schedule changes, illnesses or absences.

## **A CHILD'S DAY**

### **Who Works in the Preschool?**

*Director*-The director is designated as the program administrator supervising the preschool program. The director meets all qualifications described in the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards. The director also serves as the full-time lead teacher licensed by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners and holds, and Early Childhood endorsement or degree as assigned by the State of Iowa.

*Teacher Assistant*-Two full time teacher assistants in the classroom will carry out activities under the supervision of the lead teacher. The teacher assistants will have specialized training in early childhood education.

*Support Staff*-Central Rivers AEA support staff provides resources and assistance to the teacher and classroom, upon request, to help all children be successful in the preschool setting. Such staff may include early childhood consultant, speech and language pathologist, social workers, occupational therapists, physical therapists or others.

*Substitute*-A teacher provided by the director for coverage in the classroom to maintain the staff-child ratios in the absence of normal teaching staff.

*Grinnell College Students*-Grinnell College provides students to the preschool to fulfill their work study or volunteer hours. These hours may vary, and the number of students may vary. The students are responsible for performing teacher duties as assigned by the lead and assistant teachers. College Students are supervised by the director.

### **Daily Schedule**

A consistent daily schedule is planned to offer a balance of learning activities. Learning is both formal and informal. Your child will have the opportunity for the following types of activities every day:

Arrival, Sign in, Free Choice	Calendar	Outside/Large Motor	Music/Movement
Story time	Snack	Free Choice	Departure
Small Groups	Independent Reading	Clean Up	Individualized Intervention Groups

Lesson Plans for each week are posted on the parent information board showing how these activities incorporate a variety of skills into each day. Weekly notes will be sent home to families in children's backpacks and electronically if parents desire.

### **Curriculum**

Curriculum is a framework for learning opportunities and experiences. It is a process by which learners obtain knowledge and understanding, while developing life skills. It is continually revised and evaluated to make learning fun and exciting.

Our curriculum content and instructional materials reflect the cultural and racial diversity present in the United States and the variety of careers, roles, and lifestyles open to women as well as men in our society. One of the objectives of the total curriculum and teaching strategies is to reduce stereotyping and to eliminate bias based on sex, race, ethnic, origin, religion, and physical disability. The curriculum should foster respect and appreciation for the cultural diversity found in our country and an awareness of the rights,



duties, and responsibilities of each individual as a member of a multicultural nonsexist society.

The preschool program uses Creative Curriculum, which is a research and evidence based comprehensive curriculum designed for preschoolers. It addresses all areas of early learning: language and literacy, math, science, physical skills, and social skills. It is based on thematic in a variety of ways-through play, problem solving, movement, art, music, drawing and writing, listening, and storytelling. Suggestions for modifications and adaptations are an integral part of the curriculum. We also supplement activities and learning through Learning Without Tears, EAK, and Read it Again.

### **Child Assessment**

Guiding Principles:

It is the belief of UCC Community Preschool that assessment of young children should be purposeful, developmentally appropriate, and take place in the natural setting by familiar adults. The results will be used for planning experiences for the children and to guide instruction. Assessment will never be used to label children or to include or exclude them from a program. A family's culture and a child's experiences outside the school setting are recognized as being an important piece of the child's growth and development. All results will be kept confidential, placed in each child's file, and stored in a secure filing cabinet.

Children are assessed in the following ways:

- Creative Curriculum is modified to align with the Iowa Early Learning Standards. It records student progress in all developmental areas in the beginning, middle and end of the school year.
- Observation data provides an ongoing anecdotal record of each child's progress during daily activities.
- Families may be asked to contribute information about their child's progress. Young children often show different skills in different settings. Working together, the teaching staff and families can gather a complete picture of a child's growth and development.
- IGDI assessments are done on the children 2-3 times a year in accordance with the VPP funding. IGDI assesses the children on a variety of literacy activities.

The information from the above is used in the following ways:

- To provide information about children's needs, interests, and abilities in order to plan developmentally appropriate experiences.
- To provide information to parents about their children's developmental milestones.
- To indicate possible area that requires additional assessment.
- To help the teachers better plan activities that are developmentally appropriate for the children.

Assessment information will be shared formally with families during Family Conferences in the fall and spring. The preschool teacher will communicate weekly regarding children's activities and developmental milestones. Informal conferences are always welcome and can be requested at any time.

If, through observation or information on the Creative Curriculum Assessments, the teacher feels that there is a possible issue related to a developmental delay or other special need, she/he will communicate this to the family during a conference, sharing documentation of the concern. The preschool teacher would assist in arranging for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment when indicated.

If a child is determined to need special accommodations, those accommodations are included in the materials, environment, and lesson plans for that child. Examples include sign language and visuals for children with hearing impairments or language delays and behavior plans for children whose behavior does not respond to the typical strategies used by the teaching staff in the classroom.

### **Supervision Policy**

Before children arrive at school, the preschool teacher will complete the following daily safety checklist indoor and outdoor:

- All safety plugs and electric outlets are covered, water temperatures, and toilets, etc. in working order.
- All cleaning supplies/poisons out of reach of children and stored properly.
- Classroom and materials checked for cleanliness/broken parts, etc. including playground.
- Supplies checked-first aid kit, latex gloves, soap, paper towels, etc.

- Daily monitoring of environment-spills, sand, etc. Other serious problems reported to church secretary or maintenance personnel.
- Upon arrival, each child is observed by the teacher for signs of illness or injury that could affect the child's ability to participate in the daily activities.

No child will be left unsupervised while attending preschool. Staff will supervise primarily by sight. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible as long as teachers check every 2 to 3 minutes on children who are out of sight (ex- those who can use the toilet independently, who are in the library area, etc.)

### **Child Guidance and Discipline**

It is our policy to deal with behavior concerns by encouraging children to talk about their actions and feelings either with their teacher, or with the child they have had an issue with. We feel our job is to facilitate and nurture the development of problem-solving skills. We do our best to avoid intervening unless we feel the problem is not getting resolved on its own. We will continue to help brainstorm with the child to find possible solutions or appropriate behaviors. If the child cannot effectively deal with the situation, they will be removed from the area in which the behavior has become a concern. If a child begins to lose control of their actions and/or is having trouble discussing the problem, they will be asked to step away from the situation. Children may be asked to go to the "quiet corner" or library until they are able to gain control. It is simply a chance to "cool down" and have a clearer head for making good choices.

### **Discipline of aggression and fighting (scratching, hitting):**

Staff will set appropriate expectations for children and guide them in solving problems. This positive guidance will be the usual technique for managing children with challenging behaviors rather than punishing them for having problems they have not yet learned to solve. In addition, staff may: (1) separate the children involved, (2) immediately comfort the individual who was injured, (3) care for any injury suffered by the victim involved in the incident, (4) notify parents or legal guardians of children involved in the incident, (5) review the adequacy of the teaching staff supervision, appropriateness of program activities and administrative corrective action if there is a recurrence.

### **Biting Policy:**

Even in the best childcare, periodic outbreaks of biting occur among children. When it happens, it can be scary and frustrating for children, parents and teachers. When biting occurs, the following steps will be taken:

1. The teacher will remove the child from the situation and focus on caring attention on the child who was bitten.
2. The care giver will talk with the child who bit and talk about different strategies that the child can use next time instead of biting.

First Aid in Response to Biting:

1. Wear gloves, clean wound with soap and water. Run water over wound for 5 minutes.
2. Apply cold compress to help reduce pain and swelling.
3. Bandage the wound if necessary.
4. Write a detailed incident report for both children involved in the incident.

First Aid if Bite Breaks Skin:

1. Wear gloves, clean wound with soap and water. Run water over the wound for 5 minutes.
2. Control the bleeding.
3. Cover the wound with sterile dressing and bandage.
4. Contact parent of both children involved and encourage them to contact their healthcare provider to determine if they need to be seen.
5. Write a detailed incident report for both children involved with the incident.
6. When biting occurs, here is what you can expect from us:
  - a. We will put the child's safety first and provide first aid as well as comfort, support and advice to any child who was bitten.
  - b. We will send home an incident report with both children to be signed and returned to the preschool. It will be kept in both child files.
  - c. We will make current information and resources on biting available to you.
  - d. We will take your concerns seriously and treat them with understanding and respect.

## **Water Activities**

We have a water table in the classroom for children to stand and play with their hands in the water. During water play children are involved in active experiences with science and

math concepts. Children with sores on their hands are not allowed to participate with others in the water table to ensure that no infectious diseases are spread. Children are not allowed to drink the water during water play activities. When the activity period is complete, the water table is drained and refilled with fresh water before a new group of children comes to participate. All manipulative items used in the water table are sanitized between each use. Outdoor water play is limited to tubs and buckets or containers as well as a water table. We do not participate in swimming pool activities. Staff supervises all children by sight and sound in all areas with access to water in tubs, buckets and water tables. \* Please note the water table may be suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Snacks/Foods and Nutrition**

Attitudes about food develop early in life. The food children eat affects their well-being, their physical growth, their ability to learn, and their overall behavior. We have an opportunity to help children learn about foods, to enjoy a variety of foods from their own cultures and others, and to help them begin to appreciate that their bodies need to be strong, flexible and healthy. Eating moderately, eating a variety of foods, and eating in a relaxed atmosphere are healthy habits for young children to form.

Two food groups will be represented at each snack time as outlined in CACFP guidelines. With the serving of a variety of nutritional snacks, children will be encouraged to expand their tastes by at least trying a portion of the food offered. All food is prepared, served, and stored in accordance with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. Clean, sanitary drinking water is made available to children throughout the day. Staff discards any foods with expired dates. Foods that are hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of children's reach. Foods requiring refrigeration will be kept cold until served.

For each child with special health care needs, food allergies, or special nutrition needs, the child's health care provider should provide the program an individualized care plan prepared in consultation with family members and specialist involved in the child's care. Children with food allergies shall be protected from contact with the problem food. With family consent, the program posts information about the child's allergies in the food preparation area and in the areas of the facility the child uses to serve as a visual reminder to all adults who interact with the child during the day. A note is also sent home

with families so that they are able to take caution in choosing their snacks. Program staff will keep a daily record documenting the type and quantity of food a child consumes when any child with a disability has special feeding needs and provide parents with that information. Teaching staff will take precautions to make sure that all foods served are served in a manner that they will more be a choking hazard to the children.

The school district does not use food or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior and will not withhold food or beverages as a punishment, nor will teaching staff ever threaten to withhold food as a discipline.

### **Outside Play and Learning**

We have daily opportunities for outdoor play as the weather permits and provided the weather air quality and environmental safety conditions do not pose a threat. This allows children the opportunity to develop their large muscle skills, get exercise, and be active. We use the Child Care Weather Watch guidelines produced by Healthy Child Care Iowa to determine if the Wind chill Factor or Heat Index is safe for outdoor play.

In cases when we cannot go outside (due to weather conditions) children are given the opportunity to use indoor equipment for similar activities inside and are supervised at the same level as outdoor equipment. For example, tumbling mats may be offered for upper body activities or rolling across the mat. We implement these activities in the big room in the church basement.

In order to make sure that your child can play comfortably outside, it is important to dress them according to the weather. When it is cold outside, they need a warm coat, mittens or gloves and a hat (labeled with your child's name). For warmer days dressing your child lightly is just as important. For those in-between days dressing your child in layers is a practical idea.

There are areas on the playground for children to be in the shade and still be active. We encourage you to bring a hat or other clothing for your child to wear as another protection from the sun. Sunscreen or sunblock with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher will be applied to your child's exposed skin (only with your written permission). We will also use an insect repellent containing DEET (with your written permission) no more than

once a day to protect your child from insect bites with the public health authorities recommend its use.

Program staff will complete the National Program for Playground Safety's Suggested General Maintenance Checklist on a weekly basis.

### **Clothing**

Please dress your child in clothing that is easily washed so that they may enjoy the activities provided. Asking your child to "stay clean" during the preschool day may inhibit them from participating in some activities. We encourage the use of paint shirts, but we cannot guarantee that spills or stains will not occur. Instead, we ask that you please send an extra pair of clothes in their backpack so they can change if needed. Please clearly label the clothing with your child's name to reduce the possibility of mistakes.

### **Treasure from Home**

We would appreciate it if toys brought from home were limited to the day of sharing. Treasures can be lost and broken and that can be quite devastating. Your child is encouraged, however, to bring to preschool any type of interesting specimen for sharing any day of the week, such as rocks, shells, and/or flowers. We would prefer advanced notice of live insects or baby animals.

### **Animals**

Occasionally throughout the preschool year we will have classroom visitors that are animals. All animals will be under the supervision of their owner. The preschool teacher ensures that the animal does not create an unsafe or unsanitary condition. The animal would appear to be in good health and have documentation from a veterinarian or animal shelter to show that the animal is fully immunized. The teacher would ensure that staff and children practice good hygiene and handwashing before and after coming into contact with the animal.

Any children allergic to the pet will not be exposed to the animal. Reptiles are not allowed because of the risk for salmonella. The classroom teacher is responsible for checking requirements have been met.

### **Birthdays**

Birthdays are an important and significant event in the life of a child. They afford the opportunity for the children to be given special recognition. Accordingly, students who wish to bring treats for the class on their birthday may do so. Snacks that come in on a child's birthday need to be commercially prepared and packaged in sealed containers. Those who have summer birthdays will be given a date in which they can still celebrate their birthday during the school year. Invitations to parties outside of school that do not include the entire class will not be distributed at school.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES**

The program will promote communication between families and staff by using written notes as well as informal conversations or email. Families are encouraged to send written notes with important information so all the staff who work with the child can share the parent's communication. Teaching staff will write notes for families no less than weekly. Staff will use these notes to inform families about the child's experiences, accomplishments, behavior, and other issues that affect the child's development and well-being. Parents are encouraged to maintain regular, on-going, two-way communication with the teaching staff in a manner that best meets their needs-email, in person, notes or phone calls.

The program also uses a communication service called Remind. Teachers will sign parents up via a cell phone number. The teacher will send short reminders about important information at the preschool. This information may be fieldtrip reminders, inclement weather updates, reminders for items needing to be brought to preschool, etc.

### **Parents in the Preschool**

We love to have parent's visit preschool, as parents play an important role in their child's academic success. Each parent has a unique set of talents and interests – so do not be shy about offering your assistance! There are several ways you can assist us in providing your child with the best possible education at school:

- Support and encourage your child to develop a positive sense of self-worth
- Discuss any problems or worries directly with the teacher
- Visit the preschool and join in the program
- Read the newsletters and notices that come home
- Be proud of your child's creations and display them



- Collecting materials for use in collage and carpentry
- Offer to share any hobbies, interests or expertise you may have with the children (such as playing an instrument, pottery, cooking, etc.)
- Volunteer to help on field trips and classroom activities
- Join the board of directors

### **Arrival and Departure of Children**

All motor vehicle transportation provided by parents, legal guardians or other designated by parents and legal guardians will include the use of age-appropriate and size-appropriate seat restraints.

When bringing your child to school, we ask that you park your car in a parking spot (church, street, hotel, etc.) and turn off the engine before entering the building. Please hold your child's hand as you enter the building to decrease the possibility of an accident. Parents or legal guardians must accompany children into the building to begin their day.

Other than parents or legal guardian, only persons with prior written authorization (Emergency Card) will be allowed to pick up a child from the school. Anyone who is unfamiliar to teaching staff, including authorized individuals, will be asked to present photo identification before the child is released to them.

When all children have arrived, teaching staff will record attendance for the day. Throughout the day, each time children transition from one location to another, i.e. classroom to outdoor, the teacher will be responsible for counting the number of children whenever leaving one area and when arriving at another to confirm the safe whereabouts of every child at all times.

During departure, parents are asked to park their vehicle and enter the building or playground to pick up their child. Please hold your child's hand when exiting the building to decrease the possibility of an accident. Please do not let them leave the building ahead of an adult. No child will be permitted to leave the building without an adult.

### **Field Trips**

An important learning opportunity can take place in the form of a field trip that is relevant and reinforces what has been taught in the classroom. Parents will be informed of each field trip through a note, email or newsletter. A parent or legal guardian must sign an informed consent form for trips for each child before each trip. Consent forms are not needed for short walks as long as the permission slip is signed at the beginning of the year. Adult family members are asked to volunteer to go on these trips to provide increased supervision and adult/child ratios. A state background check is required for any adult wanting to go on the trips.

During the field trip, a first aid kit, emergency contact cards, teacher cell phone, and emergency transport authorization information for each of the children in the group will be taken on all trips. Children will be counted every 15 minutes while on the field trip. Children may only use a public restroom if they are accompanied by a staff member. Children will never be left alone in a vehicle or unsupervised by an adult.

### **Attendance**

Students who are enrolled for classes in the UCC preschool are expected to be in school for the full session and are expected to be punctual in their arrival and departure. Students are not expected to be absent any more than is necessary for health reasons or appointments. Irregular attendance interferes with the progress of your child and others. If a child is absent more than 20% of the days during the month, then the director will be contacting the parent, especially in cases of the absences being unexcused. In our preschool setting 20% of days for the month looks like a week for each class. All of our absences are recorded and communicated with Grinnell-Newburg School District. If frequent absences become a habit, the director will send home a letter to parents to inform them of how many absences their child has had. If the problem were to persist, and there is no change in the frequency of absences or a second letter would need to be sent, the director will communicate this with our board, and the school district. A meeting may be called with the parents to develop a plan to get the child in school. If there were to continue to be an issue, the district rules for absences may come into effect. Exceptions can be made in the case of extreme illness, surgeries, vacations, etc. The director has the right to ask for a doctor's note in the event of extreme illnesses. Please let the director know in advance whenever possible.

### **Ethics and Confidentiality**

It is essential to protect the confidentiality of all information concerning children and their families. Children are people who deserve respect. One way we demonstrate this respect is to refrain from talking about the children in their presence unless the child is part of the conversation and to refrain from labeling a child negatively or positively. No information about any particular child shall be shared with another child's parent. We continually strive to model such qualities as patience, tolerance, cooperation, acceptance, understanding of others, and enthusiasm for children as well as for other adults.

### **Preschool Advisory Committee**

The UCC Preschool, along with the other preschools in the Grinnell-Newburg district, has a preschool advisory committee composed of parents, school staff and other community members interested in the preschool program. This group meets quarterly to provide feedback on services that meet children and family needs. They also serve as a sounding board for new ideas and services. Please let the preschool teacher know if you are interested in being part of the Preschool Advisory Committee.

### **Preschool Board**

The Preschool Board of Directors meets once a week each month. Board member duties are general oversight of the program, hiring staff, reviewing financials, and volunteering at preschool functions. If any parent would like to become a board member, they should speak to the director or a board member.

### **Grievance Policy**

Open and honest communication between families and the preschool program is an essential component of a high-quality early childhood program. We want you to be confident that your child is being well cared for and is having a quality experience. If there is ever a time you have a concern regarding your child, we want to encourage you to address your concern to your child's teacher. If additional help is needed, either party may ask for assistance from the preschool board.

If you have a concern regarding some aspect of the program or policy, please contact the director or the preschool board president.

As part of our program assessment, in the spring of each year we also provide you with a family questionnaire to evaluate our program. This information helps us to assess how the

program is meeting the needs of families and children, as well as to identify strengths and weaknesses.

## **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

Teacher and administrators use a variety of formal and informal ways to become acquainted with and learn from families about their family structure and their preferred means of child-rearing practices and communication and information about their socioeconomic, linguistic, racial, religious and cultural backgrounds as they wish to share. Families are surveyed in enrollment paperwork and through other questionnaires during the school year regarding their family, beliefs and preferences. Home visits are conducted at the beginning of the school year. Program staff communicate with families on at least a weekly basis regarding children's activities and developmental milestones, shared care giving issues, and other information that affects the well-being of their children. Family teacher conferences are held in both the fall and spring semesters, as well as when either party requests. At least one Family Night is held during the year.

UCC Preschool values the time spent talking to and interacting with families and developing strong, reciprocal relationships. As the teacher learns from the family's expertise regarding their child's interests, approaches to learning and developmental needs, goals for your child's growth and development can be incorporated into ongoing classroom planning. Families are encouraged to share any concerns, preferences or questions with the preschool director at any time.

Although in person daily contact cannot be replaced, preschool staff also relies on notes home, emails, phone calls, newsletters and bulletin boards as alternative means to establish and maintain open two-way communication.

UCC Preschool will, to the extent possible, provide full opportunities for meaningful participation of the families with children with limited English proficiency, families with children with disabilities, including providing information and school reports in an understandable and uniform format and, including alternative formats or request and to the extent possible in a language families understand.

UCC Preschool believes that families should be supported in making decisions about services that their children may need. The teaching staff will provide information to families about available community resources and assist as requested in helping the family make connections.

### **Home Visits**

Home visits are made prior to the start of school. This is an opportunity for the preschool teacher to get to know you, your child and your family and for you to begin to create a partnership between home and school in order to best meet your child's educational needs. This is a great time for you to share what makes your family unique, how you prefer to communicate with the teacher and share your knowledge about your child's interests, approaches to learning and developmental needs. You can help the teacher understand what your goals are for your child and whether you have any concerns you would like addressed. Parents are encouraged to share these preferences, concerns, and questions at any time with either classroom teacher or administrator.

### **Family Teacher Conferences**

The preschool program will have formal family conferences in the fall and spring. During the conference, the teacher will share results of classroom assessments and samples of your child's work. Together you can make a plan to continue to encourage your child's growth and development.

### **Family Event**

A family event is an opportunity for you and your family to come to school to participate in fun as well as educational activities. With help from family volunteers, the day will be planned to meet the needs of the children and families in the classroom. The family event will be done in conjunction with the other preschools in the district. Notices will go out giving details of the family event. \*This is subject to change as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Transitions**

Home school connections are crucial to the transition to Kindergarten or any other program, such as special education. The child's family provides consistency and continuity necessary for a young child to be successful. Making a change from one program to another can sometimes be difficult for a young child whether the transition is

within the same building or in another location. Teaching staff will partner with the family to make the transition as smooth as possible. UCC Preschool has arranged with the Kindergarten teachers of the local school a transition building field trip. Preschoolers will visit Kindergarten classrooms at both buildings, tour the building and become familiar with the room and teachers and other staff.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

UCC community preschool is committed to promoting wellness and to safeguard the health and safety of children and adults who participate in our program. In order to provide a safe and secure environment for every child and adult, we follow guidelines by the Quality Preschool Program Standards, regulatory agencies and pediatric authorities in the field.

### **Health and Immunization Certificates**

Within four weeks after a child begins the program, health records that document the dates of service shall be submitted that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

When a child is overdue for any routine health services, parents, legal guardians, or both provide evidence of an appointment for those services before entry into the program and as a condition of remaining enrolled in the program, except for immunization for which parents are using religious exemption. Failure to get the completed paperwork in will result in your child being dropped from the program.

### **Health and Safety Records**

Health and Safety information collected from families will be maintained on file for each child. Files are kept current by updating as needed, but at least quarterly. The content of the file is confidential but is immediately available to administrators and teaching staff who have consent from a parent or legal guardian for access to records; the child's parent or legal guardian; and regulatory authorities, upon request.

Child Health and Safety Records will include:

- Physical or health statement

- Immunization card
- Emergency card
- Application
- Parent authorizations
- Sunscreen permission form
- Instructions of any of the child's special health needs such as allergic or chronic illness (e.g., asthma, hearing or vision impairments, feeding needs, neuromuscular conditions, urinary or other ongoing health problems, seizures, diabetes).
- Individual emergency care plans for children with known medical or developmental problems or other conditions that might require special care in an emergency (allergy, asthma, seizures, orthopedic or sensory problems, and other chronic conditions; conditions that require regular medication or technology support).

### General Health and Safety Guidelines

- All staff must be alert to the health of each child, known allergies, or special medical conditions.
- All staff must be alert to the whereabouts of all children. Systems are in place for accounting for children at regular intervals, especially during periods of transition.
- All staff follow proper procedures for hand washing, using disinfectant, and following universal precautions to prevent infections.
- All staff know evacuation routes and procedures.
- All teaching staff complete "Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens" annually.
- At least one staff member who has a certificate of satisfactory completion of pediatric first aid training, including managing a blocked airway and providing rescue breathing for infants and children, is always present with each group of children. When a child in the group has a special health condition that might require CPR, one staff person who has successfully completed training in CPR is always present in the program.

### **Illness Policy and Exclusion of Sick Children**

Sometimes it is hard to decide if a child should or should not attend preschool. The following guideline will help you with your decision.

- Children and adults who have meningitis, Hib disease, diarrhea, fever and/or vomiting, chicken pox, Covid-19 symptoms or Hepatitis A are required to be excluded from attendance at school.
- Children will be considered ill if they have symptoms of any disease listed in the above paragraph or they cannot participate in the activities provided. Staff will make the final decision regarding whether a child is too ill (or running a fever, lethargic, etc.) to come to, or stay at the preschool. The children may return to the center when they have been SYMPTOM FREE, without the use of fever-reducing medications, for 24 hours.
- Children who experience diarrhea but who otherwise do not appear ill will be kept at school unless the diarrhea occurs as frequently as twice in an hour. Children who have diarrhea accompanied by other symptoms of illness will be sent home. The child may return to the preschool when there has been no occurrence of diarrhea for at least 24 hours.
- Children with pinkeye must be on medication in order to return to the preschool.
- Children with head lice bugs cannot return until there are no visible bugs. Children who have nits will be allowed to stay at the preschool if they do not have live bugs. Treatments must show improvement to the teacher before the child may return. If improvement is not evident to the staff, the child may be asked to stay home until progress has been made.

Parents will be contacted immediately in case of illness or serious injury. Please make sure we have an up to date phone number to reach you at. If you are unavailable during the day due to work or other meetings, please make sure the preschool has a number of someone to easily get a hold of. It is expected that if a parent is contacted to pick up their child from preschool, they will do so within 30 minutes of the teacher calling.

Parents must notify the center when a child has contracted a communicable disease so that it may be posted.

### **Medication Policies and Procedures**

Medications may be administered using the following procedures:

- Only lead teachers will administer medications
- No medications will be administered without properly completed "medication request form" found by sign in book.



- Prescribed medications can only be given to the person for whom they were prescribed and must carry the prescription label. Prescribed medications cannot be shared between siblings.

Medications will be kept at the temperature recommended for that type of medication, in a sturdy, child resistant container that prevents spillage.

Medication will not be used beyond the date of expiration on the container or beyond any expiration of the instructions provided by the physician or other person legally permitted to prescribe medication. Instructions which state that the medication may be used whenever needed will be renewed by the physician at least annually.

### **Cleaning and Sanitization**

The classroom will be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. When a spill occurs, the area will be made inaccessible to children and the area that will be cleaned immediately. Toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion will be removed immediately and disinfected after they are cleaned with soap and water. This also applies to other surfaces in the classroom. Toys and surfaces will be disinfected using a non-toxic premade disinfectant solution. DHS and QRS guidelines will be followed when disinfecting. Machine washable cloth toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion must be laundered before another child's use. Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used.

### **Hand Washing Practices**

Because 50% of all infectious disease can be eliminated by using appropriate hand washing techniques, staff and children will be washing their hands frequently during the day.

Children and adults wash their hands:

- Upon arrival for the day;
- After diapering or using the toilet;
- After handling bodily fluids (e.g., blowing or wiping a nose, coughing on a hand, or any touching of mucus, blood or vomit);

- Before meals and snacks, preparing or serving food, or handling any raw food that requires cooking;
- After playing in water that is shared by two or more people;
- After handling pets and other animals or any material such as dirt, sand, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals.

Adults also wash their hands:

- Before and after feeding a child or preparing snack
- Before and after administering medication
- After assisting a child with toileting
- After handling garbage and cleaning

Staff will follow universal precautions in handling blood and body fluids as recommended by the Center for Disease Control.

Except when handling blood or bodily fluids that might contain blood (when wearing gloves is required), wearing gloves is an optional supplement, but not a substitute for handwashing in any situation listed above.

- Staff must wear gloves when contaminated with blood may occur
- Staff does not use handwashing sinks for bathing children or removing smeared fecal material

In situations where sinks used for both food preparation and other purposes, staff clean and sanitize the sinks before using them to prepare food.

### **First Aid Kit**

A first aid kit is located in the preschool classroom next to the door. It is fully equipped according to guidance from Healthy child Care Iowa. Following each use of the first aid kit, the contents will be inspected and missing or used items replaced immediately. The first aid kit will be inspected monthly. There is a smaller first aid kit located in the outside play area. The first aid kit is also always taken along on field trips and outings away from the site.

### **Fire Safety**

A fire extinguisher is installed in the preschool classroom with a tag indicating its annual service date. The fire alarm system is serviced annually. Smoke detectors, fire alarms and

carbon monoxide detectors are tested monthly. A written log of testing dates and battery changes is maintained and available upon request. Fire drills are conducted monthly and recorded on a log.

### **Medical Emergencies and Notification of Accidents or Incidents**

UCC Preschool has in place a “Safety Procedures Booklet” that describes the following situations and procedures to follow:

- Emergency phone numbers
- Fire procedures
- Utility failures (electric power failure, water line break, gas line break)
- Severe weather
- Bomb threats
- Physical threats/armed intruder
- Evacuations
- Crisis intervention plan, crisis intervention steps and media procedures
- Accidental injury or illness procedures for life threatening and non-life-threatening situations
- School crisis team members and a checklist to use
- List of CPR/First aid experienced persons in each building

This booklet will be posted by the telephone and included in the first aid kit. The booklet will be reviewed by each staff member at the beginning of each school year and when changes are made to it.

In the event your child receives a minor, non-life-threatening injury during their time at preschool, the teacher will assess the situation and apply for first aid as needed. Minor cuts and scrapes will be treated with soap and water and bumps will be treated by applying ice and injured area. Any incident or injuries will be documented on an accident form and a copy will be given to the parent within 24 hours of the incident.

### **Inclement Weather**

In case of inclement weather, an announcement will always be made by the preschool over KGRN (1410AM), KCCI, WHO-TV prior to the start of the school day. The teacher will also send a remind message out and post it on Facebook. The preschool will follow the Grinnell-Newburg school district as to what they do due to the weather. If the district

delays school, there will be no morning preschool. Afternoon class will meet provided that the weather clears up. If the district cancels school, the preschool will be cancelled for the day. If the district lets school out early, the preschool will make the decision of when and if to let preschool out early. All decisions will be communicated with the parents. Parents are responsible to communicate the information to anyone else that may be picking up or dropping off their child.

### **Child Protection Policies**

The health and well-being of every child in our care is of the utmost importance and the protection of children is our responsibility. A volunteer or applicant for temporary or permanent employment with the preschool program involves direct interaction with or the opportunity to interact and associate with children must execute and submit an affidavit of clearance from any and all crimes against a child or families. In addition, no person with a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect will come into contact with children in the program or have responsibility for children.

The program has written policy for reporting child abuse and neglect as well as procedures in place that comply with applicable federal, state and local laws. The policy includes requirements for staff to report all suspected incidents of child abuse, neglect, and both by families, staff and volunteers or others to the appropriate local agencies. Staff who report suspicions of child abuse or neglect where they work are immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for that reason alone it is proven that the report is malicious. All teaching staff complete "Mandatory Reporter: Child and Dependent Adult Abuse" at least every five years and within six months of employment.

The program does not tolerate employees physically or sexually abusing or harassing students. Students who are physically or sexually abused or harassed by an employee should notify their parents, legal guardians, teacher, principal, or another employee. The Iowa Department of Education has established a two-step procedure for investigating allegations of physical or sexual abuse of students by employees. That procedure requires the preschool and the school district to designate and independent investigator to investigate the allegations.

### **Substance Abuse**

Persons under the influence of drugs and alcohol will not be permitted on the premises of the UCC Preschool. At no time will children be released to a person under the influence of alcohol and drugs.

## **STAFF**

### **General Information**

The UCC Preschool has written personnel policies that define the roles and responsibilities, qualifications and specialized training required of staff and volunteer positions. The policies outline nondiscriminatory hiring procedures and policies for staff evaluation. The policies are provided to each employee upon hiring.

Hiring procedures include completion of the following checks: criminal record checks, free from history of substantiated child abuse or neglect check, education credentials, verification of age, completion of high school or GED, personal references and a current health assessment.

### **Health Assessment**

The preschool program maintains current health information from documented health assessments for all paid preschool staff and for all volunteers who work more than 40 hours per month and have contact with the children. A current health assessment (not more than one year old) is received by the program before an employee starts work or before a volunteer has contact with children. The health assessment is updated every two years.

Confidential personnel files, including applications with record of experience, transcripts of education, health assessment records, documentation of ongoing professional development, and results of performance evaluation are kept in a locked filing cabinet in the church secretary's office.