



Jacob's Ladder Cooperative Preschool 2020-2021 Parent's Handbook

DAILY SCHEDULE	2
ARRIVAL GUIDELINES	2
SEPARATION ANXIETY	3
A WORD ABOUT CELL PHONES.....	4
DEPARTURES	4
FEEES AND ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS.....	5
SNOW DAYS.....	7
CLOTHING.....	7
SHOW AND TELL/SHARE	8
SNACKS	9
ALLERGIES	9
BIRTHDAYS	9
HEALTH PRACTICES	10
MEDICATIONS.....	11
DISCIPLINE	12
DISMISSAL POLICY	13
EMERGENCY PROCEDURES.....	14
SPECIAL HELPERS.....	15
"SAFE SANCTUARY"	16

DAILY SCHEDULE

Drop-off 8:50-9:00: Late arrivals need to be brought upstairs. Please ring doorbell located to right of door.

Pick-up 11:59: Doors open at 11:55. Parents are requested to wait outside the classroom door until teacher opens it. If student must leave early, please indicate time on daily sign-in sheet.

ARRIVAL GUIDELINES

Drop-off is at the rear door to the fellowship hall beginning at 8:50. Enter the parking lot from Nolensville Rd (by the front offices) and line up in a double line beginning at and following the orange cones. A Jacob's Ladder staff member or assigned parent will open the child's car door and unbuckle your child. **PLEASE PUT YOUR CAR IN PARK FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL CHILDREN AND STAFF.** Doors to the preschool will be locked at 9:00. Late arrivals must be accompanied to the door.

The director will sign in all the students for the day on Kinderlime.org. Please send an email to the director (jacobs ladder@nolensvilleumc.org) if someone else besides the normal person will be picking up your child.

We try to expedite drop off as quickly as possible so that a line of traffic does not form on Nolensville Road. Please have your child ready to leave the car (appropriate outerwear, bookbag near child, etc.) Please have your child remain in his/her child restraint as you drive through the drop off line. We believe it poses a safety issue if children are unbuckled even during the stop/start of the drop off process. **Children must not sit on parent's lap at the steering wheel.**

If you need to convey a specific concern for that day or a message to the teacher, we recommend sending a note in the pencil pouch of your child's folder or send the teacher an email.

Although staff members are in their rooms prior to student arrival, this time is used for organization and planning. For this reason, no children (with the exception of parent helper's child or staff's children) will be allowed in the building prior to the designated drop off time.

As part of our Safe Sanctuary Policy, the exterior doors will remain locked at all times. **PLEASE RING DOORBELL TO ENTER OTHER THAN AT PICK-UP TIME and be aware that we may not be able to answer the doorbell immediately. Only the Director or the TA may answer the door as teachers do not leave their classroom.** Please explain this to any person coming to the preschool on behalf of your child.

SEPARATION ANXIETY

We highly recommend that you tell your child you are leaving and you will return. Then, depart in a resolute and positive manner so that your child sees you feel good about him or her being at the preschool. Our staff is very experienced in this matter and will do everything possible to redirect your child and encourage involvement in the program. We assure you that for the first couple of days, your child will be given extra attention during your departure time, encouraging him or her to trust and bond with the teacher and classmates.

A WORD ABOUT CELL PHONES

While cell phones are great to have in the event of an emergency, **we ask that you not use them during drop off and pick up.** This is an important time in your child's day and they deserve your undivided attention.

DEPARTURES

Children must be picked no later than 11:59am. Parents or designated drivers are required to "sign out" their child on the iPad located in the plastic bin on the outside of classroom door. Please come up the rear exterior stairway and remain in the preschool hallway until the teacher opens her door. Your child is to be picked up only by persons listed on the application form. If there is a change in your plans, please let the Director know at least 15 minutes prior to pick-up time.

During the first week of school you may be asked for photo ID when picking up your child. If the teacher does not recognize the person who has come to pick up your child, it is our policy to ask for photo ID and then verify that they are listed on your application as "people authorized to pick up my child."

Punctual pick-up is very important. We are a non-licensed facility that must adhere to the 2 hours and 59 minutes per day guidelines as set by the State of Tennessee. We understand that emergencies may delay your arrival, but we must enforce our pick-up time. Therefore, a late pick up fee of **\$1.00 per child/per minute is charged after 11:59 and will be added to your next month's tuition. Children must be picked up from the Director in the activity center after 11:59.** If you are delayed, please call the school to inform the Director of your anticipated arrival time.

We offer daily "take-down" for those parents who may have difficulty with the stairs, (younger baby in infant carrier, multiple younger children, etc.). If you feel you will need this service, please speak with the Director.

FEES AND ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

1. A child cannot be admitted without completion of a registration form and a non-refundable application fee of \$100.00.
2. Checks should be made payable to "Jacob's Ladder". **Please put your tuition check in the zipper pocket in the file folder.** Do not hand checks to the staff while they are unloading your child from the car. We cannot accept cash for tuition payments, only checks or money orders, due to Nolensville First UMC's financial audit.
3. Monthly tuition is to be paid on or before the 1st day of each month. Account balances not paid in full by the 5th of the month will receive a \$10.00 late fee regardless of the balance due. Those accounts that are 15 days overdue must be discussed with the Director and the Financial Secretary.
4. Parents who experience difficulty with meeting their tuition payments are encouraged to meet with the Director. We will be glad to work with you. Limited scholarship funds may be available.
5. Should a parent choose to withdraw their child, the balance of that month tuition will not be refunded. **Two weeks written notice is required for the withdrawal of your child. This allows us to prepare the child for saying "goodbye" to his/her friends as well as to give time to notify children on the wait list of an opening.**

6. No tuition refunds or substitution of days will be given for absences, snow days, family vacations, or planned holidays as outlined in the school calendar.
7. **A complete EMERGENCY AUTHORIZATION AND CHILD HEALTH RECORD FORM must be on file before a child begins preschool.** This is required by the state. A new health record is required at the beginning of each school year.
8. **Immunizations must be up-to-date and the report must be signed and dated by a physician.**
9. All children must be "potty trained."
10. Parents must sign an affidavit that handbook has been received and explained.
11. In the event of a divorce, we are required to have copy of the custody order on file.
12. A word about our tuition policy: Jacob's Ladder is a non-profit program. Our fees are based on the total cost of providing a high quality experience for the children. Your tuition has been divided into 9 equal payments even though the number of actual school days may vary month to month:

Pre-K 3	\$215.00 per month
Pre-K 4 and 4/5	\$230.00 per month
Supply Fee	\$50.00 per semester

SNOW DAYS

The Preschool will be closed for snow or severe weather when Williamson County Schools are closed. If schools close early because of the weather, the Preschool will do the same. If Williamson County closes immediately, so does the Preschool. **If Williamson County Schools open one hour late, we will open at 10:00am with dismissal at 11:55am. If Williamson County Schools open two hours late, we will be closed.** Please use your best judgment in any situation. We want everyone to be safe. There will be no makeup days or refunds for snow days, as we have extra days built into our schedule. However, in the event of more than five snow days, Jacob's Ladder will attempt to adjust conference days or reschedule the year end picnic so as to include these as educational days.

CLOTHING

Please dress your child in comfortable play clothes that they can manage easily. This is very important for restroom breaks. Girls must wear tights or shorts under their dresses. Also keep in mind that "hands on" learning sometimes involves making a creative mess: clothing should be easily laundered.

Because the children go outside each day, be sure that the clothing is appropriate for the weather. If the temperature is above freezing we will go outside. In cold weather, your child will need gloves, cap and warm coat. LABEL THESE ITEMS. **Rubber soled shoes are best for your child's safety, especially outside. No sandals, flip-flops, jelly shoes, clogs, or cowboy boots. Jewelry is not appropriate as it is sometimes dangerous and may be broken.**

Your child needs a COMPLETE change of clothing, including socks and underwear to keep at school. Label these items and place them in a large Ziploc bag. As the seasons change and your child grows, please make the appropriate changes in this extra set of clothing.

Should your child bring home wet or soiled clothing, please send replacements the next day. A dependable supply of extra clothing fosters independence and minimizes embarrassment in case of an "accident."

SHOW AND TELL/SHARE

When requested by the teacher, show and tell items will be allowed in the classroom based on the theme for that week. We will keep all "Show and Tell" items in the child's bookbag until sharing time. Please do not allow your child to bring TOY WEAPONS, OFFENSIVE ITEMS, MONEY, EDIBLE ITEMS, OR FRAGILE JEWELRY WHICH MIGHT BE BROKEN.

Remembering to bring a show and tell item is your child's responsibility. We suggest you help your child pack all items to be brought to school, including library books, the night before. **We do not allow children to bring toys from home into the classroom at any other time.** For the younger child, learning to play cooperatively and to share is a major accomplishment. However, undue concern over protecting a personal item can distract a child from important social achievements. Therefore, if a teacher determines that the item your child brings is causing problems, the item will be removed from the room until you collect it at the end of the day.

SNACKS

Parents will be assigned responsibility for snacks for their child's class on a rotation. We encourage healthy snacks that are low in sugar. Snacks are to be brought for the entire week. We will provide water in all classrooms as the beverage.

ALLERGIES

Please advise your teacher as well as the Director of any food allergies. Teachers will provide a list of snack suggestions as well as a list of allergies in the class. As there are several students with nut allergies, we are a **PEANUT-FREE ENVIRONMENT**. While we cannot prohibit all foods that are manufactured in a plant that processes nuts, we ask that no peanuts or peanut butter items be brought to the school. If your child requires an Epi-pen to be kept at school, we will need an action plan to accompany the Epi-pen.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays may be celebrated at the discretion of the parent in consultation with the teacher on or close to the actual birthday. Summer birthdays will be celebrated in May. We would like to suggest that fancy cookies or miniature cupcakes be brought in for the entire class. **Please do not send sweets with excessive icing!**

If your child has a party which does not include all of his classmates, invitations may not be handed out at school. Because of their limited social experience, young children do not understand legitimate adult reasons for inviting only a few of the class.

HEALTH PRACTICES

The Preschool requires all children to provide immunization records prior to admission to the program. Immunizations are to be up-to-date at all times. All immunization forms are required before the first day of your child's attendance.

Children should not be brought to Preschool if they have severe colds, undetermined rash or spots, fever of 100 or above, severe headache, upset stomach, diarrhea or discharge of the eyes, nose, or ears. **Please inform the Director if your child has come down with any contagious disease.** We can then discretely alert other parents to watch for symptoms in their child.

Parents should exercise caution and keep their child home should other unusual symptoms occur. Parents will be notified to pick up children immediately if signs of illness occur during the day. Please use the following guide to determine when your child may return to Preschool.

Chicken Pox	7 days after onset of rash or until all lesions have crusted over
Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)	When child has been under treatment for 24 hours and there is no sign of discharge
Impetigo	48 hours after beginning therapy
Measles	4 days after onset of rash
Mumps	9 days after swelling is gone
Strep	24 hours after starting antibiotics and child is fever free for 24 hours <u>without fever reducers</u>
Fever	24 hours free of fever <u>without medication</u>
Diarrhea	24 hours free of diarrhea <u>without medication</u>
Vomiting	24 hours free of vomiting <u>without medication</u>

Lice	Treated for head lice/nits as well as all live lice and nits removed. Upon returning to preschool, student will be checked by Director to ensure all lice and/or nits are not present.
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The Preschool reserves the right to request a written doctor's report when question of a contagious disease exists or if child has had surgery, been hospitalized, or had extended medical absence. **No provisions can be made for a parent requesting a child's restraint from outside play.**

In order to protect the health of all our students, we ask that siblings who are ill not come into the building at pick-up time. We will be glad to add your child to Take-Down. You may request "take-down" during drop off, or call Director 15 minutes prior to dismissal.

MEDICATIONS

If the qualifications above are met for a well child, but medication is still prescribed by your doctor, we will be pleased to assist you. Procedures for administering medications, as outlined by the Department of Human Services are as follows:

1. The medicine **MUST** be in the original container with the child's name written on it.
2. The parent **MUST** provide a spoon, dropper, etc. so the child will receive the accurate dose.
3. A form that includes the child's name, date and time, name of medicine, and dosage is required before you leave the medicine with us.

4. **NO OVER THE COUNTER MEDICINE WILL BE GIVEN.**

For example, Tylenol, cough syrup, herbs, etc. cannot be distributed by staff, nor kept by your child in clothing or backpack.

5. If your child has asthma or an allergy requiring the use of an inhaler or Epi-pen, we recommend you leave the required medication at the school at all times. An action plan must accompany the inhaler or Epi-pen.

Please be sure to collect your medicine at the end of the day or school year.

DISCIPLINE

Consistency is an important part of our school day. For that reason, we have implemented an "Assertive Discipline" program school wide. This program consists of lots of positive reinforcement for acceptable behavior, and a consistent list of consequences for unacceptable behavior.

Positive reinforcement will be in the form of encouraging words, special privileges, notes to child, notes home, stickers, etc.

We have two basic rules in our school:

1. **Follow instructions.**
2. **Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.**

We believe that children learn by making choices. If a child has made a "poor choice" of behavior, he/she will be offered the choice of redirecting the behavior or accepting a natural consequence of the poor choice.

Natural consequences might be

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|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1st time . . . | Five minutes away from the activity |
| 2nd time . . . | Time-out in thinking chair |
| 3rd time . . . | Director's office |
| 4th time . . . | Parent conference is called |

Learning sometimes requires being allowed to make a mistake. We feel that most problems can be prevented by the use of positive reinforcement and praise for the children. Most behavior difficulties can usually be dealt with in the classroom. We always keep the children's best interest in mind. We will do everything we can to work with you and your child, but if a child becomes harmful to him/herself or to the other children, we will have to permanently dismiss the child.

DISMISSAL POLICY

In the event that a student is unable to exercise sufficient maturity to remain at Jacob's Ladder, it may become necessary to dismiss the child. Examples of indications of insufficient maturity are:

1. Consistent lack of control of urinary/bowel habits
2. Inability to control impulse to hit, bite, push, or injure self or others
3. Consistent exhibition of stress relative to separation anxiety

Staff will consult with parents and work with child to overcome the signs of immaturity or stress. If the child continues to show persistent signs of stress, a conference will be held with the teacher, parents, and Director to determine child's ability to remain in the program. If it is agreed that the child may benefit from a professional evaluation, we will be glad to recommend a list of qualified professionals.

Sufficient time will be given for a child to make recognizable, acceptable changes in behavior. A second conference will be held to determine child's progress, and a recommendation may be made for the child to be withdrawn. **In no case, will a child be retained as a student who is a danger to him/herself, staff, or other children.**

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

FIRE: Fire drills will be conducted monthly and documented. In the event of an actual fire the following procedure will be followed:

1. Children and staff will immediately evacuate the building following the exit chart located in each classroom.
2. Children and staff will initially gather in the picnic shelter. If picnic shelter is in threat of igniting, children and staff will gather in the north east corner of the playground.
3. Role will be taken and parents will be contacted to pick up children.

TORNADO: Tornado drills will be conducted twice per school year and documented. In the event of a tornado, children and staff will gather in the bathrooms located at the extreme front of the new fellowship hall. The Chairperson of the JL Board of Directors, will be the initial emergency contact person if phone service to the church is interrupted.

LOCKDOWN: In the event of a threat in the community, all doors of the church will remain locked. Children and staff will remain in their assigned classrooms if possible. If it is apparent that children need to be located together, the activity center will be the central location. Local law enforcement agency will be notified immediately of any situation specific to Jacob's Ladder or NFUMC. Parents will be contacted as to when children may be safely released.

SPECIAL HELPERS

Jacob's Ladder is a "cooperative preschool," which means we ask for parent participation. The "special helper" program requires each family provide an adult representative at the school to help two days during the school year. Our goal is to maintain a consistent adult/student ratio of 1:6/7. The "special helper" will assist with activities such as: receiving children at arrival time, set-up and take-down of activity center, playground monitoring, classroom aid for special projects, party assistance, cutting materials for use in the classrooms, and assisting with music class.

We recognize that not all families will be able to comply with this requirement. **Those families unable to assist with the "special helper" program will be charged a fee of \$70.00 per school year or \$35.00 per each day they do not sign up to help or arrange for a substitute. If you cannot be there on your assigned day, please arrange to switch with another parent and notify the Director of your exchange.** This money will be used to pay a teacher's aide for days we do not have a "special helper." Please sign up for days that are convenient for your family so that we do not need to make random assignments.

"SAFE SANCTUARY"

In the past, families worked under a blanket of "faith" that anyone working within a church as a paid employee or volunteer could have their trust with the children. That is no longer the case in today's society. The United Methodist Church is establishing "Safe Sanctuary" programs throughout all our ministries. Therefore, we will be requesting that volunteers at Jacob's Ladder agree to have a background check. We hope you understand the need to comply with this mandate. Our children are precious and we need to know they are in the safest possible environment. All Jacob's Ladder staff members have been through a thorough background check.

Background checks for volunteers are processed by a contract agency at the cost of \$6.00. We ask that you cover this cost if at all possible. In order to complete the background checks, each adult who is planning to be a "special helper" needs to submit their FULL name and email address to the Director. You will receive an email with a link to guide you through the online, secure consent and screening process.

Please keep this handbook for future reference. If all participating families follow the same guidelines, we will be able to offer consistent programming and avoid miscommunication.

Jacob's Ladder Cooperative Preschool and Nolensville First United Methodist Church do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national, or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship programs and other school administered programs.