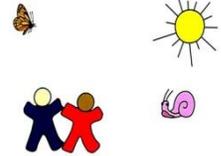




# Everything you need to know about **THE PRESCHOOL ONE GROUP** at the Children's Greenhouse!



*Welcome to the Preschool One Group! Please take the time to read these few pages of information that will help give you a basic understanding of the Preschool One Group. Thank you!*

## **CHILDREN**

At the time of enrollment, the children in the Preschool One Group range in age from approximately 2 years 8 months to 3 years 8 months.

## **STAFF**

There is a **HEAD CAREGIVER**, a full time employee, who is responsible for the overall operation of the group. The head caregiver makes sure that the group's activities run efficiently and is the one who plans the activities around the center's curriculum themes. There is also a full time **HEAD ASSISTANT CAREGIVER** who works with the head caregiver in all aspects of the program and whose responsibility it is to ensure a smooth transition when the head caregiver leaves for the day. We encourage you to address questions or concerns to these primary caregivers. Together, with full and part time assistants, they form a team who supervise the children and who interact with them during activities and routines.

There is a ratio of one caregiver for every four children. This enables us to provide a good deal of attention to the individual needs of each child.

## **ROOM**

Parents and children enter the Preschool One room through the preschool gym. The Preschool One room has a large kitchen, a bathroom complete with small toilets and changing tables and it has a separate room for naps. Preschool One shares the gym area with the Preschool Two Group.

## **DAILY ROUTINES**

The goal of the Preschool One Group is to provide for the needs of each child in our care. There is a schedule of routines and activities that includes eating, sleeping, toileting, playing and learning for this group. A copy of this schedule is on the last page of this packet and a copy is posted in the room. In addition, our staff spends time helping children to reach developmental milestones through planned and improvised activities.

You may choose to receive a written summary of your child's day by filling out the top portion of a **DAILY DETAILS** form at arrival time. Each parent should complete a **PRESCHOOL ONE INTAKE FORM** when your child starts in our program and at any time that there are significant changes in eating, sleeping, health needs, etc. The Intake Form gives caregivers an overview of your child and is something they will refer to periodically for guidance.

## **BEHAVIOR**

Children test their limits on a daily basis! Anticipating this, our staff plans a daily schedule and activities that are age-appropriate and designed to keep the children engaged. There are rules that are discussed and toys and supplies are plentiful to ensure that the children are playing happily throughout the day.

If a child engages in inappropriate behavior that is within the norm, caregivers will help the child through the situation by discussing it with them. If a child hurts another child, we encourage conversation that helps both children to understand that it is not acceptable. If a child needs a moment, a staff member will provide a calming activity and will stay with the child until all is well.

## **ACTIVITIES/LEARNING**

Children are learning every minute of the day. They learn from the way we organize the room, from the daily schedule, from activities, and when they play outdoors.

The Preschool One room is set up for learning. Children have many opportunities to make choices, come up with ideas, experiment, and take responsibility for their work. Here's what you see when you visit the Preschool One room:

- The children have cubbies, labeled with their names and photos. Their jackets, coats, change of clothing, etc. are kept in the cubbies.
- Each child also has a mailbox where you will find artwork and notices from the office.
- Materials are on low shelves, in containers, and on hooks so children can get them independently and put them away.
- Shelves are neat and uncluttered so materials are easy to see, remove, and replace.
- Picture and word labels are on containers and shelves so children know where materials belong and to learn to identify words.
- There are distinct interest centers--blocks, dramatic play, toys and games, art, discovery, library, sand and water, music and movement, iPads, and different play spaces outdoors--so children know what choices are available and make decisions.
- A variety of learning materials are in each area so that no matter where children choose to play, they learn.
- Similar materials are grouped together to teach children to sort and classify--skills that are important to understanding and solving math problems.

We want your child to feel secure and independent, to move from one activity to another as easily and confidently as possible. And we want to provide a variety of learning experiences for a well-rounded education. So we plan a daily schedule with these goals in mind. We follow this same schedule day after day. After a few weeks, the children can tell us what they are supposed to do next!

Caregivers plan a variety of activities for the children each day and each day also includes opportunities for the children to learn how to express themselves, to play and share with one or several friends, to learn self-help skills and to learn to follow simple group rules.

The Preschool One Group goes outdoors to the playground each day, weather permitting, to climb, ride on bikes and cars, dig in the sand and play with outdoor toys. The group will occasionally go for walks to enjoy the sights and sounds of the campus. On rainy or very cold days, the group will use the indoor gym area for active play.

## **SLEEPING**

Parents give staff guidance as to whether or not their child should nap. The Preschool One room has a separate sleeping area where the children sleep on cots. A caregiver sits with children while they are going to sleep and monitors children while they are sleeping. Cots are labeled with children's names and are regularly cleaned and disinfected.

## **MEALS**

If your child is scheduled to be at the center during lunch times, you are responsible for providing lunch. Our license to operate requires that we monitor the children's food intake for nutritional value; this includes lunch and snacks, which are provided by the Greenhouse. Based on this requirement these are some basic rules that everyone should follow:

### **PLEASE DO NOT SEND:**

- X** HIGHLY SUGARED, SALTED OR ARTIFICIALLY FLAVORED OR COLORED FOODS
- X** CANDY, GUM, CHEESE DOODLES OR CHIPS OF ANY KIND
- X** CHOCOLATE IN ANY FORM (COOKIES, CANDY, GRANOLA BARS, ETC.)
- X** PRE-PACKAGED FOODS (SUCH AS LUNCH BUCKETS OR FROZEN FOODS)
- X** FAST FOODS OF ANY KIND (THIS INCLUDES MC DONALDS AND BURGER KING)
- X** HIGHLY SWEETENED CEREALS (NO FRUIT LOOPS, TRIX, ETC.)

### **PLEASE DO SEND:**

- ✓ MILK OR 100% FRUIT JUICE AS A BEVERAGE WITH MEALS. *When possible, juice should be diluted.*
- ✓ A LUNCH THAT PROVIDES SEVERAL APPROPRIATE FOOD CHOICES.

## **LUNCH GUIDELINES**

Imagine having to serve any meal or snack to several tables full of hungry young children! At the Greenhouse that goes on several times a day and it is the goal of our staff to make these times as enjoyable as possible for the children. So that the caregivers may devote more direct attention to the children we ask you to follow these simple guidelines:

- Lunches that contain food to be served warm should be placed in the refrigerator and will be warmed by our staff.
- Lunches should contain a variety of food, including fruit and a simple snack or dessert.
- Lunches should include a beverage.
- Pre-packaged drinks, applesauce, fruit cups and puddings are occasionally wasted because the children only eat small amounts and the remainder cannot be put into a lunch box.
- Please cut all food into bite-sized pieces; this includes peeling, pitting and slicing fruits, including grapes. *Please do not send in any meat on bones.*
- You may send peanut butter sandwiches.
- Some suggested lunch items are: *sandwiches, yogurt, rolled up cold cuts, cold meats, pieces of cheese, raw or slightly cooked vegetables, cheese and crackers, macaroni and cheese, spaghetti, cut up apples, pears, oranges or any fruit cut up, graham crackers, vanilla wafers, animal crackers or other plain cookies.*
- **Any uneaten lunch items will be returned to you in your child's lunch box.**
- **SPECIAL FOOD NEEDS** – health or allergy related, nutritional, religious, or cultural, will be accommodated. The most important factor in special situations is to discuss these needs with administrators and caregivers.

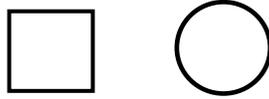
***In the event that you forget to bring a lunch for your child, don't panic! We keep some lunch foods on hand just for this type of emergency. Please stop in the office and we will gladly assist you when this situation occurs.***

## FOOD SAFETY

We need your help! As you prepare your child's lunch for the Greenhouse, there are some simple things that we would like you to do to ensure that the food you pack is not a choking hazard:

- ✓ All firm food, including meat, fruit, cheese, and raw vegetables, must be cut into pieces that are no bigger than ½ inch.

**These are examples of the size food pieces should be:**



- When you send grapes – please cut them in 4 pieces.
- When you send hot dogs – please cut them in half lengthwise and then in small pieces.
- When preparing chicken or any meat, please remove all bones and skin and cut in small pieces.
- ✓ If you send peanut butter for lunch, please spread a thin layer on bread or crackers.
- ✓ Please do not send raisins or fruit snacks for children less than 4 years of age.
- ✓ Please do not send nuts or popcorn as a snack for any child.
- ✓ THANK YOU and as always, please speak with caregivers if you have any questions or if your child has any special needs regarding food!

## MEAL SCHEDULES

In addition to lunches that come from home, snacks are provided for the children three times per day.

- **Breakfast** – you may send in breakfast from home, if you would like. It will be served to your child at morning snack time or if you are scheduled to arrive before 8:30 AM, it will be served when your child arrives.
- **Morning Snack** – consists of a variety of nutritious breakfast foods and is served at approximately 9:15 AM.
- **Lunch** – is served at approximately 11:45 AM but if a child does not eat well, they are offered lunch again at afternoon snack.
- **Afternoon Snack** – is served at 2:15 PM and this is also when lunch will be served again for those children who did not eat well earlier.
- **Late Afternoon Snack** – a light snack is served at approximately 4:30 PM.
- **Beverages** – the children are given 1 % milk or water as a beverage with all snacks.

## SNACK GUIDELINES

Snacks are provided by the Greenhouse and include a variety of nutritious foods appropriate for the time of day. Occasionally there are special snacks for birthdays or snacks related to curriculum topics. Weekly snack menus, that list each day's foods, are posted in each room for your review.

Children are offered drinks of water or milk throughout the day, particularly in warm weather when we have water available, indoors and outdoors, at all times.

**WE DO NOT SERVE PEANUT BUTTER OR PEANUT PRODUCTS FOR SNACK.**

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Birthday celebrations at the Greenhouse are kept simple and yet are special. With the help of caregivers, each child celebrating a birthday will make a birthday crown and we will provide VANILLA ICE CREAM CUPS for a little celebration at snack time or after lunch time. You can decide if you wish to bring in special napkins, plates or party hats to add to the celebration. Speak with your child's caregivers if you have any birthday related questions.

## **TOILETING/DIAPERING**

Children in Preschool One are often at different stages of toilet training. Some are in diapers or pull-ups, in which case they are changed every two hours or when needed. Parents provide all diapering supplies and will be asked to sign a form giving us permission to apply creams or lotions.

Department of Health guidelines are followed for diapering and these procedures include but are not limited to:

- Staff wear vinyl gloves when changing diapers
- Diapering area is covered with exam table paper
- Soiled diapers and paper are disposed in covered trash cans
- Diapering area is wiped down with a disinfecting solution of bleach and water
- After diapering, children and adults wash their hands

Some children are in the process of learning to use the toilet and will be encouraged and helped in this process by our staff who will work cooperatively with parents on this important developmental step. When your child begins toilet training, please notify caregivers.

Some children are completely toilet trained and will be encouraged to use the bathroom at several times during the day. Staff will always assist children in the bathroom with cleaning routines and children will be taught to wash their hands after toileting.

Regardless of their toileting learning stage, we know that accidents will occur. These situations are handled with by our staff with understanding and they will assist the child with cleaning up and changing into clean clothing.

You are encouraged to discuss your child's toileting stage with caregivers at the start of the semester and at any time during the semester when there are changes.

## **SUPPLIES**

Please bring these items to the Greenhouse for your child and please write your child's name on each item:

- Diapering supplies including diapers, wipes and diaper ointment or cream. As you run low on diapering supplies, you will receive a note asking you to bring in additional items.
- When your child begins toilet training, please bring in extra changes of clothing along with extra underwear.
- One change of clothing that includes a shirt, pants, socks and undershirt and underwear (if your child is toilet trained).
- A sweater or sweatshirt just in case it's cool in the building.
- A crib sheet and light blanket for sleeping. (Sheets and blankets will be laundered weekly at the Greenhouse.)

## **OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

### 1. **MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS AND IMMUNIZATIONS**

Each child at the center is required to have an annual, complete physical examination, signed and dated by a physician and recorded on DSS Form 4433 (which are available in the Greenhouse office). In addition, please keep us informed when your child's immunizations have been updated by bringing in a printout or note stamped by your health care provider.

### 2. **MEDICATION**

If your child needs to have any type of medication while they are at the center, you must stop in the office and speak with administrators who will provide you with the appropriate permission forms.

## **SUMMER SESSIONS**

- **SCHEDULE:** The daily schedule of activities and routines will be adjusted in the summer. Parents will receive the summer schedule at the start of the session their child is attending.
- **CLOTHING:** Children who are enrolled during the summer months of July and August should bring a bathing suit, a towel, and water shoes so that they can fully participate in the fun of our sprinkler and outdoor water play.
- **SUNBLOCK:** We provide sunblock for the children and apply it prior to going outdoors. Parents may choose to supply their own product which we will keep on hand to use prior to outdoor activities. Parents will be asked to sign a form giving us permission to apply sunscreen.

## **ASSESSMENTS AND CONFERENCES**

Over the course of a semester, the head caregiver will conduct assessments to determine that each child in the program is reaching age-appropriate developmental milestones. These assessments will be used to provide parents with information about their child's development during parent/caregiver conferences and to assist staff in planning programmatic activities that meet the developmental needs of each child. Sample forms may be viewed in the office.

Individual meetings with caregivers are offered at the end of the Fall and Spring Semesters. Notice of meeting dates will be given, prior to the end of the semester, and parents may choose a meeting day and time that is convenient.

This opportunity to meet with your child's caregiver is very valuable because it will give you an opportunity to privately discuss your child's progress and development and to review assessment materials.

You may also request a meeting with your child's caregiver at any time during the year if you have the need to discuss any issues involving your child or if you would like to receive a developmental progress report.

## **MOVING TO THE NEXT AGE GROUP**

We generally transition children to the Preschool Two Group at the start of a new semester. Occasionally, we will move a child during a semester if there is an opening and if the child is developmentally ready. When the decision to move a child is being made, parents will be informed and given an opportunity to meet with new caregivers. As part of the transition process, children will make several visits to the new room, accompanied by caregivers they know.

## **IN CLOSING**

We want your time in the Preschool One Group to be a positive experience for your child and for you. At any time, please do not hesitate to ask caregivers questions and to speak with administrators if you have concerns.

# Sample Preschool One Schedule

## FOR FALL AND SPRING SEMESTERS

(Schedule may vary based on the needs of the group.)

7:15	Breakfast
7:30	Playdough/Water Play/Sand Play Art Activities and Table Toys
8:45	Diaper/Toilet Time
9:15	Snack
9:35	Book Time
9:45	Circle Time/Story Time
10:15	Outdoor Play/Gym
10:45	Art Activities/Puzzles/Manipulatives Diaper/Toilet Time
11:45	Lunch
12:15	Naptime
	Playdough/Water Play/Sand Play
1:00	Art Activities/Table Toys
1:30	Diaper/Toilet Time
2:15	Snack Time
2:40	Book Time
3:00	Outdoor Play/Gym
3:30	Circle Time
4:00	Diaper/Toilet Time
	Art Activities/Puzzles/Manipulatives
4:30	Light Snack
4:45	Free Play

