

Grace Kids Early Academy



Parent Handbook

Revised October 2025

Grace Kids Early Academy Parent Handbook 2025-2026

Welcome! We are so excited that you have considered Grace Kids Early Academy as a foundation for your child's future!

OUR VISION

Grace Kids Early Academy helps children discover a deeper knowledge of God that they may grow as grace-filled disciples and future leaders.

OUR MISSION

Our mission at Grace Kids Early Academy is to provide grace-filled, engaging, secure and nurturing environments where children can grow in wisdom and develop a faith that will last a lifetime.

OUR PLEDGE

Grace Kids Early Academy partners with families to inspire learners to lead in wisdom and faith that will last a lifetime.

We exist to educate and care for children in order to connect them to God and others.
Thank you for sharing your child with us.

Sincerely,
Grace Kids Early Academy Staff

Operation Times

August – May

Monday - Friday 7:30 am – 5:30 pm

June – July

Monday – Friday 7:30 am – 5:30 pm

Please see our website for our annual school calendar which includes session start times and holidays.

4 Day Program: \$400 Monthly

Grace Kids Early Academy 4-day program is Monday through Thursday from 8:50 to 2:15.

5 Day Program: \$500 Monthly

Grace Kids Early Academy 5-day program is Monday through Friday from 8:50 to 2:15.

Full-Time Care: \$800 Monthly

Grace Kids Early Academy will also have a full-time program Monday through Friday from 7:30-5:30.

Inclement Weather:

Grace Kids Early Academy will make every effort to remain open during snow and ice; however, we will take into consideration neighboring school closures and make an informative decision. Notice will be given through our parent communication app, and Facebook page.

Other Closures:

If Grace Christian Fellowship needs the use of the classrooms and we are unable to have school, we will close for that day. Ample notice will be given to make different childcare arrangements, if necessary.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Grace Kids accepts students of any race or ethnic origin, and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. All the rights, privileges, responsibilities, programs and activities will be made available to each student provided the student meets our requirements and abides by our policies.

Admission

GKEA accepts students of any race or ethnic origin. All the rights, privileges, responsibilities, programs and activities will be made available to each student provided the student meets our requirements and abides by our policies.

To enroll a child, the following must be completed:

1. Parent/guardian must complete an Enrollment form; Allergy form, Discipline Policy form, Parent Handbook verification, Health Record form (signed by a doctor) a copy of a current shot record, Procure Account, and Picture Release form.
2. Tuition and Fees Paid

Reminder: Any change in emergency or personal information such as telephone numbers, addresses, custody agreements, allergies, etc. must be reported immediately to our office and is solely your responsibility.

Right to Refuse Admission

Grace Kids reserves the right to refuse admission to any child at any time with or without cause. Possible reasons for refusal of admission include, but are not limited to:

- The need to maintain compliance with Child Care Regulations
- Staff deems the child too ill to attend (please see our Sick Policy)
- The child's physical, developmental, or emotional needs are unable to be met by the staff
- Domestic situations that present a safety risk to the child, staff or other children enrolled if the child were present at the preschool
- Parent/Guardian failure to provide completed up to date records or documentation in a timely fashion

Parent/Guardian Expectations & Code of Conduct

Parents of children enrolled at Grace Kids must abide by the Parent Code of Conduct. Parents who violate the Code of Conduct will not be permitted on the church or preschool property thereafter.

- Inappropriate Language - Parents or adults may not use inappropriate language on church/preschool property at any time. Inappropriate language may not be directed at a child or staff member at any time.
- Threats or confrontational interactions with employees or other parents will not be tolerated. Any disagreements must be handled in a calm and respectful manner.
- Physical or harsh verbal punishment of your child or other children on church/preschool property is prohibited.
- Smoking, vaping, or consumption of alcohol/illegal substances is prohibited on church/preschool property.
- Dress code- Parents and visitors must wear clothing that provides adequate coverage (no see-through clothing, exposed undergarments, or excessively revealing attire). Clothing must not contain offensive, violent, sexual, or discriminatory images or text. Clothing must not promote drugs, alcohol, vaping, or other adult-only themes. Shoes must be worn at all times, in the building.

Tuition

Tuition may be paid in full or on a 10-month payment plan (August-May). Monthly tuition is due by the 15th day of every month or the business day prior, if the 1st falls on a weekend or holiday. There will be a \$25 late payment fee added if the account is not brought current by the time the following months invoice is sent out (the 1st of each month). ****All**

monthly rates remain the same no matter how many days of GKEA take place per month.**

Parents are responsible for ensuring all accounts are current. GKEA has the right to withhold records for any accounts with unpaid balances.

Any account with a past-due balance of 30 days or more will be subject to immediate dismissal.

Tuition is based on enrollment, not attendance. There is no tuition reduction for sick time, personal time, vacation or school holidays.

Withdraw

Should a parent need to withdraw a child before the end of May, **a written two-week notice is required.** If a two-week notice is not given prior to the payment due date, the payment will be charged, and reimbursement will not be given.

Registration Fees will NOT be refunded.

If a student has already registered for the following school year, withdrawing two weeks prior to May will forfeit the spot for the upcoming year.

An adult must accompany children to enter the school. State regulations require that the parent/guardian sign the child in and out every day. Students will not be admitted into the classroom unless a school staff member is present. Never leave your child in a class if you do not see teacher/staff present.

Parents may not enter the classroom at arrival or dismissal times.

Parents will be background checked if permitted for activities within the center.

Arrival

- Drop off times are listed below:
-4 Day & 5 Day program: 8:50-9:15 am
-Full time program: 7:30-9:15 am
- Drop off procedure: Parents will sign in your child using the Procure app/camera for QR code scanning. QR codes are located at the end of the 3 main hallways. Then you will walk your child to their designated classroom.
- The doors will lock at 9:15 am. Please understand that your child is considered late

at this point. We will allow them entrance to the building, as long as it is before 10:30 am. Once you have hit the 3rd late arrival, a late arrival fee will be added to your balance and will increase with each late arrival after that. This will start over each month and be billed monthly.

- A Doctor's note will be required if your child has an appointment that is causing them to arrive late.
- If your ability to arrive on time becomes a consistent issue, we will need to sit down and have a discussion. We ask that you understand that for the first few weeks, it will be an adjustment for the children in our care and late arrival can cause disruption of your child and all other children in the class.

Dismissal

- Pick-up times are listed below:
-4 Day & 5 Day program: 2:15-2:40 pm
-Full time program: 2:15-5:30 pm
- Pick-up procedure: Parents will sign out your child using the Procure app/Camera for QR code scanning. QR codes are located at the end of the 3 main hallways. Then you will walk to your child's designated classroom to pick up. We ask that you do not linger long to talk to the child's teacher. If you do need to speak in length, please reach out to schedule either a phone call or conference time to meet one-on-one.
- If you are running late to pick up your child and not sure you will be here on time, please send your child's teacher a message to let us know. If you are late 3 times in one month, you will be charged a fee. This fee will increase with each late pick-up after the 3rd. This will be billed to you each month. This will start over each month.
- If late pick-up becomes a consistent issue, we will need to sit down to have a discussion.

A student will only be released to an individual listed on their authorized pick-up list on file with the school office. Parents may update their pick-up list at any time using the school's online enrollment system or by submitting the request in writing to the school office. GKEA reserves the right to ask for photo identification from anyone picking up a child.

Birthdays

We allow each class to celebrate a student's birthday in their classroom with their friends and teachers

only. We do not allow parents to come in to celebrate. You may communicate with your child's teacher on what snack/treat may be sent or brought for your child's birthday. If the birthday falls on the weekend or summer, communicate with the teacher what day you would like to celebrate. Store bought goods are preferred.

Biting Policy

If the bite does not draw blood and is not on the face, then the following actions will take place for each age group.

Babies: biter is immediately placed in a crib

Toddlers and older: the biter is immediately placed in time-out

If the bite draws blood, leaves a mark, is on the face or occurs three times in one day, parents will be called immediately. Parents of the child who bit will be expected to take them home for the remainder of the day.

If biting continues, the Director will discuss the issue with the parent/guardian to determine the reason for the biting. If biting continues, we will ask that the child be withheld from the program.

Custody Orders

Certified custody orders, if applicable, must be provided to the Director at the time of enrollment. Any changes in the custody order must be provided to the Director immediately. We cannot enforce any custody agreements without documents from court stating the agreement.

Discipline

Our discipline policy can be found in your enrollment packet.

Each teacher is expected to use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control and self-guidance. Punishment is never associated with food, rest or toilet training. Corporal punishment, humiliation and scare tactics are never used.

Recurring misbehavior will result in a visit with the school Director and the child, and then will also be discussed with the parent/guardian. Extreme, repeated misbehavior may result in dismissal from the program. This is left to the Director's discretion.

Dispensing Medication

If your child needs to take medication while at GKEA, the following criteria must be met:

1. Medication must be in original container with the correct date labeled.
2. The child's name must be on the container.
3. Parent must complete an Authorization Form.
4. Prescription medications must have a label with doctor's authorization and instructions.
5. Over-the-counter medication, which instructs, "consult your physician" will only be administered if accompanied by written instructions from the child's physician.

Medication of any type may not be brought to school in the child's bag. **ALL MEDICATION MUST BE GIVEN DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE AT THE TIME OF DROP-OFF. DO NOT LEAVE THIS WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER.**

Emergency Drills

Fire drills will be conducted monthly. Severe weather drills will be conducted every 3 months. A copy of our Emergency Preparedness Plan can be viewed in the office.

Hearing and Vision Screening

The Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act, Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 36, requires a screening or a professional examination for possible vision and hearing problems for children who are 4 years old or older in the Preschool class. ****Parents will be required to provide written proof that a professional has screened their child.****

Illness

Children with any of the following illnesses or symptoms will not be admitted to a classroom and will be sent home if they occur at school:

- o Oral temperature of 100.4 or higher
- o Diarrhea (3 times)
- o Vomiting (1 time)
- o Mouth sores with drooling
- o Rash with a fever, or severely covering the body
- o Suspected Pink eye
- o Scabies, head lice, etc.
- o Suspected strep throat

- o Chicken pox
- o Symptoms/signs of possible severe illness

Should your child show any of the above symptoms, you must pick him/her up immediately after you have been contacted. The child may not return until he/she has been free of symptoms for a minimum of 24 hours without medicine. **A child may be sent home if other symptoms are present, with or without a fever, at the Director's discretion.**

If your child has an illness that requires them to stay home and has a sibling enrolled in the center, we ask that both the sibling and the ill child stay home to prevent the spread of germs and possible illnesses, regardless of if they have symptoms or not.

Parents of students being sent home due to illnesses classified as Enterovirus will be asked to

- 1) Take all siblings enrolled in the program
- 2) Quarantine for seven days
- 3) Return with a doctor's release for each student

Parents must contact the school office by 9:00 am if your child is unable to attend due to illness.

Immunization Records

All children are required by the State of Texas to have current, age-appropriate immunization or provide an exemption affidavit. A copy of the current record is required before admission to the program is granted. **If Grace is fined or penalized for noncompliance of immunization cards due to a parent's neglect, that fine will be passed on to the client responsible, including an additional \$50 administration fee.**

Lunch Guidelines & Suggestions

-Please label **ALL** bottles/cups and lunch boxes/lunch containers with your child's name.

-We only have refrigerator space for infant/nursery bottles and their milk. You will need to use a cold pack to cool any other food or drink item in your child's lunch.

-We do NOT heat up lunches, as this takes too much time from our schedules, and we do not have microwaves in our classrooms. You may use a thermos to keep food warm.

-Cut up chunks of meat and cheese. Avoid hard candies and popcorn.

-Whole grapes, carrots, celery or hot dogs must be cut into small pieces

-Oranges and apples need to be peeled, seeded and cut into small pieces

-Parents must provide lunch and a light snack but the school will supply water each day. The school is not responsible for the nutritional value of lunches/snacks or meeting the child's daily food needs. Parents must inform the school of special diet instructions in order for us to meet the needs of children that require any dietary restrictions/additions.

Medical Emergencies

Children may occasionally encounter bumps, bruises, minor scrapes or cuts while at GKEA. These are cleaned and treated using approved first aid procedures. Following any accident, the teacher will complete an incident report that will be given to the parent. In case of a more severe injury, first aid procedures will be followed, and the parent will be contacted immediately.

If emergency care is required and the parent cannot be contacted, EMS will be called, or the child will be taken to ORMC and the physician on the enrollment form will be contacted.

Parent Conferences and Visits

Should you wish to discuss any questions or concerns regarding our policies or procedures with the director, please email the office to schedule an appointment.

All visitors must use the front main entrance between the hours of 7:30 AM and 5:30 PM.

Exterior doors must never be propped open.

Parental Notifications

All required notifications and postings will be placed in the front office on the bulletin board and/or given to each parent as required by the Minimum Standards for Licensed Child-Care Centers. These Standards can be accessed on the web at www.dfps.state.tx.us or at the local licensing office. To report abuse or neglect you may call 1-800-252-5400 or go online at www.dfps.state.tx.us The local licensing office number is 432-684-3299. This office is located at 3401 N. A Street, Midland, TX 79705. A copy of this center's most recent Licensing inspection report is posted in the school office.

Rest Time

The Minimum Standards requires a rest period after lunch time. Parents must provide a nap mat for any child ages 18 months and up. Any items brought from home for rest time should be labeled with the child's name.

****Do not send full size pillows or blankets, as we do not have room to store them.****

Personal items used for naptime will be sent home at the end of the week for sanitizing and washing, along with the child's nap mat.

Toilet Training

Parents must notify their child's teachers if they are ready to begin toilet training. Our staff will not begin toilet training without consulting the parent and will not continue the program without parental support at home. **Children will not be promoted to the 3-year-old (3's) class until they are fully potty trained. If they are not, a spot will not be held for them in the 2's class.**

Teachers are allowed to verbally assist students; however, we encourage our teachers to refrain from physically assisting students in the restroom who are over the age of 4. Our desire is to help each child reach his/her fullest potential in all areas and this includes independent toileting. Recurring accidents may result in dismissal from the program. If you have any questions regarding this policy, please speak with the school Director.

If a child has an accident, the teacher will place soiled clothing in a plastic bag and notify the parent. Soiled clothing may not be placed in student backpacks; parents may collect these items at the end of the day during pick up.

If the child is in our 3's classes and has an accident, the parent will be notified. If the child has 3 accidents within one week, the child will be sent home for a reset day for the parent to work with the child and may return the following school day. If this becomes an issue further, a discussion will be held with the parent and Director to discuss further options and a plan, or to withdraw the student until they are fully potty trained.

Toys

Grace Kids Early Academy has a wide variety of toys, games, and other resources to offer children during center time. Personal toys are NOT permitted in the center. They can cause a disruption, a dispute, can be lost, stolen, or broken. The exemption is for show and tell, which should be labeled and discussed

with the teacher. GKEA is not responsible for stolen, lost or broken toys. **Please do not send any toys with your child to school. Leave them at home!**

Chapel

Chapel is a requirement for all students. This class is held Monday-Friday for all GKEA students and is led by our Specials teacher. Bible songs are played Monday-Wednesday and we have dance parties every Thursday.

Physical Activity

Grace Kids supports the need for physical activity each day. Our staff will prompt all children to participate in active play every day. Children will have ample opportunities to do moderate to vigorous activities, such as running, climbing, dancing, skipping and jumping, to the extent of their abilities.

Outdoor play is a regular part of our daily routine. All preschool children will participate in a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

Close-toed shoes are highly recommended for outdoor and indoor playground time. To ensure their safety, children may not wear flip-flops or dress up shoes to school. (Exception on special event days)

Grace Kids has four outdoor playgrounds:

- The Front Playground rated for 6 months – 23 months.
- The Back Turf Playground rated for ages 2-5 years.
- The West Mulch Playground rated for ages 3-5 years.
- The East Mulch Playground rated for 5 years and up.

Grace Kids also has an indoor playground. The indoor playground will be utilized on excessively hot, windy, cold or rainy days. Outdoor play will not be allowed when the temperature or heat index is over 100 degrees, or the temperature or wind chill is below 45 degrees.

All Grace Kids Playgrounds are closed to the public before and after school.

Allergies

We must be aware of any food or other known allergies that affect your child. If your child has any known food allergies, you will need to fill out an "Allergy/Food Exemption Medical Statement." This

allows us to alert all our staff to be on guard with their allergies. The Allergy/Food Exemption Statement must be turned into our office as soon as this allergy has been identified. This form must be updated annually. We also need to be aware of any Non-Food allergies that can affect your child as well. If your child has any Non-Food allergies, you will need to fill out a "Non-Food Allergy Medical Statement" which must be turned into our office immediately after identifying the allergy. This form must also be updated annually. You will also need to fill out an "Authorization to Give Medication" form if your child requires an Epi-pen or other emergency treatment.

Infant/Toddler Curriculum

We will keep your child on his/her daily schedule as much as possible. During the day, we will do activities with your child to help them develop their social, emotional, cognitive, language, and physical skills that go along with our Frog Street curriculum. These activities include playing with age-appropriate toys, art, imagination, enjoying story time, discovery, music, and even outdoor time (weather permitting).

Pre-School Curriculum

The Frog Street preschool curriculum will cover age-appropriate developmental, activities that will help children with movement and coordination, autonomy and social skills, healthy work habits, language, mathematics, orientation in time and space, science, music/worship, and visual arts.

Safe Sleep for 8 Weeks - 12 Months

Infants will have supervised nap periods that allow the infant to maintain his or her own pattern of sleeping or waking periods. Infants will nap in cribs that comply with all safety standards and guidelines. Only a well-fitting crib sheet is allowed in the crib. Blankets, stuffed animals, pacifier straps, toys, pillows, etc., are not allowed in the crib during nap time.

Infants may not nap in a restricted device unless the parent has submitted a Sleep Exception Form that includes a signed statement from a health-care professional stating that the child sleeping in a restrictive device is medically necessary. If an infant falls asleep in a restrictive device (swing, stroller, bouncer, etc.) the infant will be moved to a crib as soon as possible to continue napping.

Infants not yet able to turn over on their own will be placed in a face-up sleeping position in the infant's own crib, unless the parent has submitted a

completed Sleep Exception Form that includes a signed statement from a health-care professional stating that a different sleeping position for the child is medically necessary.

Infants may not be swaddled when laid down to sleep or sleep in a swaddle blanket. Infants in cribs will not be covered with blankets or clothing at any time.

Teachers will inform parents of the following on a daily report:

- Times the infant slept
- Times and amount of food consumed
- Times of diaper changes
- Infant's general mood for the day
- Brief summary of the activities the infant participated in while in care

Breastfed Babies

Mothers of infants that are breastfeeding will have a comfortable area to nurse their baby. Mothers will not be allowed to feed in the child's classroom. Please let staff know if you need to breastfeed so we can get you a private room.

Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. Grace Kids staff are considered reporters under this law. The school staff are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the case of any suspicious marks, behavior or condition prior to making a report. Under the Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best intention of all children. Grace Kids staff receive annual training on recognizing and preventing child abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse.

Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include but are not limited to:

- Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the child's body
- Severe verbal reprimands
- Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness or season

- Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (car seats, boosters, seat belts, etc.)
- Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence or appearing to be under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Leaving a child unattended for any amount of time, including in a motor vehicle
- Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
- Sending a sick child to school and is over medicated to hide symptoms which would typically require the child to be kept at home until symptoms subside
- Children who exhibit or communicate behaviors that are consistent with an abusive situation

If parents feel they need assistance with possible child abuse, neglect or sexual abuse, we encourage you to get help. Please call the National Parent Hotline at 1-855-427-2736. The Texas statewide Abuse and Neglect Hotline phone number is 1-800-252-5400. This hotline is open 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Gang Free Zone

Grace Kids is a gang-free zone. All childcare centers are required to designate a gang-free zone that is within 1000 feet of the center. Gang activity within this area is prohibited. Gang related or criminal activities or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of the preschool is a violation of the law and is therefore subject to increased penalty. The goal of the zone is to deter certain types of criminal activity in areas where children gather.

Suspension Policy

In the event of disruptive behavior, emotional, physical, or intellectual needs beyond the expertise of the classroom teachers, or in case of physical or safety threats to other classroom children, the preschool reserves the right to remove the child temporarily or permanently from the preschool in any situation where these conditions are applicable. To guarantee a child's safety, we reserve the right to dismiss a child who repeatedly puts themselves in danger: such as (but not limited to) running out of a classroom, running off the playground or away from a teacher. Temporary suspension from the school may be necessary for the safety of the child and others while any appropriate evaluations are completed/or while securing any appropriate support services. GKEA will make reasonable accommodations to its practices and procedures but is

not required by law to alter or change the services provided for a child displaying dangerous/inappropriate behavior, developmental delays and/or disabilities as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Right to Refuse Admission

GKEA reserves the right to refuse admission to any child at any time with or without cause. Possible reasons for refusal of admission include, but are not limited to:

- The need to maintain compliance with Child Care Regulations
- Staff deems the child too ill to attend (please see our Sick Policy)
- The child's physical, developmental, or emotional needs are unable to be met by the staff
- Domestic situations that present a safety risk to the child, staff or other children enrolled if the child were present at the preschool
- Parent/Guardian failure to provide completed up to date records or documentation in a timely fashion

Additions and Changes:

Grace Kids Early Academy reserves the right to edit or adapt the policies in this handbook at any time throughout the year, as the needs arise. The center will make all changes and additions available on our website at the time of the change or addition.

GRACE KIDS EARLY ACADEMY SUPPLIES

Please label everything. Grace Kids Early Academy will not be responsible for stolen, misplaced, or lost items.

Nursery (6-12 Months):

- Diaper Bag
- Diapers/Wipes
- Foods/Formula
- Bottles/Sippy Cup
- Change of Clothes/Bibs/Socks
- Sleep sack (if your child likes them at naptime)
- Jacket/Blanket
- **Not allowed- paci with attached clips, wubbanubs, or teething necklaces**

Toddlers (12-24 Months):

- Backpack
- Washable or Plastic Nap Mat/Blanket
- Finger Foods for Lunch/Pouches
- Change of Clothes/Socks
- Diapers/Wipes
- Sippy Cup
- Jacket

Two's:

- Backpack
- Washable or Plastic Nap Mat/Blanket
- Finger Foods for Lunch
- Change of Clothes/Socks/ Underwear
- Diapers/Wipes/Extra Underwear if Potty Trained
- Sippy Cup
- Jacket

Threes and Four's:

- Backpack
- Washable or Plastic Nap Mat/Blanket
- Lunch
- Change of Clothes/Socks
- Water Bottle/ Water cup
- Jacket