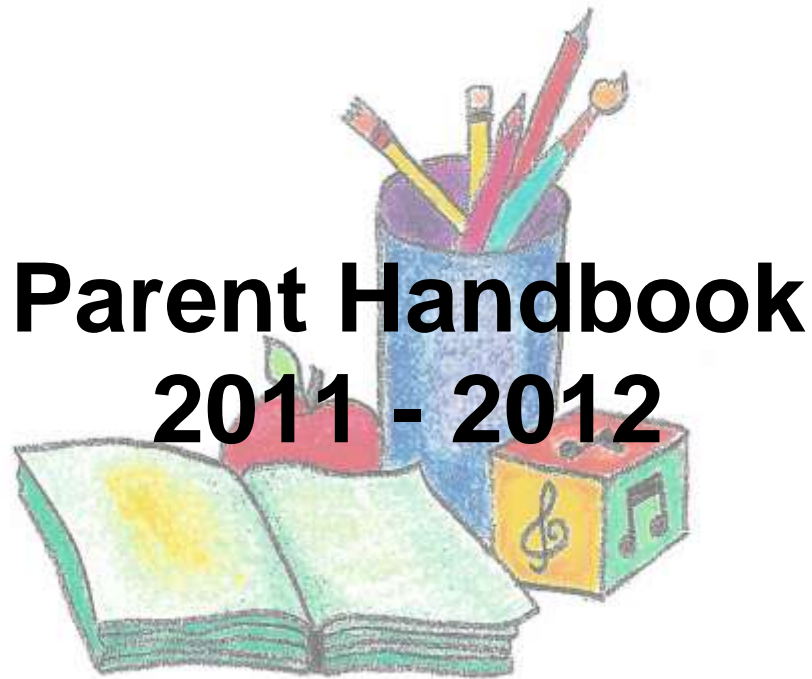


Poplar Grove Learning Academy:

Poplar Grove Preschool

Poplar Grove After School Center

At Poplar Grove United Methodist Church



Parent Handbook 2011 - 2012

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On the web at www.pgumc.us/preschool

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Overview

Poplar Grove Learning Academy, Inc was organized to provide learning opportunities for Preschool and School-Age Children in the community. The Academy is currently comprised of two programs, Poplar Grove Preschool and Poplar Grove After School Center, both offered during the school year. In the future, additional programs may be added, such as summer enrichment programs (e.g. music, drama, art, math, science) and summer preparation for kindergarten.

Poplar Grove Preschool has been in existence for almost 25 years, providing preschool enrichment and learning opportunities. An After School Center was started in September 2004 for school age children. The North Boone School District buses stop at the Center as schools are dismissed, dropping the enrolled students; students from Poplar Grove Elementary walk across the field.

Poplar Grove Learning Academy is licensed by the State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and meets or exceeds all the standards and requirements for Day Care Centers.

Purpose and Philosophy - Preschool

The purpose of Poplar Grove Preschool is to provide enrichment activities and learning opportunities for 3, 4, and 5 year olds to facilitate physical, intellectual, emotional, and social growth.

The program philosophy is based on beliefs that:

- Each child is an individual, unique in his background;
- Children have different rates of developing and ways of learning;
- Learning at the preschool level is play-based;
- Self-esteem and the ability to learn are interdependent;
- Music and motion are essential to development of circuitry in the brain;
- It is our responsibility to provide an environment that:
 - Provides a wide variety of play-based learning opportunities
 - Play centers with age-appropriate toys and media
 - Seasonal or thematic play centers
 - Group and individual games and activities that use large muscle groups
 - Group and individual games and activities that use fine motor skills
 - Provides individual and group activities (games, music, arts, crafts, puzzles, and other manipulatives) that allow natural teaching opportunities for developing math and literacy skills;



The goals of the program are to assist in developing a child who:

- Has a positive self-concept
- Is able to work and play with children and adults
- Deals with his/her emotions
- Is physically coordinated
- Can orally communicate (talk, ask questions, listen)
- Expresses himself/herself in many ways (movement, art, building materials, drama, music, spoken word)
- Is curious and wants to learn
- Has readiness skills for full time school

The program purpose is accomplished through the use of structured and unstructured discovery time, outdoor time, physical activities, small group time, music, art, drama, dance, and story times.

Purpose and Philosophy – After School Center

The purpose of Poplar Grove After School Center is to provide a safe, enriching, and nurturing environment for school age children to enhance the children's intellectual, social, and emotional skills.

The goals of the program are to assist in developing a child who:

- Has a positive self-concept
- Is able to work and play with children and adults
- Deals with his/her emotions
- Can orally communicate (talk, ask questions, listen)
- Expresses himself/herself in many ways (movement, art, building materials, drama, music, spoken word)
- Is curious and wants to learn

The program purpose is accomplished through the use of consistent adult leadership, structured and unstructured discovery time, outdoor time, physical activities, small group time, arts and crafts, drama, and other age-appropriate activities.

Calendar:

Preschool will begin each year on the first Tuesday after Labor Day in September and will end on the Friday before Memorial Day in May. Emergency closing of school due to weather or other emergencies will be announced before 8 AM on LOCAL radio and TV stations.

September 6	PRESCHOOL T-TH CLASS STARTS
September 7	PRESCHOOL M-W-F CLASSES START
October 7 & 10	No Preschool – Columbus Day Holiday
November 11	No Preschool – Veterans Day Holiday
November 23, 24, 25	No Preschool – Thanksgiving
December 10	PRESCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM
December 21 – Jan 2	No Preschool - Winter Break
January 16	No Preschool - M.L. King Day
February 20	No Preschool – President Day Holiday
March 26 – 30	No Preschool – Spring Break
April 6	No Preschool – Good Friday
April 13	No Preschool – Institute Day
May 12	PRESCHOOL SPRING PROGRAM
May 25	LAST DAY of PRESCHOOL

After School will begin on the first full day of student attendance by the North Boone school district calendar and will end with the last full day of student attendance. The After School Holidays and non-attendance days will coincide with the attendance calendar of the North Boone School District. On EARLY RELEASE days, the After School program will start at 12:30PM. If there are to be exceptions, all students and parents will be given a minimum of 2 weeks notice.

Arrival and Departure

Preschool

- **For the safety of all children**, please always use the Carson Road entrance to the church parking lot. **DO NOT USE THE ENTRANCE** off ROUTE 173 for drop-off and pick-up.
- Parents or the authorized/designated representatives are responsible for getting the preschool children safely into and out of the school building.
- Parents or the authorized/designated representatives must **sign**

- **the child in** when they arrive and **make the staff in the classroom aware** of the child's arrival.
- Children will need to wash/sanitize their hands in the Preschool bathrooms upon arrival at school.
- When picking up the child, parents or the authorized/designated representatives must **sign the child out**. Children will be released by the teacher or the assistant only to those individuals whom the parents have authorized in writing on the Emergency Form. If someone else is designated to pick up the child on a particular day, the teacher must be notified by the parent in writing. Picture identification may be requested at the time of pick-up. If the teacher/assistant has a concern about the representative picking up the child and the child does not recognize the person readily/spontaneously, the parent will be contacted; the child will not be released until that contact is made.
- Children are to **arrive** no earlier than 5 minutes prior to the beginning of class. If children are not picked up by 10 minutes after class ends, parents will be charged \$5.00 for every 15 minutes, payable in cash at the time of pick-up.
- On some days, it may be difficult for some children to separate from their parents. This is normal. It is recommended that parents make the drop-off brief and cheerful with a hug and assurance of being back to pick them up. The teacher and assistant will get the child quickly involved in play or activities. The child will not be forced to participate, but will be given positive alternatives and options.

After School

- Children walking from Poplar Grove Elementary School will be met at a designated school door by a staff person. They will walk across the field and use the sidewalk in front of the church to get to the north door entrance or will use the State Street sidewalk to the sidewalk in front of the church (on Route 173) to the north door.
- Other children arriving by bus will be dropped off at the sidewalk that leads directly to the north door. The School Age Worker or Assistant will try to meet each bus as it arrives.
- If children do not arrive as expected within a reasonable timeframe, staff person will call the school and notify the parent.
- All children will **sign themselves in** when arriving and wash their hands in the Preschool bathrooms or other bathrooms as instructed.

- When picking up the child, parents or the authorized/designated representatives must **sign the child out**. Children will be released by the teacher or the assistant only to those individuals whom the parents have authorized in writing on the Emergency Form. If someone else is designated to pick up the child on a particular day, the teacher must be notified by the parent in writing prior to that day. Picture identification may be requested at the time of pick-up. If the teacher/assistant has a concern about the representative picking up the child and the child does not recognize the person readily/spontaneously, the parent will be contacted; the child will not be released until that contact is made.
- If children are not picked up by 6:10 PM, parents will be charged \$5.00 for every 15 minutes, payable in cash at the time of pick-up. Late pickup greater than two times in one year will raise the charge to \$5 per each 5 minutes.
- If by 6:30 PM, no one has called or comes to pick up a child, and we cannot contact anyone on the Emergency contact form, police and DCFS will be notified.

Preschool Daily Program:

30 Minutes: Wash hands, Welcome, Free Play

15 Minutes - Clean-up time, Circle Time (Pledge, Calendar, Weather)

20 Minutes – Music & Movement, Story Time, Bathroom Break and Prepare for Snack

20 Minutes – Snack Time

30 Minutes – Small Group Activities (Learning Centers, Manipulatives, Games, Crafts)

20 Minutes – Movement & Exploration (Outdoors if possible)

15 Minutes – Closing Song & Story

After School Center Daily Program (2:30 P.M. – 6:00 P.M)

2:45 – 3:15 PM Gathering – Arrival from various schools

3:00 – 4:15 PM Snack; homework

4:00 – 4:15 PM Special activity/science, reading/story

4:20 – 6:00 PM Homework completion; indoor/outdoor games; crafts, drama, free play, computer time

Nutrition & Snacks:

- Nutrition is essential for healthy bodies and effective learning. Preschool children are expected to be brought to school having had breakfast or lunch (as appropriate).
- Approximately midway through the session, a nutritious snack will be served. These snacks will be oriented toward low sugar and good, basic nutrition. Apple juice, water, milk, or other 100% juice will accompany the snacks.
- Appropriate store-bought snacks include:
 - Apples, apple and peanut butter
 - Other washed fruit - bananas, grapes, oranges (washed & ready for us to cut and distribute)
 - Raisins, fruit bars (e.g. Fig Newtons), applesauce, fruit cups
 - Popcorn, pretzels,
 - Crackers & cheese
 - Cheese sticks
 - Snack mix, snack bars, low sugar cereal (<10 gm sugar/serving)
 - Granola bars
- Children will not be forced to eat the snack, but no substitutions will be made. **HOWEVER**, children **allergic** to contents of the snack provided will be served a suitable substitute.
- A short prayer may be said.
- Preschool and After School
 - Parents will be asked to bring a nutritious snack for their child's birthday; children with birthdays outside the school year will have their ½ year "birthday" celebrated. Special napkins are a good way to recognize the special day. ***Please DO NOT send cake, cupcakes or frosted cookies.***
 - Preschool parents will also be asked to furnish snacks at approximately four other times during the school year.
 - A snack schedule will be issued regularly. The Preschool "Snack Bag" will be sent home the day before the family is scheduled to bring the snack
 - Snacks **MUST** come to school in the original packaging from the store where purchased with the **ingredient label intact**. Homemade snacks cannot be accepted due to allergies and DCFS health regulations.

Outdoor Activity and Field Trips:

- Whenever possible, children will be taken outside for games and activities. We will not go outside if the temperature is below 32°F or if wind chill makes conditions unsafe. **PLEASE DRESS YOUR CHILD FOR THE WEATHER.**

- There may be occasional field trips or excursions off site.
 - Permission forms and information about the event will be sent home several days before the event; these forms will need to be signed and returned prior to the child being taken on the trip.
 - Transportation will be contracted with an agency providing safe mode of transportation for preschool and school-age children.
 - Walking field trips may also be taken to sites within a reasonable distance. These trips will also require a written permission form and additional parent or adult volunteer supervision will be used.

Staffing: Teachers, Assistants, and Substitutes

Preschool

Kathe Keithley, Director
 Marie Woodcock
 Allison McCutcheon
 Julie Seeber
 Arlene Buttke
 Diana Morland
 Jessica Haselhorst (sub)
 Sharon Stoner (sub)

After School

Judy Haselhorst, Asst Dir
 Sharon West
 Julie Seeber (sub)
 Sharon Stoner (sub)
 Diana Morland (sub)

Staffing Ratios for Preschool – minimum 1 teacher & 1 assistant per 20 children; additional staff & volunteers as indicated; After school minimum 2 adults per 25 -35 children; more adults as indicated by behaviors & special learning opportunities.

Admission

Admission will be on a “first come-first served” basis. To be admitted to the Preschool and/or After School programs, students must:

- Meet the age requirements for the program
 - Preschool – 3 years to 5 years old. The child must attain the age of 3 years by September 1st of the year being enrolled.
 - After School – Kindergarten through 12 years of age attending Manchester, Poplar Grove, and North Boone Upper Elementary Schools.

- Preschool children must be able to handle toileting independently.
- Pay a non-refundable Registration Fee
- Provide the required forms, completed, and signed prior to attendance:
 - Admission Form
 - Health Form – including immunizations, vision and hearing, signed by a physician and not older than 6 months prior to the first day of school. After School students may provide a copy of the school physical.
 - Birth Certificate
 - Emergency Form
 - Consent Form
 - Receipt Verification Form

Discharge

A child will be discharged from Poplar Grove Learning Academy (Preschool or After School Center) for any of (but not limited to) the following reasons:

- Failure to pay tuition
- Failure to complete required forms in a timely fashion
- Lack of parental cooperation and compliance with policies/procedures
- At the request of parents, in which case a two-week written notice is requested. No refunds of tuition will be made.
- At the request of the Teacher or School Age Worker because of
 - An inability to participate or benefit from the program
 - An inability of a school-age child to take and follow directions on a repeated basis
 - Discipline problems that jeopardize the ability of the Teacher, School Age Worker, and/or Assistant to provide necessary supervision and appropriate learning environment for the other children

A parent-teacher conference will be held to determine appropriate strategies to handle the situation. A time frame will be agreed upon by both parties. A follow-up conference may be requested by the Preschool Director and Owner.

Attendance

Preschool

- Preschool Sessions may include:
 - Session I: Monday/Wednesday/Friday 8:45 – 11:15 AM
 - Session II: Monday/Wednesday/Friday 9:15 – 11:45 AM

- Session III: Tuesday/Thursday 8:45 – 11:15 AM
- Session IV: Tuesday/Thursday 9:15 – 11:45 AM
- It is expected that children will attend their assigned Session regularly, except in cases of illness. There are no “part-time” options for the Preschool Sessions.
- Parents are to notify the Teacher if the child will be absent for any reason.
- Transportation must be provided by the parent or authorized representative.

After School

- The child must be of school age, attending Kindergarten through 5th grade or 12 years of age.
- Transportation must be provided by the parent or authorized representative or the child must be able to walk from Poplar Grove Elementary School or use the North Boone School District Buses from Manchester or the Upper Elementary Schools that stop at the After School Center. No transportation will be provided by the After School Center.
- Full-time attendance is defined as 3 days per week or more.
- Part-time attendance is defined as 1-2 days per week. Part-time attendance must be on a “planned” basis; that is, the After School Center must be aware of the planned attendance of the child the week prior to attendance. Tuition is billed on the “planned attendance” schedule.
- “Last minute-same day” attendance may be possible, depending on the staffing and known attendance for the day. The Director or Assistant Director must be called prior to the child being accepted for the day. In all cases, the child must be registered, with required forms on file.
- Children who attend after-school programs/events may arrive at other than regular school dismissal times. Staff must be aware of the planned late arrival and method of transportation.
- In all cases, the parents must notify the After School Center if the child is to be absent from a regularly scheduled attendance day.

Tuition and Fee Structure

- Registration Fee **\$35 (non refundable)**
(for both Preschool and After School Programs)

- Tuition - **PRESCHOOL**

2 days/week	\$75 per Month
3 days/week	\$95 per Month
- Tuition – **AFTER SCHOOL**
 - Weekly Payment (Full Time) **\$45 per Week**
 - Monthly Payment (Full Time) **\$165 per Month**
 - Daily Fee (Part Time) **\$15/day**
(1-2 days/week)
 - Multiple Child Discount **15% per Month**
(1st full time child full tuition; discount each additional child)
 - Non-attendance-Hold position **\$35 per Month**
Family discount (more than 1 child) - \$25/child
- There are no refunds for holidays, vacations, non attendance, or illness at either program.

Tuition Payment

- Tuition may be paid monthly, quarterly, or yearly. If paid monthly, it is due the first day of school of each month. A monthly invoice and / or payment envelope will be sent home with students a few days before the first of each month. Parents are to return the payment to school in the envelope provided by the first day of school of the month.
- Parents should contact the Director or Owner prior to the 15th of the month to arrange for delayed or partial payment if there is a problem. A late fee of \$25 will be charged for tuition not paid by the 15th of the month. Three delinquent payments (with no notification) within one year will be cause to discharge the child.
A \$25 service charge will be assessed for checks returned to the Academy because of “non sufficient funds”; a note will be sent home along with the returned check. Payment including tuition and service charge must then be paid in cash.

Clothing and attire

- Children should wear/bring clothing appropriate for indoor activities as well as daily (as weather permits) outside activities. Snow boots will NOT be worn in the classroom.
- Children should wear well-fitting shoes appropriate for active play. (e.g. NO LOSE-FITTING SANDALS, FLIP-FLOPS, CROCS, OR DRESS SHOES)
- We recommend all clothing (including boots, backpacks etc.) brought to the school shall be inconspicuously marked with the child’s name.
- Preschool children should bring a tote or backpack with name or ID inconspicuously attached, to use to take home crafts, newsletters, and other materials. Backpacks should also include a complete change of clothes in case of accident or spill.

- Coat hooks are available outside the classroom door for outer wear and backpacks/totes. The child will be responsible for identifying his/her own belongings.
- Personal Belongings - Children will not be allowed to have personal belongings, toys, games, jewelry, money etc., in the Preschool Room except by special permission or for a special event. Any item brought to school will be secured in the child's backpack or in a safe place in the Preschool or After School Room until departure.
- Parents are asked not to send candy, gum, or food to school unless prior arrangements are made with the teacher.

Health, Illness, and Medication

- The school must be notified if the child is absent for any reason, including illness.
- Poplar Grove Preschool and After School Programs are for well children. Parents are asked to keep their child home if there are symptoms of illness, including, but not limited to fever, vomiting, diarrhea, rashes. The child should be fever free without medication for 24 hours prior to attendance.
- Parents or the designated representative will be called and asked to pick-up their child if they exhibit any of the above symptoms while at school.
- Children are expected to participate in all activities, such as going outside if the weather permits. If the child has not fully recovered from an illness to permit this, the parents will be asked to keep the child at home.
- A doctor's decision regarding return to preschool may be required.
- Medication – Medication will NOT be administered at the Preschool or After School Programs. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis.

- Medical Emergencies - If an emergency injury or illness occurs, the parent or designated representative will be notified immediately and asked to pick up the child. (Parents are required to maintain an updated Emergency phone list at the school.) A cot and blanket will be provided for the child to rest on. If the injury or illness appears life-threatening or serious, the parents will be contacted and the child, accompanied by the teacher or assistant, will be taken by ambulance to the designated hospital.

Guidance & Discipline:

Discipline is viewed as a process of learning self-control, respect for others, and responsibility. To help children learn this process, the following guidelines are in place:

- Children will be oriented to school behavior expectations in the first weeks of each session and will be reminded throughout the year.
- Children will be redirected when demonstrating inappropriate behavior. The goal is to help the child become self-disciplined and responsible for his/her own actions. Learning the consequences of an action and taking responsibility will be emphasized.
- At times, children will assist with making clear and concise rules and limits.
- Teachers, assistants, and school-age workers will;
 - Anticipate and redirect inappropriate behaviors;
 - Remind children of expectations, rules, and limits;
 - Help children use words to express anger, resolve conflicts, and express needs and desires;
 - Assist children in the conflict resolution process.
- The teacher, assistant, or school-age worker may remove a child from an activity if inappropriate behaviors persist and help the child to find an appropriate activity to engage in; if needed, a child will be directed to a chair in the room to take a break for no more than one minute per year of age.

- The teacher, assistant, or school-age worker may remove a child from an activity if inappropriate behaviors persist and help the child to find an appropriate activity to engage in; if needed, a child will be directed to a chair in the room to take a break for no more than one minute per year of age.
- If a child physically hurts another child, he/she will be removed from the activity, the hurt child will be comforted and the children will then be assisted with the conflict resolution process. The parents will be informed at the end of the day;
- If the child continues to behave inappropriately, parents will be called for a conference with the teacher and assistant to develop a strategy and timeline for correction. Professional or outside intervention may be requested. Should the strategy not be effective, the parents may be asked to withdraw the child from the program.
- No corporal punishment will be used.

Parent Participation & Conferences:

- Parents are welcome to visit at any time. It is most helpful if the teacher or school-age worker is aware of the visit ahead of time, but this is not required. As a safety precaution, the doors to the building will be locked during school hours. Please ring the doorbell to the left of the door. The ability to exit the areas is possible at any time.
- Parents may call the teacher or school-age worker, after hours to discuss issues. Phone numbers will be provided at the orientation and are on the front and back of this handbook.
- A Preschool orientation session will be conducted in August of each year.
- Parents may volunteer to assist in the classroom at any time and may be asked to help with particular projects. A sign-up sheet will be posted.
- Resources and information about interesting events will be posted on the bulletin boards outside the class areas near the entrance doors. Information may also be sent home with the children.
- Emails &/or newsletters will also be sent to keep parents informed.
- Conferences may be requested by the parent, the teacher, or the school-age worker, as needed or desired.

Student Records:

- All student records will be confidential and secured at all times.
- Records or individual student information will not be released unless proper, written authorization by the parent or legal guardian is secured and on file. Written authorization will consist of DCFS form CFS 600-3.

- A copy of the Emergency form will be maintained in the student's file.
- Student Records will be maintained by the corporation for a minimum of 5 years after the child is discharged from the program.

Safety:

- Pest control is carried out by thorough cleaning and when necessary isolated spraying with non-toxic materials.
- Monthly fire evacuation and/or tornado drills are conducted.
- In an extreme emergency evacuation, children will be taken to the Poplar Grove Elementary School (if it is open). Parents will be called via the staff cell phones and notices of where the children are will be posted. If the public school is not open, the children will be taken to a nearby home or public facility as deemed safe by the staff.
- Teaching staff will carry their cell phones. Please have these telephone numbers handy for making contact as needed:

Director/Preschool Teacher

Kathe Keithley 815-742-3033

Assistant Director/Owner/After School

Judy Haselhorst 815-742-6101

After School - School Age Worker

Sharon West 815-985-5543

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