

Westminster Presbyterian
Preschool & Kindergarten

Toddler Family Handbook
2026 - 2027



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Toddler Program Handbook

Welcome to Westminster Toddler Program ~

We are excited that you will be sharing your children with us this school year. For some of you, this will be a new experience and we would like to make it a very positive one for both you and your child. This handbook will provide you with some helpful hints and suggestions as to how our Toddler program is structured and share information with which we want every family to be familiar. If you have any questions about a policy or the program, please know that you can contact us at any time. We are looking forward to a fun and special year.

Sincerely,

Your Toddler teachers

Ms. Amy Phillips & Mrs. Nan Roper

Arrival Time / Adjustment / Where to Enter

Please try to arrive between 9:00 - 9:10 daily. Prior to 9:00, teachers are preparing for the day and oftentimes in and out of the classroom. All families enter our room through the south end security doors daily. A staff member will be at the Toddler classroom door to greet you.

When bringing your child to school, park in the Devonshire south lot and enter the south doors by the Toddler playground. These doors are locked at all times and can be entered by pushing the button to be approved for entry after security clearance via camera.

It is required to sign in daily along with your contact phone number for the day as well as any notes for pick up.

We have found that the adjustment period for the child will begin to take place once the parent has given hugs and kisses goodbye. We do understand how difficult this may feel to you if your child cries when you leave. We will do our best to help him/her settle in with toys and friends and even a snack.

If your child is one who is feeling that the full time is much too long for the first days, we will call you and suggest a gradual growth into the full length of the day. Our goal is to build success each day; even if the steps are small at first.

Some children will come to school and settle in very quickly the first day while others may cry for 4-6 weeks. If your child cries, take comfort in knowing that this is normal behavior for this age group and we are ready and willing to help your child through this transition time. You won't believe the change you will see by mid-November!!

Birthdays / Parties

Knowing the excitement felt in this celebration, we ask that you keep the day scaled down and plan for special activities to occur away from school. A special snack may be sent. Please reach out to us to coordinate.

Class Parties for Parents to attend: Fall Picnic and Spring Milk and Cookie Picnic

Chapel

Chapel is offered weekly. During this special time, children are introduced to simple Bible stories and faith-based lessons that emphasize values such as kindness, gratitude, and helping others. Through age-appropriate songs, prayer, and storytelling, children experience God's love in a joyful, engaging, and nurturing environment that supports their spiritual growth and early faith foundation.

Class Correspondence

You will receive a Classroom Connection weekly which allows you to step into your child's week with photos and friends. The school also provides a newsletter every month, along with weekly communication from the Director sent on Sundays.

Clothing

Children need to come to school dressed for play, art and all the activities of the program. Also, children should be dressed for outdoor play daily (weather permitting). Safety is our priority as toddlers develop their large motor skills. To provide the best stability for both indoor and outdoor play, please ensure your child wears tennis shoes every day.

Communication

Written communication is always welcome. We are also available to you via the phone, text and email. As you arrive in the morning, we are focusing on the children and it can be difficult to engage in a conversation at that time. Additionally, there may be some topics that would be better discussed with children not present. We can return a phone call to you at the end of the day. Daily Communication is shared in school totes for families with children aged 12 – 18 months. This contains information about state of alertness, eating time/pattern, diapering, general temperament and summary of daily activities (746.2431.1-5).

Please check your child's tote bag daily for art, newsletters and school information.

Please keep us informed of information that you feel will help us throughout the year to know your child. Although we do not have conferences, we welcome your feedback and perspective.

Diapers & Wipes

All families will send 2-4 diapers in your child's school tote daily. Additionally, each family will send 2 packages of wipes the first week of school. Diapering procedures are posted by the changing table.

Fine Arts Classes

The children in the Toddler classes will attend either music or library as their Fine Arts Class 1 time per week.

Goals / Curriculum / Student Profile

Our goal for every child is to achieve a positive social group experience. Through the curriculum which supports the development in areas of physical development (large and fine motor), cognitive, language, social & emotional development and beginning exposure to the fine arts program, we allow for self-paced active learning in an environment that is nurturing, warm and inviting. A year-end assessment is completed on each child in April and shared with families.

Goals include:

Physical Development -

- Gross Motor Skills – sitting, crawling, standing, walking, running, hopping, jumping, balance, climbing, stepping, rolling a ball, total body coordination and participation in large motor games.
- Fine Motor Development – holding, picking up objects, pouring, stringing, squeezing, stacking, pegboards, carrying, manipulating play dough and beginning self help skills.
- Cognitive Development – exposure to the concepts of size, shape, color, texture, naming, counting, matching, expressive and receptive language.
- Social/Emotional Development – contribute to the development of play skills, positive self-concept, creative and imaginative play, positive peer/adult interactions, sharing and manners.
- Aesthetic Development – enjoy experiences with music, art & literature.

Health

We take many precautions to keep everyone healthy by hand washing, sanitizing tables and toys, and helping with runny noses. School policy states a child will NOT be allowed at school if he/she has:

- *colored nasal discharge*
- *diarrhea*
- *not been fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medicine*
- *chronic coughing*
- *other ailments that prevent 100% participation*

Please refer to your Family Handbook for more details. We want to keep all the children and teachers healthy and happy! Any toy/item that has been in contact with any body secretion (nose, mouth, etc.) is removed from the classroom and placed in a container away from the children for non-use until the item is sterilized. These items are washed daily in a cleaning solution and left to air dry.

Labeling

Please label anything you bring to school for your child. Many lunch boxes, cups, pacifiers, coats, sweaters and "lovie items" look identical and it can be quite upsetting to a child to see someone with his/her special item.

Lovies

Lovies refers to an item to which a child is significantly attached. This could include a blanket, stuffed animal, pacifier, etc. Generally speaking, we do not attempt to separate the child and lovie if the child is transitioning to the class. When the child shows signs of being ready, we set lovie aside to allow involvement in the program. Please be sure it is labeled.

Lunches

We have table seating appropriate for small children. Children do not walk around with cups or food. Parents send an age and quantity appropriate lunch daily. Please label all containers (lunch bags, drinking cups, food containers, etc.) with the child's name. Children sit down together, with adults, for snack and lunch time. Please check with teachers for any food allergies in the class.

We encourage finger foods that allow your child to be independent and explore new foods. Lunch/snack is a social time as well as nutrition time. Please pack food items in labeled containers that do not leak or spill. Sipper cups work very well. We do not have refrigeration or heating available so please pack items with a cold pack if needed. For safety, please cut grapes in half. Hot dogs need to be sliced in non-round cuts. WPPK does not serve popcorn, nuts, seeds, peanuts, candy, dried fruit, or marshmallows and we ask parents NOT to send as these items can contribute to choking. We will try to send home what is not eaten so you will be aware of what was consumed for lunch. All food allergies are identified on all enrollment forms provided by the parent and posted in the room by class.

*If a parent prefers to breastfeed while the toddler is at school, an adult sized comfortable seating area can be provided in the Parlor or designated private space to enable this.

Medical Emergencies

Please read the details listed in the Family handbook.

Medications

We do not administer any over the counter or prescription medications to children while at school. Any emergency medications must have a signed form kept in the school office and in the classroom. Please read the specifics in our Family Handbook.

Pick-Up / End of The Day

Pick-up is at 12:00. Our late fee policy begins at 12:10. The fees are discussed in your Family handbook. If you have an older child in the carpool line, you have 2 options:

- Pick up your older child first at 12:00 and come to the Toddler room by 12:10 or
- Pick up your Toddler child first at 12:00 and then go through the carpool line.

Any late pick-ups are turned into the school office and billed accordingly.

Policy on Biting

Biting is a reaction that toddlers frequently express when they are frustrated because they are usually unable to communicate their emotions verbally. They quickly learn that biting causes a strong response and can be rewarding if it gets them what they want. We can help the child in several ways as parents and teachers.

When a child bites, the adult should immediately stop the child. The adult should accept the child's emotions but convey that biting is not acceptable or appropriate. We communicate our expectations with a comment such as "I know you want that toy now but you cannot hurt your friends with your teeth. Use your words and tell her you would like a turn." Teachers will convey to each child that it is her job to keep everyone safe in the room and she will not allow one child to hurt another.

The child who bites regularly needs closer supervision and a choice of interesting activities. The adult should track what situations seem to cause the biting, what children seem to be targeted, and at what time of day it may occur. Then the teacher can help the child avoid these situations. Appropriate substitutions such as a cloth, pacifier or teething toy can be offered for a child still in the oral stage of development.

Biting is dealt with immediately after the occurrence. Westminster discusses with parents that although this is one of the most unpleasant behaviors of this age, it is considered "developmentally appropriate" behavior. Suggestions on how to assist in working through this stage are also discussed.

Under no circumstances should a child who bites be bitten back. This conveys messages that it is alright to hurt someone and you can bite when you are upset. Biting back will NOT show the child "how it feels to be bitten" since children at this stage of development cannot interpret the feelings or put themselves in the place of another child.

Biting can be frustrating for parents of children in the class. With patience, supervision, and attention to each child's needs, we can all help the child to succeed.

If the behavior pattern were to continue and several options of extinguishing the behavior have not proved successful, the child will be removed from the program until further determination can be made that the child is emotionally and behaviorally ready to return to the class environment. This behavior is not acceptable behavior for children enrolled in a threes or older program.

Toilet Training / Supporting Independence

As your child turns 2 years old, he/she is becoming more confident and more independent. Independence from diapers is the natural progression in your child's growth. The key is not when the adult is ready, but when the child is ready. Your child is ready when he/she wakes up dry from a nap, takes diapers off, begins to show an interest in using the toilet, can tell you they need to use the toilet, etc. You may have a very verbal child at home, but that same child may be more reserved at school. In our many years of experience as parents, nannies and teachers, we have accrued many tips and guidelines to assist in this transition from diapers to underwear.

A child is often most comfortable and confident at home, where there are fewer distractions. In our classroom, we rotate toys monthly and the environment is very active. Toddlers often don't want to stop playing to use the toilet.

Because of this, we've found that for a child to be successful at school, they should be able to walk into our bathroom and use the toilet with very little assistance. This means they can communicate their need, perform the process, and dress/undress themselves independently.

In our experience, we recommend a child be successfully using the toilet at home for a minimum of 4 weeks before attempting underwear at school. We use gentle encouragement to help them listen to their bodies, but we follow the child's lead to ensure they never feel pressured. We want your child to be completely confident and physically capable before making that transition.

Comfortable clothes are strongly encouraged for the ease of toilet training. Long smocked dresses are lovely, but tend to fall into the toilet and get wet. Elastic-banded pants are easy to push down and pull up. Parents of boys – It is very helpful if you show us how you are teaching your son to use the toilet (i.e., whether he sits or stands).

While it may be ideal to toilet train your child before a new baby arrives in the house, we encourage you to wait. Once the baby arrives, your toddler will likely show some regression. Holidays can be chaotic with family, friends, travel and excitement of the season to begin toilet training. Wait until you have a stretch of days where you can be at home and relax. The toilet training will happen naturally and easily.

We understand that this process is a journey and that every child progresses on his/her own unique timeline. Please try not to be discouraged by setbacks; they are a normal part of learning! We often observe that after a few weeks of success, toddlers may begin to sense the mounting expectations around toileting. This can lead to a regression where they might balk at using the bathroom or have more frequent accidents as they navigate those feelings.

Please send several extra outfits, including socks and a pair of shoes, for any accidents that may occur during this process.

Transitions

We feel it is in the best developmental interest of children to stay with their class throughout the duration of the school year in order to bond with the adults and their peers. If children continually transition in and out of the class, healthy connections and relationships do not develop. Therefore, children do not move to older classes as they have their next birthday.

The Toddler Handbook is a supplement to the Family Handbook for families enrolled in the Toddler program. For more detailed policies and procedures that have school-wide application, please refer to your Family Handbook.

Non-Discrimination Policy

WPC will recruit, hire, call, upgrade, train, and promote within all job titles without regard to race, creed, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, or gender identity), national origin, disability, age (40 or older), genetic information (including family medical history), or marital status. (2.2021)