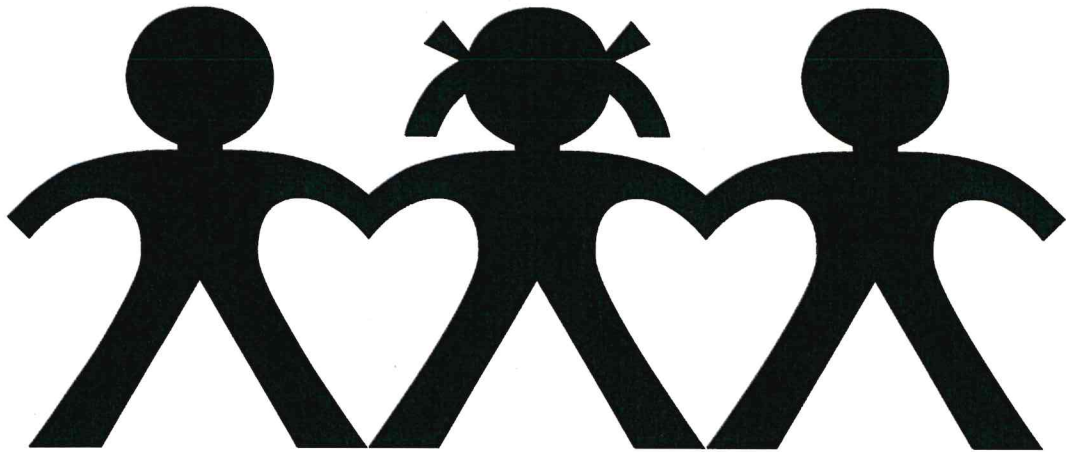


Parent Handbook 2024-2025



Cary Methodist Preschool

Our school, our children, our church. All connected with love.

Cary United Methodist Church

500 First Street

Cary, Illinois 60013

847-639-7655

(Fax)847-639-0920

cmp.preschool@gmail.com

www.carymethodistpreschool.org

PURPOSE

The Cary Methodist Preschool, as a mission of the Cary United Methodist Church, operates as a non-denominational Christian preschool. It is represented on the Administrative Council of the church and is administered by a separate Board of Directors. Cary Methodist Preschool is licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and meets or exceeds the minimum standards set by them for faculty, staff, health and safety, nutrition, ratios and record keeping.

The purpose of Cary Methodist Preschool is to provide a Christian environment in which children experience positive "hands-on" learning that fosters spiritual, cognitive, social, emotional and physical development. Classroom activities provide developmentally appropriate interactive experiences, which allow children to explore and discover the world around them.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Cary Methodist Preschool Board of Directors consists of seven to nine members plus the Preschool Director and the Pastor of Cary United Methodist Church. The Preschool Board members follow the structure of other Cary United Methodist Church committees. The members of the Preschool Board can be parents of current and past students, Cary United Methodist Church members as well as members of the community who have a vested interest in the development and well being of young children.

If you have questions or suggestions pertaining to the operation of our preschool, or would like to serve on the board, please feel free to contact the Preschool office at 847-639-7655. The Preschool Board of Directors meets once a month.

PHILOSOPHY

The Philosophy of the Cary Methodist Preschool is to provide children with a Christian environment that is developmentally appropriate and focuses on the whole child, emphasizing socialization and learning through interaction with his/her environment. Our curriculum incorporates a variety of learning activities based on the Illinois Early Learning Standards.

RELIGION

Religious instruction at our preschool includes a daily prayer, celebration of Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter, and a general philosophy about God's world. In addition, Bible stories are naturally integrated into our weekly themes. The church religious education director conducts a monthly Chapel time to help support Christian character.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

Cary Methodist Preschool bases its curriculum on the development of the whole child, emphasizing socialization and learning through active involvement with his/her environment. In all classes, teachers provide developmentally appropriate activities and materials based on the Illinois Early Learning Standards to help children learn and grow at their own pace. Teachers combine structured daily routines with free-choice activity times, allowing children to explore their own creativity while relying on the

comfort of predictable routines. Sessions include a circle time, center activities, snack, storytime, music and fine and large motor activities.

Circle Time is an opportunity for the children to practice their listening skills as the teacher and the children share ideas and discuss the topic of the day.

Center Activities allow the children to choose from a variety of activities in the following centers: dramatic play, blocks, books, manipulatives, art, math, science, and a sand and water table.

Story and Music Time promote creative expression, listening skills and language development.

Large Motor activities include outside play on our climbing equipment. If the weather doesn't permit outdoor play, we often use indoor equipment such as the parachute, games with balls or beanbags, or an active music activity.

The **Writing Table** is an area where markers, crayons, pencils, scissors, and paper are available for children to use daily.

SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE

9:00-9:15am	Hand washing, Arrival, Greetings
9:15-9:30am	Circle Time - Activities include greeting of children, introduction of curriculum areas and theme being introduced that day, calendar (for 4's & Pre-K classes), weather, show 'n tell, explanation of activity centers available that day.
9:30 -10:45am	Choice Time - Children choose from the following teacher prepared activity centers: art, math activities, manipulatives, dramatic play, block play, reading center, writing table, sensory table activities, and light table activities.
10:45-10:50am	Clean-Up - All children participate in clean up time.
10:50-11:10am	Second Circle Time - which includes music, stories, finger plays or listening games.
11:10-11:30am	Playground/Large Motor or Music/Language Arts Children will play outside, weather permitting, or participate in a circle time which includes music, stories, finger plays or listening games.

*This is a sample only. If the class format strays from the normal routine on a daily basis, we will notify the parents. Each individual classroom will have a daily schedule posted in their classroom.

Occasionally the teachers are asked if a sibling or visiting friend/relative can join the classroom. Because our classrooms are set up for a specific number of students per teacher, and due to necessary medical/immunization forms that must be on file before a student can attend, we are unable to honor any requests for visitors.

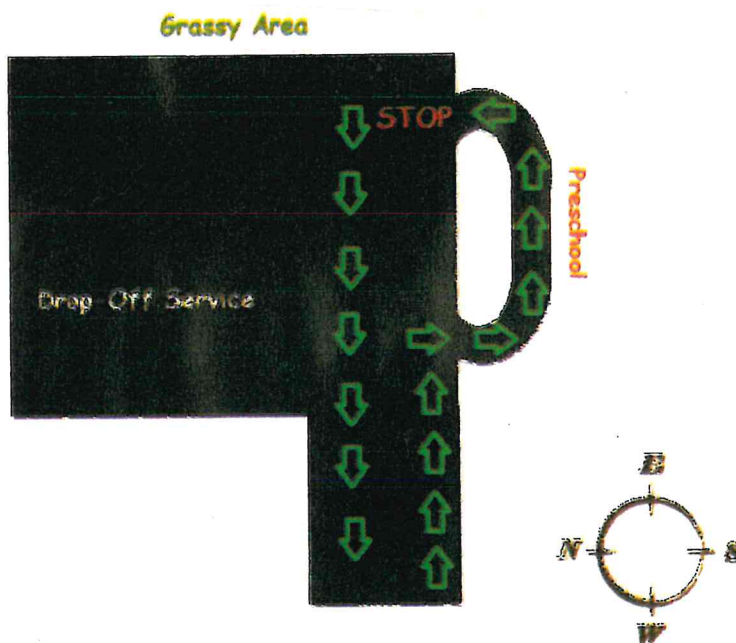
SAYING GOOD-BYE

If your child is uneasy about coming to preschool, we share the following suggestions with you.

- On the first day of preschool talk to your child about how a teacher will help them into the school, help him/her wash hands, and get involved with an activity.
- After letting your child know that you will return, we recommend that you say good-bye and then leave. A teacher will comfort your child and reassure him/her that you will return. When good-byes become long or drawn out, it usually becomes a power struggle and can turn into a stressful situation for the child, parent and other children in the classroom. Please feel free to call the preschool office to check on your child anytime during the day!
- Talk about preschool in a positive way. Name specific activities for your child to look forward to such as "Won't it be fun to play on the playground?" or "I know you will enjoy playing in the block center."
- One thing to consider if your child is hesitant about coming to school, play dates with other classmates are a wonderful way to bridge the social gap for them.

* If you have questions or concerns about separating and how to make the situation less stressful, please feel free to talk to your child's teacher or the preschool director.

ARRIVAL AND PICK-UP PROCEDURES



Feel free after pick-up to visit with other families in the grassy area (as pictured on the diagram). Please make sure to monitor your children at all times and do not let your child damage the foliage or run in the parking lot.

Drop-off service is available, and it will start 5 minutes before class starts. Please do not block First Street at drop-off time. In the unlikely event a back-up would occur, we ask that you circle around the block. When pulling into the front circle during drop-off make certain you pull to the far eastern end of the circle by the dumpster. This will allow the maximum number of cars in the circle. A teacher will then come to help your child come into the building. **NEVER PASS A CAR IN THE CIRCLE DRIVEWAY UNLESS INSTRUCTED TO DO SO BY A STAFF MEMBER.** When exiting the circle, please check for oncoming walker traffic and pedestrians.

If you want to get your child out of the car, you may do so but please stand next to your car and make sure to either always hold their hand, or make sure they understand they need to stand directly next to you on the sidewalk.

Please do not arrive any earlier than 5 minutes before class starts, as the staff is busy preparing their classrooms and answering attendance calls. It is very important that your child be in the classroom no later than 5 minutes after class begins. Children who are late to class miss out on important class content.

Pick-Up service for all students will be outside. The 3's and 4/5's classrooms will pick up outside the West Church sanctuary doors. The 2-year-old classroom will pick up outside the middle preschool door. Stay 'N Play pick up is also at the West Church sanctuary doors.

Each teacher will have a list of those who may pick up your child. For our school to be in compliance with D.C.F.S. Standards we require written instructions from the parent or guardian if the child is to leave with someone other than the parent. Each child's application form allows space for the parents to list several approved pick-up people. If the approved pick-up person is not known yet to the staff, they will be asked to show identification before the child will be released to the driver.

It is important that all parents plan their schedules to arrive each day at the conclusion of the class. Even 5 minutes can seem like a very long time to a preschooler - especially if the other children have gone. We do, of course understand that emergencies occur and are perfectly willing to take that into consideration. If you are held up for any reason, please call the preschool office so your child can be reassured that you are on the way.

If there is a consistent problem (more than 3 times) being late, a late fee will be charged. **The fee is \$10.00 for the first ten minutes that the parent is late and \$5.00 per minute there after.** Again, the clock in the hallway across from the preschool office will be used to determine the extent of time and the amount of the fee. The teachers will not discuss the fee with the parent; the director will present the parent with written notification.

If a child is not picked up at the designated time and prior arrangements have not been made, we will attempt to call home, office, and/or cell number provided, then we will continue to pursue contacting the individuals who are listed on the child's emergency and pick up forms. Again, please make every effort to pick up your child at the designated time as children often become upset when they are the last child picked up from the preschool.

Please schedule an appointment with the teachers or feel free to email/call them with any questions. Please refrain from having lengthy conversations at drop off and pick up times due to the teachers' responsibilities.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Conferences: Parent/ teacher conferences will be held in November and February. This will be a time for parents to become better acquainted with their child's teacher and to discuss your child's progress. Additional conferences can be scheduled if you or the teachers feel it is necessary. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher or the preschool director if you would like to discuss or share something concerning your child at any time during the year.

Field Trips: During the school year, the children will have the opportunity to take field trips within the area. Parents or guardian will be asked to accompany their child at the field trip site. Permission slips will

be sent home in advance indicating the date and times. Please return the completed permission slip to your child's teacher. Whenever an off-site activity is planned you will be notified via the monthly calendars and/or a permission slip.

We sometimes bring in guest visitors to talk to our classes. A dentist, firefighter, police officer, veterinarian, school bus driver and "Mother Goose" are some of the visitors we have had in the past. If you have an occupation that you would like to share with the preschoolers, please feel free to contact one of our teachers or the director.

Volunteers: One way that parents can be involved in our preschool program is to volunteer to help with certain classroom activities such as: classroom party helpers, cutting out classroom projects, etc. Volunteer sign-up sheets are posted at Meet the Teacher Day and during the first week of school. The time commitment is usually once every few weeks. This is a "little" way for parents to be involved and a BIG help to our classroom teachers. We also welcome parent volunteers on our Preschool Board of Directors and for activities the preschool board sponsors throughout the school year (i.e. fund-raisers, book fair, ice cream social, and teacher appreciation).

Communication: To continue our ongoing communication between school and home, each class will receive a monthly calendar/newsletter from his/her teacher. The director will send home a preschool newsletter each month. Please check the calendar and newsletters for important information and reminders. You will also be receiving emails from the preschool frequently during the school year. Under no circumstances can emails be used for advertising, promoting businesses or charitable organizations.

Special Events: Each year the preschool schedules a special "Dad's" Day on a Saturday in October. We hope that all Dads can make it, but if Dad is unable to attend, an Uncle, Grandpa, friend, or even mom is welcome. We will also have a Christmas Program and Mom's Day. Please check the school calendars for dates and times. The dates for these special events will be included in monthly calendars and newsletters. The preschool asks that cameras and video cameras be used only at these special events.

HAND WASHING

The Department of Children and Family Services has issued guidelines for appropriate hand washing to prevent or control the spread of infectious diseases. Children's hands will need to be washed during the following times:

- Upon arrival at the preschool
- Before and after snack/lunch
- After using the toilet
- After wiping or blowing his or her nose
- Before and after cooking or other food experience
- Before and after using the water table and
- After outdoor playtime.

The recommended technique for thorough hand washing, according to the Department of Children and Family Services is:

- Wet hands under warm running water
- Lather both hands well and scrub vigorously for at least 15 seconds
- Rinse hands thoroughly under warm running water
- Dry both hands with a new single-use towel
- Turn off the water using a disposable towel instead of bare hands to avoid recontamination of clean hands

The teachers will be using the same hand washing procedures and the children will be encouraged to use this technique throughout the school year. We would ask for parent assistance in helping their children follow these procedures.

BASIC RULES OF CONDUCT

The staff has set a few basic rules of conduct, which are intended to work two ways. While they prevent the child from doing something undesirable, at the same time they protect them from having something unpleasant done to them by another child. Sharing will be stressed; destruction of other's work or hurting someone else will not be tolerated. All children will help with classroom clean up and putting things away. Again, we would ask for parent assistance in helping their children understand and follow these basic rules and to provide consistency between home and preschool.

DISCIPLINE, POSITIVE GUIDANCE AND APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

Cary Methodist Preschool's philosophy is based on the premise that all children experience success with the wonder and thrill of learning. We strive for an environment that gives children the opportunity to explore and experiment within consistent, age-appropriate limits.

Discipline means setting limits, guiding behavior and helping children learn appropriate behavior. Limits and rules are established for the benefit of each child as a member of the group. Developmentally appropriate activities and positive reinforcement reduce discipline problems. The teachers at Cary Methodist Preschool will use positive discipline methods that are individualized, consistent and appropriate to the child's level of understanding and directed toward teaching acceptable behavior and self-control. Classroom control is accomplished through close supervision, gentle guidance and redirection. The children will be encouraged to "use words" to solve disagreements.

Children and parents are expected to support and respect the learning process in the classroom. If behavior is such that a child is harming himself/herself or others, or is disrupting the learning environment, then a brief time-out may be used. On occasion it may be necessary for the teachers and parents to work on solutions together if there is an ongoing problem with a child's behavior. It is our intent that ALL children at Cary Methodist Preschool feel safe and accepted.

Consistent Disruptive Behavior

To ensure a pleasant environment that protects all children, we have implemented the following policy concerning consistent disruptive behavior. The classroom teacher will inform the parent/guardian of the specific recurring behavior. If this behavior continues, the preschool director will notify the parent/guardian of the disruptive behavior, and we will work together to come up with an action plan. If there is no change in the behavior, your child's teacher and director will decide if the placement of your child is appropriate for Cary Methodist Preschool. You will be contacted regarding the decision whether we find it necessary to remove your child from the class. May tuition deposit will be refunded, if the current month's tuition has been paid up to date.

We have defined "disruptive behavior" as any behavior that causes or may cause personal injury to your child or others (i.e. hitting, kicking, biting, throwing things, defying, running away) or any such behavior that would disrupt the normal classroom routine and atmosphere. Disruptive behavior overall is any behavior that would take a teacher or the director away from the class group for an extended length of time.

TUITION

There is a non-refundable yearly registration fee of \$75.00 that is paid at the time of registration (\$95 if after April 1st). We also collect May tuition as a "security" deposit at registration. This tuition is also NON-REFUNDABLE. All students are presumed to be enrolled for the full school year. Parents will receive a monthly tuition statement indicating tuition amount due. Please make all checks payable to CARY METHODIST PRESCHOOL. Because the school must meet its financial obligations, tuition cannot be adjusted for daily absences or vacations.

Monthly tuition per child for this year will be as follows:

Class meets:	2 times per week	\$ 190.00 per month
	3 times per week	\$ 250.00 per month
	5 times per week	\$ 315.00 per month

Tuition payments are due the beginning of each month. Tuition statements will be sent home with your child's monthly calendar. It is **not** necessary to return the tuition statement with your payment. Please make all checks payable to CARY METHODIST PRESCHOOL. A **\$30.00** fee will be charged for insufficient funds and a **\$30.00** late fee will be charged for payments received after the 10th of the month, unless prior arrangements have been made with the director. If at any time you have questions regarding tuition or payments, PLEASE talk to the director.

FUNDRAISERS

We do our best to rotate our fundraisers to keep interest level up in the products. Our fundraisers help make school improvements for your children's classrooms (examples: the Smart Board, playground equipment, other special items....). If you'd prefer, you are able to make a single donation and opt out of direct fund-raising programs.

STAY 'N PLAY

Stay 'n Play is our Monday - Thursday extended day program for children in our 3's & 4/5's classes who are currently enrolled CMP children. The morning children have the option to bring a lunch to school and stay from 11:30 am - 1:00 pm. There is a 1:10 teacher to student ratio with a maximum of 20 students per room. Sign-ups will be made available on our website at carymethodistpreschool.org, the third week of the month for the following month. The cost for Stay 'n Play is \$10.00 per day. Payment is due at the beginning of the month. Please remember to send a packed lunch and drink with your child, **BUT DO NOT SEND ANY PEANUT PRODUCTS INCLUDING PEANUT BUTTER as we are a PEANUT FREE ZONE!**

No refunds or credits will be given for missed Stay 'n Play days.

SNACKS

Due to the increasing issues of food allergies, Cary Methodist Preschool will now be buying and serving snacks to the children on a daily basis. **WE ARE A COMPLETELY PEANUT FREE FACILITY!!!!** This is for the safety and health of all our students. For our preschool to be in compliance with the McHenry County Health Department and the Department of Children and Family Services, the snacks will be served on a rotating monthly schedule that is posted on the director's wall.

In addition to snack, 100% juice and/or water will be served daily.

If your child has a food allergy, please be sure the teachers and director are aware of the specific allergy at the beginning of the school year. Accommodations will be made.

THERE WILL BE A \$60 SNACK FEE FOR THE YEAR TO OFFSET THE COST OF THE SNACKS.

Please **DO NOT** send candy, candy bars, cakes, cupcakes or fruit snacks for your child's birthday or any other special occasions. It will be thrown away due to the children with allergies in the building. You may bring non-food items to share with the class (example: pencil, stickers, small toy...). We want your child's special day to be exciting and fun while respecting the safety of the other children at school.

EXCEPT FOR STAY and PLAY LUNCHESES, DO NOT BRING ANY FOOD ITEMS INTO THE SCHOOL.

Please do not let your child eat food items in the car or bring in food items into class to finish. Your child will need to eat breakfast at home. The cross contamination of recently eaten foods can cause a severe reaction. Thank you for your consideration on this very important issue.

CLOTHING

We work with many different types of materials (tempera paint, liquid watercolors, finger-paints, glue, food coloring, shaving cream, dirt etc.) and have a wide assortment of activities, so **please** dress your child in comfortable, **WASHABLE** play clothes. Smocks are provided by the preschool; however, they do not always fully cover the child's clothing. The preschool will not be held liable for clothing that is stained by paint or any other medium the children are working with. **PLEASE** do not send your child to school in expensive, special or one of a kind piece of clothing.

PLEASE have your child wear gym shoes or rubber soled shoes. Dress shoes, cowboy boots, sandals or flip-flops are not appropriate preschool footwear.

Children should wear warm outer clothing on cold days, as we will be going outside when the temperature and wind chill are 20 degrees or higher. Each child should bring boots and snow pants on cold and snowy days. All items **MUST BE** labeled with child's name, this includes coats, boots, mittens, hats, and backpacks.

We require each child have an extra outfit in his/her backpack for those unexpected accidents or spills. Please include socks, underwear, shorts, pants and shirt. **PLEASE KEEP THESE ITEMS LABELED IN A ZIPLOCK BAG AND CURRENT FOR THE SEASON AND YOUR CHILD'S SIZE.**

For your child's comfort they should be dressed in clothing that allows them to take care of their own toileting needs. Overalls, belts, tights, clothes with lots of buttons, etc. are not recommended for preschool wear. Please help your child practice toileting self-help skills at home, so they can help themselves at preschool.

PERSONAL PLAYTHINGS & PARTIES/INVITATIONS

Children should not be allowed to bring toys or personal playthings to school unless we request them for a special activity.

Guns, swords or weapons of any kind are **NOT** allowed under any circumstance. Please contact the teacher if you have a question regarding a particular sharing item. Please set up a date and time with your child's teacher if you have something special to share with the class.

Invitations will be allowed in the children's mailboxes as long as one is being given to **ALL** children in the class. Standing in the hallway or parking lot and distributing invitations will **NOT** be allowed. **You may bring in one small non-food item to share with the class in celebration of your child's birthday. Please do not bring in treat bags. In addition, some classrooms may ask an adult to be a guest reader for your child's birthday celebration!!!**

PETS

Pets cannot be brought on the school/church property whether walking or driving.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS/SCHOOL PHYSICALS

Each child is to have a completed medical form on file on or before the first day of class. The medical form, provided by the preschool, includes a physical examination, necessary immunizations, a lead screening assessment, and a TB test. The exam and TB test shall be given not more than six months prior to admission and all immunizations must be completed before the child can enter the class. Returning students may use the previous year's health form if the date on the form is less than two years old.

Required immunizations include:

- 4 or more doses of Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis
- 3 or more doses of Oral Polio Vaccine
- 1 dose of Live Measles Vaccine (at 15 months or older)
- 1 Mumps and 1 Rubella Vaccine (at 12 months or older)
- 1 series of Haemophilus Influenza B (HIB)
- 1 series of Hepatitis B
- Varicella (Chicken Pox) or Proof of having Chicken Pox

For the protection of all children, your child should be kept home if he/she shows any of the following symptoms:

- Fever (child must be "fever free" for 24 hours before returning to preschool). **We consider any temperature above 99 degrees to be a "fever"**
- Vomiting within 24 hours
- Excessive Coughing (not allergy related)
- Diarrhea
- Discharge from eyes, ears or nose
- Rash/Skin eruptions

In addition, we try to observe each child at arrival time or shortly after class begins for any signs of illness that, in our judgment, would preclude his/her attendance on that day. Parents may be required to obtain medical clearance for the child to resume participation following any type of communicable disease.

If a child should become ill during the day, the parent will be contacted, and the child will be isolated from the other children. If the parent cannot be reached, the responsible adult designated on the emergency information form will be called.

In case of an emergency the parent will be contacted immediately. If the parent cannot be reached, the child's doctor/hospital will be contacted, as well as the responsible adult designated on the emergency information form.

If a child has been exposed to a contagious disease, and symptoms appear, the child should be kept at home and the condition reported to the preschool at once. If for **any** reason, your child will not be attending class please call us at 847.639.7655 or email us at cmp.preschool@gmail.com.

Allergies/Prescription Medicine

All children with allergies requiring medication (Benadryl, EpiPen, etc) must provide the preschool with the necessary medication, in the original pharmacy container, along with written directions/prescription from the doctor on how to administer the medication. Parents are responsible for keeping track of expiration dates and keeping the medication current. The preschool will provide medical bags for each child which will be labeled with the child's name, specific allergies, photo and necessary information to administer medication. This bag will be taken to the classroom by the teacher during the time the child is in class and returned to the preschool director's locked desk at the end of classtime. Prescription medication may be administered only under unusual circumstances and **ONLY** if medications are appropriately labeled and we have a written consent form from the parents and physician with complete instructions on proper dosage, times to be given, and in the original pharmacy container with a current date. These arrangements must be discussed with and cleared by the director in advance.

Vision and Hearing Screenings

Vision and Hearing screening will be done yearly, as mandated by the state of Illinois, for all preschool children ages 3 - 5 years old. The McHenry County Department of Health will come to CMP and screen the children in the spring (exact dates are set by the MCDH). There may be a nominal fee for this service. Vision screening is not a substitute for a complete eye and vision evaluation by an eye doctor. This screening does not meet the requirement for the state mandated eye examination for entering kindergarten.

PEST CONTROL

The Department of Children and Family Services requires we inform all parents that the preschool participates in a quarterly pesticide program. We have a contract with a local pest control company who uses a variety of non-chemical methods as well as pesticides to minimize children's exposure to chemicals. The application occurs at least 2 hours before children arrive and never when children are in the building. If your child has an allergy to pesticides, please inform the preschool director and accommodations will be made if possible.

SCHOOL CLOSING / EMERGENCY DISASTER PROCEDURES

Cary Methodist Preschool will follow Cary's District # 26 yearly calendar, closing for the same holidays, teacher in-service days, vacations and school closings due to bad weather. In the event of bad weather please refer to the website www.emergencyclosing.com for a list of closings. **Remember CARY METHODIST PRESCHOOL WILL BE CLOSED WHEN DISTRICT #26 IS CLOSED due to bad weather.**

While it is impossible to identify every situation that may occur, we have developed safety plans similar to School District #26 for emergency situations. The types of emergencies that may occur, but not limited to include fire, intruder, and threats to building security, evacuation, and natural/environmental disasters. It is important to our preschool and families that all of us remain alert and calm during emergencies/disasters. We will confront each situation on a case-by-case basis, working with the Cary Police and Fire Departments as needed. We have fire and tornado evacuation plans in place and we hold drills several times throughout the school year for these situations. **It is important that you have updated telephone numbers (including cell numbers) and emergency contact information on file at the preschool.**

Our plan would be to contact you when a situation arises and ask that you make arrangements for your child to be picked up at the preschool or other designated location that would be determined at the time of an incident (i.e. classrooms, upper level of church facility, South portion of the church property, or Sts. Peter and Paul school).

In case of a school or church emergency/disaster that would cause an evacuation or lockdown of this facility, it is imperative that parents cooperate with the preschool, church and emergency personnel. We ask that you:

- Stay where you can easily be reached by phone
- Come to designated site to pick up your child when notified to do so
- Bring identification so that your child can be signed out by an authorized pick-up person
- Stay calm for the benefit of your child

Our teacher's first priority will be to keep your children safe in all situations. We will continue to discuss and review our procedures on a regular basis.

REFUNDS/TAKE HOME ACTIVITIES

Cary Methodist Preschool will not refund or prorate tuition due to illness or vacations. If your child will miss school and you would like take home activities, please reach out to your child's teacher.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

Children's records are open only to the child's teacher, the director, an authorized employee of the licensing agency, or the parents of the child. Upon signing the handbook receipt, you will give us permission to release your child's educational file to the child's subsequent school unless otherwise indicated.