



GENTLE RAIN PRESCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK

2026-2027



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GENTLE RAIN PRESCHOOL
Strausstown, PA

2026-2027 Parent Handbook

Introduction

Thank you for choosing to be part of the Gentle Rain Preschool family. We are honored that you have entrusted your child to us.

Gentle Rain Preschool was established by Zion Blue Mountain UCC to serve the Strausstown community and surrounding areas. The programs of the preschool are designed to emphasize the development of the total child socially, emotionally, intellectually, physically, and spiritually. As a faith-based preschool, our academic goals are directed to provide the skills, attitude and knowledge needed to enable each student to achieve their potential. While the program incorporates elements of the Christian faith, no effort is made to divert any child from their established faith.

The purpose of this handbook is to establish effective communication between home and school.

Nondiscrimination Policy

Our school does not discriminate in the provision of educational services on the basis of race, color, religion, age, gender, national origin, disability, citizenship status, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law.

Enrollment

Parents or guardians may schedule an appointment with the Director/Assistant Director for a tour, and the child(ren) may accompany the parents. We believe this provides both parents and directors the opportunity to clearly communicate their expectations of Gentle Rain Preschool and to review the required paperwork one-on-one, including the application form, tuition agreement, emergency contact form, and the child's immunization record. Registration forms and fees must be returned prior to the child(ren) attending.

In the event of a class being at its full capacity, we will place you on the waiting list for up to six months. You will be contacted when an opening becomes available.

Class Options and Tuition Pricing

The Gentle Rain school year starts the Tuesday after Labor Day and ends the last Friday in May. We offer two classes.

The Preschool class is for children ages 3 & 4 who will not be entering Kindergarten the next school year. Morning sessions (9:00 am- 11:30 am) will be offered as well as full day sessions (9:00 am -3:00 pm, combined with Pre-K classroom after lunch).

<u>Preschool Options</u>	<u>(half day classes)</u>	<u>Full Day Pricing</u>
Monday – Friday	\$288 per month	\$540
Monday/Wednesday/Friday	\$175 per month	\$360
Tuesday/Thursday	\$134 per month	\$268

The Prekindergarten or Pre-K class is for children who will be entering Kindergarten the following school year. Classes will be full days (9:00 am-3:00 pm) and parents are responsible for packing a nutritious lunch for their child.

Prekindergarten Options

Monday – Friday \$540 per month

Monday/Wednesday/Friday \$360 per month

Tuesday/Thursday \$268 per month

Sibling Discount

If you are enrolling more than one child from the same family, full tuition is charged for the first child; a 10% discount is offered for all other children.

Financial Hardships

We understand that unforeseen circumstances can occur in a family's economic stability and security. Should you encounter a period of financial hardship which would prevent you from paying tuition on time, please be sure to communicate with us. We will work collaboratively with you to try and develop a plan.

Holiday Closings

We are closed the following days:

Columbus Day

Thanksgiving Break (Wednesday-Monday)

Winter Break (see current year calendar provided at the start of the school year for dates)

Martin Luther King Jr Day

President's Day

Spring Break (see current year calendar provided at the start of the school year for dates)

Referral Discount

We offer a \$50 referral credit to any family that refers a child from, outside their house hold, who then enrolls.

Medical and Immunization Records

Prior to enrollment, all students must have a current medical form on file, which includes a current list of vaccinations and if applicable, the date of their last vision and hearing screening. All state required immunizations must be completed unless parents produce the required documentation for medical or religious exemption. If a currently enrolled child or staff member has a medically compromised immune system, the school will evaluate whether a child who is not fully immunized may be newly enrolled. If a child is not fully immunized for a disease which occurs in the school, as a safety precaution, that child will be excluded from all activities until any danger of infection is past. Only those directly involved with the care of your child or affiliated with state licensing, protective services or other government agencies will have access to your child's records. Others may access these records only with your written consent.

Parent Communications

A monthly newsletter shares in-school information, offers suggestions for home activities, and calls attention to special events.

At any time, parents may request conferences and we reserve the right to schedule conferences as needed.

COVID-19 Policies

Gentle Rain will be observing and strictly enforcing the most recent CDC guidelines.

Mask Wearing will be at the discretion of each individual family unless CDC Guidelines recommend otherwise.

Medication Administration

We encourage parents to request their physician to prescribe or recommend medications in such a way that they do not need to be administered during the school day. If the physician determines that the medication should be administered during the school day, we will consider such requests in accordance with state and local regulations.

Any medication must be in a new sealed container. Prescriptions must be in the original packaging, with the label and dosage securely attached. The prescription indicated on the label must include the child's name and be current.

Epi-pens and other emergency medications will be stored in the normal locked medication cabinet.

Parents must provide written permission for school staff to apply sunscreen, lotion, and bug spray on their child. All parent provided bottles must be in the original container, labeled with the child's name.

Hygiene and Cleaning

- Handwashing: As soon as students arrive at the classroom, prior to lunch or snack, after craft time, after outside play, before/after sensory play, anytime the bathroom is used, and at the teacher's discretion.
- Sanitizing/Disinfecting: All hard surfaces will be wiped down throughout the day, before and after use as well as at the end of each day. Toys that have been in a child's mouth or otherwise contaminated are removed immediately, cleaned with soap and water and disinfected. All surfaces and toys will be sprayed using a non-toxic diluted bleach solution or EPA-approved disinfectant prior to leaving the room throughout the day. All cleaners and other toxic substances are kept out of the reach of children in a secure locked cabinet.

Admission/Exclusion Due to Symptoms of Illness

Children who present with any of the following symptoms should not be in attendance until symptoms subside:

- Fever of 100.4 or higher
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Are within the first 24 hours of antibiotic treatment
- Yellow skin or eyes or infected skin-patches
- Heavy nasal discharge that is **NOT** clear
- Constant severe cough
- Diarrhea (2 or more runny, watery, or bloody stools), dark (red/orange) urine, or gray or white stool
- A possible communicable disease such as sniffles, reddened eyes or eye discharge conjunctivitis (pink eye), sore throat, swollen glands, painful ears, rash, headache, abdominal pain or vomiting (2 or more times in a 24-hour period)
- Lice, scabies or other parasites (2 treatments are required)
- Fatigue or is not feeling well enough to participate in regular activities

- Draining rash or sore
- Stiff neck

Should not be in attendance until symptoms subside.

If you have any doubts about your child's health, please keep your child home or consult your physician. If your child appears to be sick or has any of the above while at school, we will notify the parent/guardian for immediate pickup. If your child is not picked up within one hour of notification, we will start contacting the emergency contacts you have listed.

The child will be permitted to return to school when his/her temperature is normal for **24 hours without aid of fever-reducing medication**. Your child must have any prescribed medication, such as antibiotics, in the child's system for 24 hours before returning. In the event your child is sent home with one of the above health concerns, they will not be permitted to return for **24 hours after symptoms subside**.

Tuition Agreement

There is no reduction in payment in the tuition amount if your child is absent. We also will not be allowing make up days for days missed. Payment of your tuition assures that your child's place in our program is maintained during their absence.

1. Please direct all tuition or payment questions to the Preschool Director.
2. Invoices will be sent via the Bright Wheel app 7 days before they are due.
3. Tuition is due on the 1st of the month.

There is a three day grace period for payment. A \$25 late fee will be attached following the three day grace period. If payment becomes 30 days late your child will be unable to attend until your account is current. We accept payment via Bright Wheel, cash or check; checks should be made out to "Gentle Rain Preschool". No checks should be made out to an individual.

4. Returned Checks

In addition to reimbursement of the returned check, a fee for any returned checks will be reflected on the following month's bill based upon the fee charged to the Preschool by the bank. Any funds due that are not reimbursed by the end of the current month will result in a child not attending classes until the Preschool is compensated the delinquent amount.

5. Refund Conditions

There are no refunds for advanced tuition payments or registration fees. If you need to discontinue your child's enrollment, a four week written notice is required.

6. Late Policy and Fees

You will be assessed a \$2 a minute late fee for late pickups. You are responsible for paying all late fees upon the receipt of the invoice.

Vacation Policy

We understand the value of family vacations and other trips during the school year. We ask for communication on these matters so that we are aware of a student's continuing enrollment. There will be no reimbursement

of tuition for vacations taken. However, provided we receive communication in writing, and tuition continues to be paid, we will hold a student's place on the roll for as long as is needed.

Clothing & Personal Belongings

Candy, gum, toy weapons, any violent-natured toy, knives, jewelry, and money are not permitted at school. Items from home should only be sent on ***designated show and tell days***.

Children should wear comfortable, washable, seasonally appropriate clothing. We do take the children outside and it is important that your child is dressed for the weather.

Your child may bring a water bottle for use throughout the school day. The water bottle should contain **water only**. If a liquid other than water is found, staff will discard it and refill with water.

Lunch boxes or bags, backpacks, water bottles, jackets, and extra clothing should be clearly marked with the child's name visible on the outside.

Arrival and Departure Procedures

Gentle Rain facility is operational from 9:00am to 3:00pm, Monday through Friday. Early drop off and late pick-ups are available when enrolling the student.

Drop-off Procedures

Drop off begins at 8:50am. Drop off procedures will be reviewed with families at our August Open House.

Early drop off begins at 8:30am.

All students must be dropped off by 9:10am unless prior arrangements have been made with the Preschool Director due to an appointment etc. If you arrive after 9:10am with no communication to the Preschool Director, your student will not be able to attend that day. Late arrivals after this time cause disruptions to the start of our school day and negatively impact the learning of the other students. The parent/guardians will need to sign in their child for each day's school session.

Pick-up Procedures

Pick up starts at 2:50 pm and ends at 3:00pm. The students enrolled in the late pick-up program must be picked up by 3:30 pm.

A five minute grace period is given before the pick-up will be considered late and will be assessed a \$2 a minute late fee. These fees will be charged on the following month's invoice. Please call as soon as you realize you are going to be late.

Weather Emergencies

In case of severe or hazardous weather, we may have to close or delay school opening hours. We will list closings and delays on the school Facebook page to notify parents. In addition, closings will be broadcast on WFMZ TV. In the event of severe weather or other emergencies during the school day, it may be necessary to close school early. We will notify parents by phone and/or email to pick up their child before the designated emergency closing time. In an emergency, immediate decisions may be made. We will make every attempt to contact you or your authorized emergency contact. If you are going to be out of town, please notify your emergency contacts and let us know whom to contact in an emergency.

Food Allergies

If your child has an allergy to any foods, please be sure that it has been indicated in your child's paperwork. This should be given to the director and/or assistant director. All parents will be notified at the beginning of the school year of any food allergies in the class.

Snack

Full day children will be served a morning and afternoon snack. Half day children will be served a morning snack. A monthly snack calendar will be sent home with your child's assigned day to provide snack. Gentle Rain Preschool will provide snack every Friday. Please be aware of food allergies that may be present in the class.

Lunch

We ask that you provide your child a healthy nourishing lunch with all components provided (i.e., drinks, utensils, napkins etc.) **There will be no heating/cooking of any lunches. (i.e. mac-n-cheese cups, chicken nuggets, etc.)** Uneaten food will be sent home with your child, to help you know what to pack for your child. Staff will discard any food with expired dates.

Birthdays

If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday at Gentle Rain Preschool, your child will be assigned to bring snack on a day closest to their birthday. Children may distribute pre-packaged treats as opposed to homemade. Please be aware of food allergies that may be present in the class.

Behavior Modification Plan

In an effort to provide a consistently safe learning environment that will aid our students in their development and preparation, Gentle Rain Preschool has developed the following behavior modification policy. We believe that one of its many benefits is that it is clear and concise. Should parents/guardians have any questions, please be sure to speak with the preschool director as soon as possible.

Specifically, this policy is meant to address behaviors such as foul and threatening language, hitting, throwing objects, and other acts that involve intentions to harm another student, staff member, or visitor. However, this policy may also be used for other behavior modifications as well and is not limited to only these acts.

The following steps will be taken if any of these behaviors occur. Please know that preschool staff may skip steps depending upon the nature and intensity of acts.

Step 1

Student is given a verbal warning and redirected. A quiet area with calming activities will be available for students who feel like they need some time to compose themselves before returning to the large group activities.

Step 2

A behavior report will be sent home to be signed by the parents/guardians and returned. Copies of these reports will be kept by Gentle Rain Preschool in order to track the behaviors.

Step 3

A phone call will be made to parents/guardians. If the behavior is one that is deemed to be a danger to teachers or classmates, the student may be sent home for the remainder of the day.

Step 4

An in-person meeting will be scheduled between the preschool director and/or assistant director and the parents/guardians. At this time a behavior plan will be developed together and referrals to services may be made.

Step 5

If all the steps listed above do not result in improvements in behavior **or** parents/guardians refuse to work with preschool staff, as a last resort the student will be removed from the rolls.

Potty Training

All children enrolled at Gentle Rain Preschool are required to be fully potty trained and in underwear. Pull ups and diapers will not be allowed. We do understand that accidents will still happen on occasion. However, if accidents become too consistent the Director/Assistant Director reserves the right to unenroll the child until they are fully potty trained. If there are extenuating circumstances, please provide a doctor's note, IEP, or IESP to the Director/Assistant Director. Please provide a labeled change of clothing for your child to keep with their belongings in case an accident should occur.

Special Information From Home

In the event of a significant change in the home which may affect the child's behavior, security and general well being, please consider informing the staff as soon as possible. We will accept the parent's judgment as to what changes may affect the child. Common causes of distress include: either or both parents being away from home for an extended time for any reason; new person living in the home; illness of either parent; illness of sibling; any hospitalization, accident or death; new caretaker or new employee; moving or death of a pet. Any information shared by you with staff will be kept confidential.

The staff will keep the parents informed of any significant changes in the school environment which may affect the child.

Child Custody Procedures

In situations where one parent has court appointed custody and the other parent is not permitted contact, a custody form should be filled out and kept on file. This form will provide the staff of Gentle Rain Preschool with information concerning both parents' rights. This information will assist the staff in administering the intent of any existing court order.

The Berks County Family Court reports a PFA to a child's school if the child is named in the protection order. The school cannot provide your child's information to anyone, either. If the PFA bars you from contacting your children, you may not do so through their school, and the school must take steps to prevent it. You also cannot attend any educational events or programs, like recitals, sports matches, parent-teacher conferences, or graduations.

Gentle Rain will not for the interest of the child take sides in custody issues. We would also appreciate it if all custody issues were dealt with outside of class.

Abuse and Neglect Reporting

All staff members are mandated by law to comply with the child abuse and neglect reporting requirement. The law requires any person working in a school or childcare setting who has knowledge of or observes a child

whom they know or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse or neglect whether within the school or outside of school, to immediately report it to the applicable state child protective agency.

We take allegations of neglect or abuse very seriously. Once the allegation is reported, we will cooperate fully with any investigation conducted by law enforcement or regulatory agencies. To the fullest extent possible, but consistent with our legal obligation to report suspected abuse to appropriate authorities, we will endeavor to keep confidential the identities of the alleged victims and investigation subject.

Fundraising

Throughout the year we may hold fundraisers. Participation is never mandatory but always greatly appreciated.

Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form

Student Name (Please Print)

Address

Phone #

This parent handbook was created to promote an understanding of Gentle Rain Preschool policies and procedures. It is important that parents and students are familiar with the expectations outlined in this handbook.

Please remove this page, sign it, and return it to the Preschool Director. It will be added to your child's permanent file. Your signature means that you have received this Parent Handbook and understand the policies and procedures of our school.

I have read and understand the policies and procedures in the parent handbook. I agree to abide by them as will my child(ren).

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date