



GRACE
CATHEDRAL
THE COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL

The Community Preschool

Welcoming All of San Francisco's Children

Our Philosophy

The Community Preschool's belief is that a positive early childhood education plays a strong influence on a child's overall growth and development. We believe a child's experience with early learning is at the core of building a positive self-image, and enthusiasm for learning. Through cooperative team efforts of parents and teachers, this early education center operates on a team philosophy to enhance the potential of each child. This learning environment is a developmentally appropriate program of teacher and child guided activities that prepare one not only for Kindergarten success, but also for the journey of life itself.

Mission Statements

- The Community Preschool will provide a balanced educational learning experience for children of ages three through five and their families.
- Children from all socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities, religious traditions, places of national origin, gender identity, ability and family structure will benefit from a program that addresses the emotional, social, artistic, language, literacy, motor skills, scientific inquiry, and critical thinking skills of every child.
- The school will celebrate the religious and cultural traditions of all members of the community.
- The school will prepare students and their families to meet the high standards for success in elementary programs in both the private and public sectors.

Admissions Statement

The Community Preschool, Grace Cathedral seeks to enroll children who will benefit from its purposes and program. As stated in the preschool's mission, the program seeks to develop a diversity of population by enrolling families from varied socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities, religious traditions, gender identities, and cultures represented in the city of San Francisco. In order to help accomplish that goal, the preschool enrolls a balance of full-fee paying, partial-fee paying, and full scholarship families. Sliding scale scholarships are open to the wider community, whereas full scholarships are granted to residents of our neighboring community in the Tenderloin and other at risk communities. When making admission decisions, the school will give attention to the level of family's interest in the school's mission and philosophies and their willingness to participate in this mission with enthusiasm and sensitivity.

Program Information

The Community Preschool, Grace Cathedral is a 12 month program, open Monday through Friday. Our school day is from 9:30am- 3:30pm. The program closes at 1:00pm on the first Friday of each month for staff development, and for a full day quarterly for teacher in-service. In addition, the program observes eleven holidays a year, and is closed for a Winter break, Spring break, and a two week summer recess in August.

All children are enrolled from 9:30am-3:30pm, five days a week from early September through the second week of August. We have a limited number of spots available for early care (8:00-9:30am), and extended care (3:30-6:00pm) for eligible families. We do ask that a child's day at school does not exceed 8 hours (we can make accommodations for full time working families' commute times, if need be). At this time, we do not offer part-time preschool.

Ages of Children Served/ Requirements

Children range in age from 3-5 years old. They must be within this age range by September 1 of the program year, and attend the preschool for a maximum of two years. All children are co-mingled in one mixed-aged classroom comprised of 21 students. Children must be able to use the bathroom independently, and wear regular underwear. No diapers or "Pull-Ups".

Tuition

Our tuition scale is re-assessed every spring. For the 2014-15 school year: \$17,460 a year. Tuition includes a morning snack, a hot and healthy lunch, and afternoon snack. Scholarships are reduced from the annual amount.

Food Service

All food provided to The Community Preschool is prepared and cooked on-site by the Acre Gourmet Lunch Program. This food is inclusive for all students for the program year. Acre Gourmet offers an organic and sustainable approach to nourishing students by using local ingredients, grass-fed meats and free-range poultry free of hormones and antibiotics. Acre Gourmet pays special attention to dietary/allergy concerns and vegetarian/vegan options.

The Staff

The teachers are the members who provide the environment and experiences from which children learn. Our staff represents a diversity of talents and has been selected for their professional skills and commitments to the education of young children. We focus on maintaining excellent standards of professionalism. Our staff is sensitive to the needs of the children and families, and committed to quality education. All preschool staff has health and security clearance from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and State of California as mandated by childcare licensing. The staff also continues their professional development throughout the year at trainings and workshops provided by Preschool For All, a program of First 5 of San Francisco.

The Curriculum

We are a play-based preschool and believe since children learn through play, we plan our time to encourage this activity. Through play, children re-enact experiences, try out different roles, express ideas, process information, widen their world view and relate to each other. Children learn by doing, so we provide first hand experience as a basis for expanding knowledge about our physical world.

At the Community Preschool, we implement a Project-Based Learning approach to curriculum. Through this research-based model, students conduct in-depth investigations of a topic that is of interest to them. With teachers acting as organizers and docents, the children learn various aspects of a topic through:

- Literacy (i.e. books, language development and letter representations through interviews, dictation, reading, etc);
- Socio-dramatic Play (pretend, creative, and exploratory play)
- Mathematics (i.e. graphs, charting, numbers, classification, sorting, estimating, surveys);
- Field Studies (i.e. Huntington Park, field trips, neighborhood walks to local businesses/sites);
- Science (i.e. natural materials, living things, our earth and environment, experimental process of questioning, prediction, trial and error and recording results);
- Creative Arts (i.e. clay, painting, drawings, open ended art)
- Class Wide Discussions (i.e. through small group discussion, visiting experts, and class reporting back to large group).
- Project Based Learning encourages student voice and choice, inquiry and innovation, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, contribution, conversation, problem solving, independence, and confidence.

In addition, the classroom is set up with Interest Areas, which promote the development of specific skills. Our Interest Areas include Art, Socio-Dramatic Play, Library, Science/Discovery, Sensory, Fine Motor, Music/Movement, Writing, and the Building/Block Center.

We are closed for the following Holidays/Observances

- Labor Day: September
- Thanksgiving: November
- Winter Break: Dec. & Jan.
- MLK Day: January
- President's Day: February
- Spring Recess: March/April
- Easter Monday: March/April
- Memorial Day: May
- Independence Day: July
- Summer Recess: August

In addition the preschool closes at 1:00pm on the first Friday of each month, and a full day each quarter. This time allows the preschool staff to attend meetings, trainings, workshops, and other professional growth opportunities. A detailed calendar will be distributed during the enrollment period.

Application and Enrollment Process

Tours: Slots will be filled with children varying in age from 3-5. Enrollment tours are lead in October, November and December. They are given by advance reservation only; limited spots are available and are scheduled on a first come – first served basis. Please call the preschool after September 15 to schedule a tour. Children must be at a minimum age of 2.0 (by September 1 of the tour season) for families to schedule a tour.

Application: Families will be given an application during the tour. As the application window opens, those families may then mail their application directly to the preschool. When submitting the application, we require a non-refundable \$50 fee. Applications are **not** ranked in the order in which they are received. All applicants and their families attend a mandatory play-date at the preschool for an afternoon in February.

Scholarships: When making admission decisions, we seek to enroll a diverse socio-economic group of families who will best fit the program structure. Based on our admissions statement, our enrolled families will be a balance of full-fee payers, sliding-scale payers, and full scholarship. Families who reside in **designated areas** of the Tenderloin neighborhood and other at-risk neighborhoods may be eligible for full scholarship. Full scholarship and sliding-scale scholarship awards are determined by *eligibility* (gross household income and family size), and *need* (parent employment, school, or other activity). These sliding scale discounts vary between a 30%-70% discount off the full tuition. Admission decision letters are sent to families in March.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the requirements for my child to be considered into the preschool?

The Community Preschoolers need to be able to use the bathroom on their own before they begin, and need to be at least three years old by September 1 of that year. On occasion we may enroll a child mid-year, if space becomes available.

Will you make an exception on the age requirement for my child?

No. The Community Preschool is licensed to serve children between the ages of 3 – 5.

Can I put my name on a waiting list? My child will be ready for preschool in two more years.

The Community Preschool does not maintain a waiting list for children under the age of three. Please contact the program in the fall season prior to when your child would be eligible to enroll (i.e., if your child is eligible to enter in Fall 2015, call the preschool to schedule a tour in the Fall 2014).

I would like to tour the school and visit the classroom. Am I able to do that any time?

We are a small program whose entire staff, (including the Director), is in-ratio with the kids during the day. In order for the Director to guide a tour prior staffing arrangements must be made. The first step of our application process is for parents to contact the program to schedule a tour during the Fall months, beginning in mid September. We apologize, but due to limited tour dates, tours are available for parents of age-eligible children only.

How do you decide who to enroll?

Our goal is to enroll a gender balanced group of 3-5 year olds who represent an array of cultures, traditions, socio-economic backgrounds and temperaments. Above all- we strive to enroll families who wholeheartedly believe in the program's mission and teaching philosophies. In addition, we have a sibling priority enrollment policy.