



The Community Preschool

Welcoming All of San Francisco's Children

Our Philosophy

We believe that a child's early education experience sets the course for his or her future. It is at the core of building a positive self-image, critical social skills, and a life-long curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. The program's deliberate socio-economic diversity brings together children and families representing a wide range of experiences, perspectives and backgrounds for a unique learning experience that allows students to experience and learn respect for diverse cultures, perspectives, and traditions. The teachers collaborate with parents to help enhance the potential of each child.

Mission Statement

The Community Preschool at Grace Cathedral believes that diversity is a strength, and that a high-quality preschool experience creates a foundation for a child's educational and life success. The Community Preschool supports students and their families by providing a child centered, inquiry focused, play based learning experience to an intentionally mixed socioeconomic group of children aged 3-5.

Admissions Statement

The Community Preschool, Grace Cathedral seeks to enroll children who will benefit from its purposes and programs. 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, and cultures represented in the city of San Francisco. To accomplish that goal, the preschool will enroll one-third full fee paying, one-third partial fee paying, and one-third full adjusted tuition families. The school will reach out to neighboring communities for children who would be unable to attend preschool without full tuition help. When making admission decisions, the school will give attention to the level of family's interest in the school's mission and their willingness to participate in this mission with enthusiasm and sensitivity. We also seek a balance of gender, temperament, and developmental levels.

Diversity Policy

Being a diverse early childhood learning center, we recognize the dignity and worth of all individuals and to protect their rights, we oppose bias, prejudice, and discrimination. The Community Preschool does not condone any behavior which is inconsistent with these tenets. We believe that spoken or written language or any behavior that is inconsistent with this philosophy and/or that demeans one's ethnic, religious, racial, physical, sex, gender identity, age, national

origin, marital status, sexual orientation, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, military affiliation, socioeconomic status, or familial status is unacceptable. We expect individuals to take responsibility for their words and deeds and to respect all people.

Social Justice Philosophy

We strive to be a full inclusion program for young children of all backgrounds and ability levels. We want everyone to feel safe enough to share their talents, hopes, and values, while learning to celebrate the abilities and cultures of others. We do not avoid talking about the larger social issues that can make caring for children difficult: commercialism, violence, racism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, and bias based on gender, language, disability, class, or family background. We engage children in this conversation by using age-appropriate language and activities that teach about identity, diversity, respect, fairness, and activism. Our focus is on helping children learn about and enjoy each other's similarities and differences. We consider parents and other family members important partners in this learning process.

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 three-week summer recess in the end of July/beginning of August.

All children are enrolled from 9:30am-3:30pm, five days a week from mid-August through the end of July. 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). Currently, 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 a maximum 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 2022-2023 school year: \$22,000 a year. This may be paid in 10 installments August through May. Tuition includes a morning snack, a cooked from scratch onsite lunch (organic and local), and afternoon snack. Tuition Adjustment is reduced from the annual amount, see more information below.

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 is committed to quality education. All preschool staff have health and security clearance from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and State of California as mandated by childcare licensing; additionally, they have permits from The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. The staff also continues their professional development throughout the year at trainings and workshops provided by SF Quality Connections, First 5 of SF and The Office of Early Care and Education. Currently all the teachers on staff are fully qualified Teachers, not solely Teachers' Aides or Assistants.

The Curriculum

We are a play-based preschool and plan our time to center our experiences and development in and through play. Through play, children re-enact experiences, try out different roles, express ideas, process information, widen their world view, encounter, and solve conflicts 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 an [Inquiry Based Learning](#) approach to curriculum. Through this research-based model, students conduct in-depth investigations of a question that is of interest to them. With teachers acting as organizers and docents, the children explore various aspects of a research question 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).
- Inquiry 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
- Indigenous People's Day: October
- Thanksgiving: November
- Winter Break: Dec. & Jan.
- MLK Day: January
- President's Day: February
- Spring Recess: March/April
- Easter Monday: March/April
- Memorial Day: May
- Juneteenth: June

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 as well as prepare documentation, developmental screenings, developmental profiles and maintain the healthy and organization of the classroom. 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 3-4. Enrollment tours are lead in October, November, December, January, and February. They are given by advance reservation only; limited spots are available and are scheduled on a first come – first served basis. Children must be at a minimum age of 2.0 (by September 1 of the tour season) for families to schedule a tour. Tours are intended for adults only.

Application: Families will be given an application at the end of the tour. As the application window opens, those families may then mail, fax, scan, and email, or drop off their application directly to the preschool. When submitting the application, we require a non-refundable \$50 fee. **Applications are due by 10am on February 24, 2022.** Applications are **not** ranked in the order in which they are received. **All applicants and their families must attend a mandatory playdate at the preschool on Friday, March 4th, 2022, from 3-4pm to be considered for enrollment.**

Adjusted Tuition: 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 tuition assistance. Families who are actively enrolled on [Early Learning SF](#), or meet [ELS eligibility certification requirements](#) will be eligible for fully adjusted tuition. Fully adjusted tuition and sliding-scale tuition adjustments are determined by *eligibility* (gross household income and family size), *need* (parent employment, school, or other activity), and *target population* ([see Section 1. Priority Enrollments](#) for qualifiers). These sliding scale adjustments vary between a 30%-70% discount from the full tuition. Admission decision letters are sent to families in early 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 two. 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 2021, call the preschool to schedule a tour in the Fall 2020).

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, is in-ratio with the kids during the day. For the Director to guide a tour, prior arrangements must be made. The first step of our application process is for

families to schedule a tour during the Fall months, beginning in October. We apologize, but due to limited tour dates, tours are available for caregivers 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, faiths, 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.

Does the school teach religion?

We are a secular program and welcome families of all faiths or no faith at all.