

HARBORCREEK PRESBYTERIAN



PRESCHOOL



6724 Buffalo Road

(directly across from the Harborcreek Kwik-Fill Gas Station)

Accepting Children ages three (3), four (4), and five (5)

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday Mornings

9:00a.m. - 11:30a.m. (Doors open at 9:00a.m.)

or

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday Afternoons

12:30p.m. – 3:00p.m. (Doors open at 12:30p.m.)

or

“Potential” FIVE DAY (Monday through Friday) PROGRAM:
includes an additional enrichment session on Tuesday
and Thursday Mornings from 9:00a.m – 11:30a.m.

Our unique Preschool has been in existence for over forty years!

We are currently taking registrations for the 2021 – 2022 school year.

For information, please call:

Preschool 897-1401

Char Chmielewski 899-0720

Church Office 899-1031

May, 2021

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

Thank you for inquiring about the **Harborcreek Presbyterian Preschool!** Our **non-denominational** Preschool/PreK is housed in a separate building behind the church, and is located at 6724 Buffalo Road, directly across from the Kwik-Fill gas station. I would like to give you some information about the Preschool first and then discuss how we are handling the Covid-19 situation.

We offer a variety of Preschool/PreK program options to meet your child's needs and also your schedule. **THREE-DAY OPTIONS:** Our **Three-Day Morning session** is held **Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings** from **9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.** (Doors open at 9:00a.m.). Our **Three-Day Afternoon session** takes place **Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons** from **12:30p.m. until 3:00p.m.** (Doors open at 12:30p.m.)

FIVE-DAY OPTION: We also *may* offer an **additional Tuesday/Thursday Morning session (from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.)** for those parents who would like their children to attend **a FIVE-DAY**, as opposed to a three-day, program. This **FIVE-DAY program** (currently "on-hold" this year because of covid) will be discussed in greater detail later on in this letter.

School starts the beginning of September and ends the middle of May. We usually follow the Harborcreek school district calendar with respect to vacation days, "snow days," etc.

Our Preschool is quite unique! We have four instructors at the Preschool, who teach different parts of our curriculum. **Each person deals with her own particular area of expertise, which is very beneficial for our preschoolers!** The four main parts of our curriculum include: (1) instructional kindergarten preparation, math, language arts, phonics, story time, sign language, printing, etc.; (2) music, rhythm instruments, science, social studies, & library; (3) art & fine motor skills; and (4) large motor skills, social skills, manners, and introduction to Spanish.

In the past, we have offered "in-house" tours of the building during a regular school day, however, these were put "on-hold" this year because of covid. **BUT** your family can go to the Presbyterian church's website at: <https://hcpresbyterian.org> **click on "Preschool"** and take a virtual tour of the inside of the building and see all the four classrooms. There is also a video on the website of all four teachers introducing themselves and describing their particular part of the curriculum. So please be sure to check both of those out!

We are proud to say that our Preschool has been in existence for well over **40+ years!** A listing of our staff (along with the number of years they have been at the Preschool, their particular area of expertise, and their homeroom) is as follows:

Mrs. Charlene Chmielewski (30 years) -- Director & Kdg. Readiness Teacher (*Bear Room*)
Mrs. Jenny Beskid (22 years) -- Art & Fine Motor Skills (*Turtle Room*)
Mrs. Karalee Space (13 years) -- Large Motor Skills, Manners & Spanish (*Whale Room*)
Mrs. Daunice Scipione (25 years) -- Library, Music, Science, Social Studies (*Songbird Room*)

We are also very fortunate this year to have Mrs. Kristen Oshlick and Mrs. Tina Fachetti as

our two assistants, who help out wherever needed. Our entire staff, including our subs, has their necessary clearances on file.

The children attending our Preschool are divided into different groups or “homerooms” according to their particular chronological age. These homerooms are affectionately known (from youngest to oldest) as the *Bears*, the *Whales*, the *Turtles*, and the *Songbirds*! (The number of students in each room is 10-12.)

Monthly calendars and **weekly newsletters** are distributed during the school year in order to keep the parents informed of our daily activities. Individual “**student evaluations**” are done ***three times a year*** (*before Thanksgiving, at the end of February, and around the middle of May*) and each time a comprehensive and detailed progress report is sent home. Our entire staff meets together to complete each and every one of these evaluations. I also stay in contact with the local Kindergarten teachers from the neighboring school districts, so as to keep current with ***their*** expectations, in order to help the children be better prepared when they enter the “big school.” (*Numerous local teachers highly recommend our Preschool and we have been very fortunate to have had the privilege of educating many of their own children!*)

Each homeroom has an assigned **leader for the day**. He/she gets to wear a special “Leader” badge and has special fun activities/duties to do throughout the time period each and every day. Needless to say, the children just love being “the Leader” whenever it is their turn!

Our daily curriculum includes Language Arts, Phonics, Math, Fine Motor Skills, Large Motor Skills, Science activities, Social Studies, Art, Story time, Music, Rhythm Instruments, etc. Politeness and good manners are practiced each and every day! Our preschoolers are also introduced to some **basic sign language**, as well as **an introduction to Spanish**; both centering around alphabet letter names, colors, some simple words, songs, etc.. All this goes on throughout the entire school year, and the children quickly discover that “learning” can be “FUN!”

We also have an in-house preschool library. All the children look forward to their **weekly** “Library Day” at the Preschool because this is when they have an opportunity to select a book and take it home for a week. This practice helps to foster a love for books and “reading” and really prepares them for future library experiences at the elementary school.

There is also a portion of the library that is specifically reserved for our **Preschool parents**. There they can find books on parenting issues or books dealing with “special concerns” such as the loss of a tooth, the birth of a new sibling or, sadly, the death of a loved one. Parents may also take out Preschool DVDs from our collection for their children to enjoy at home.

Each week we celebrate a different alphabet letter by doing **special “fun” learning activities**. *For example:* in past years during letter “**Pp**” week we have **popped popcorn**, created **purple paper hats** for our **parade**, and hosted a **pancake and pajama party**. (Teachers and students all wore their **pajamas** that day!) During “**Ll**” week we arrange to eat our **lunch** at school! During “**Ss**” week we make and eat some **super ice cream sundaes!** We have watched raisins “**jump**” during “**Jj**” week and **volcanoes erupt** during “**Vv**” week. The children have seen worms tunnel through dirt and live caterpillars transform into beautiful butterflies in the spring.

All the **special holidays** (Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter, etc.) are celebrated at our school and are always so much fun for the children and the teachers!

PLEASE NOTE: **Many children return to the Preschool for a second or a third year.** We, therefore, operate on a **THREE-YEAR CYCLE** so that our curriculum is **NOT** just a repeat of the year before but something **new and different** each year! We change our daily themes and have different art, science, & instructional activities each year.

SECURITY PROCEDURES: We are a **locked facility with a buzzer/intercom system at our front door.**

Morning Session: Doors will open for arrival at 9:00a.m. and are then re-opened for dismissal at 11:30a.m.

Afternoon Session: Doors will open for arrival at 12:30p.m., and then again for dismissal at 3:00p.m.

Our doorbell buzzer/intercom system (at our front door) allows you to communicate with the staff should you arrive after the doors are locked or need to pick your child up early.

Each day upon arriving at Preschool and before entering the building, your child's temperature will be taken by one of our staff using a non-contact thermometer. You will be asked several questions regarding your child's health. Drop-off and pick-up took place this year at each of our doors: the main door at the front and the back door by the ramp. The door the children use depends on the homeroom that they are in. Unfortunately, due to covid-19, our staff were the only adults allowed inside the building this year. Right now, we are not sure what our procedure will be for next school year.

During the school year, **photo identification** is required at **dismissal time** for anyone who is picking up your child. This **photo id** is checked against a list of people that you have previously told us (in writing) have your permission to pick up your child at dismissal time.

TUITION & FEE INFORMATION: We require two different payments during the year.

- a \$175 non-refundable registration/supply fee and
- the Three-Day (or Five-Day) tuition -- paid monthly, semi-annually, or annually.

1) A \$175 **non-refundable registration/supply fee*** **must accompany your child's Registration form and Choice of Session form in order to secure a spot for him/her at our preschool.** *This combined fee covers both registration and all the various art/paper supplies used by your child on a daily basis during the school year. Each individual child has his/her own personal box of art supplies to use throughout the year.

2) We have **two different tuition amounts** depending on which **program** you choose – either the **Three-Day (M-W-F)** or the **Five-Day (M-T-W-TH-F)** (*if available*).

a. Our **tuition** for the 2021-2022 school year is:

- 1) **Three-Day program: \$140 a month (regardless of attendance)** based on **9 months (for the convenience of payment)** -- for a total of **\$1,260.**
- 2) **Five-Day program (if available): \$190 a month (regardless of attendance)** based on **9 months (for the convenience of payment)** -- for a total of **\$1,710.**

PLEASE NOTE: A **double tuition payment will be due on or before the first day of school in September** for the 2021-2022 school year, **\$280 for the Three-Day program (and \$380 for the Five-Day program -- if available).**

****SIBLING DISCOUNT:** Please note that there is a \$45 a year (or \$5.00 a month) **reduction in tuition for EACH child when siblings are enrolled during the same year.**

*****Each child, however, must still pay the \$175 registration/supply fee.*****

Tuition can be paid monthly (September through May), quarterly, semi-annually (due Sept. & January) or annually (due September), whichever is most convenient for the parent/guardian.

****Monthly tuition (October through April) is then due by the tenth of each month,** unless you have made plans with the treasurer to pay by the semester or the year.

➔ **Now, on to our REGISTRATION information -- finally!!!**

Morning spots usually fill up the fastest! **All of these openings are filled on a “First Come-First Served” basis.** (Because of this, we always ask everyone who is registering to select **a First and a Second choice of session.**)

At the present time, we still have a **few openings left** in **each age group** for our **Three-Day (M-W-F) MORNING session for 2021-2022.**

We also have **many openings** available for **ALL AGES (3, 4 and 5 year-olds)** in our **Three-Day (M-W-F) AFTERNOON Session!**

The status of our **Five-Day Program (Mon. thru Friday)** for 2021-2022 will be discussed at the end of this letter.

Once a session becomes filled, we then start **“Waiting Lists”.** These lists are a very important reference for me! During the summer months, I sometimes am able to register some children from these waiting lists because oftentimes people who previously registered find that their situations have changed and, therefore, **new openings** are created. So (if your child is **not** immediately registered) it is very important to have his/her name towards the **beginning** of that list.

➡ **MAILING IN YOUR CHILD'S REGISTRATION:** The Preschool has a P.O. box, which is only checked occasionally; therefore, **ALL registrations MUST be mailed to MY HOME ADDRESS.** If you are planning on letting us care for and educate your child, please fill out **both** of the enclosed **registration forms as soon as possible.**

➡ Then **mail** them, along with the **\$175 non-refundable regis./supply fee**** per child, **to me at the FOLLOWING ADDRESS:** ↓

➡ **** (Check/Money Order made Payable to the Preschool!)**

Charlene Chmielewski
4740 Ridge Parkway
Erie, PA 16510-3242

➡ **PLEASE NOTE:** In order to try to be fair to everyone, **all registrations MUST be postmarked and MAILED to MY HOME ADDRESS on Ridge Parkway.** They **cannot** just be placed in my mailbox without being mailed.

Please do **NOT** mail them to either the preschool P.O. Box or the Presbyterian Church's address. If you do so, I may not receive them in a timely fashion. Remember, all preschool openings are filled on a "FIRST COME – FIRST SERVED" basis.

➡ **Registrations MUST be postmarked and mailed to my HOME ADDRESS.**

Please Also Note: The payment of the **non-refundable \$175 fee** is the **ONLY way** to **guarantee** placement for your child for the 2021-2022 school year. **I MUST have BOTH** the \$175 registration/supply fee AND the paperwork (2 forms) in order to hold a spot for your child for this coming school year.

After I receive your child's registration envelope in my mailbox, I will then send you **written confirmation** of the particular session that your child is registered for. You will also be informed of important upcoming preschool dates (i.e.: Evening Parent Meeting, Open House, the first day of Preschool in the fall, etc.) as soon as they are determined.

➡ ***** "REMIND" app:** to stay "in touch" with the Preschool and receive up-dates, I highly recommend that you sign up for the **"REMIND" app**, which is also used by many school districts as a means of communication with parents.

Visit remind.com/join and enter our class code : @83h94c along with your cell phone number. You'll get text notifications at the number you entered. Or you can also find the **"REMIND" app** on your Android or iOS device.

Thanks again for expressing an interest in our Preschool and our 2021-2022 program! We are looking forward to providing a year of “fun-filled” educational and social activities for your son or daughter! If you would like more information about the Harborcreek Presbyterian Preschool, please feel free to call me at the Preschool (897-1401) or at my home (899-0720) and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,
Char Chmielewski
Preschool Director & Bears’ Teacher
Preschool (897-1401) Home (899-0720)

Covid-19 Information: We continue to follow all the covid guidelines and protocols advised by the CDC, the PA Dept. of Ed., and our local health dept. (i.e. mask wearing, sanitizing, disinfecting, smaller class sizes, separate entrances, no co-mingling of students from other homerooms, daily temperature checks, no adults in the building other than staff, etc.) to the best of our ability. At the present time, we are not sure what these procedures will be like in the fall. Only time will tell! But rest assured that one of our top priorities, at all times, is the health and safety of both the children and the staff.

****Please Note:** We have a **NO Scent policy** at Preschool.

It has come to our attention that some students and staff members are **very sensitive** to the various smells associated with **perfumes, aftershave, hair gels, hair spray, lotions, etc.** This sensitivity causes headaches, as well as severe throat and nasal congestion. We, therefore, ask that, due to these potential allergic reactions, all preschoolers, as well as their transporting adults, do **NOT** come to preschool wearing **strong perfumes and/or scents of any kind.**

****We thank you, in advance, for your cooperation in this important matter!****

PLEASE NOTE: EVERY child is enrolled at the Preschool on a trial basis.

Please know that in most (but not all) cases, it is usually our policy to allow a child sufficient time (about three weeks or so) to adjust to our routine and our curriculum. *(While the vast majority of children do very well at our Preschool and flourish there, a few children may experience difficulty handling the various class transitions and teacher rotations that occur in our daily schedule. These children are sometimes more successful in a totally self-contained classroom with fewer students and teachers and less distractions.)*

****For Your Information:** **KINDERGARTEN “AGE”** deadline requirements are as follows:

- child must be age 5 by May 31st for all Harborcreek public elementary schools;
- child must be age 5 by May 31st for North East, and Fort LeBoeuf public schools;
- child must be age 5 by June 1st for Girard, and General McLane public schools;
- child must be age 5 by August 31st for Wattsburg, Fairview, and Millcreek schools;
- child must be age 5 by September 1st for Iroquois, and Erie public schools.

The Preschool admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.

****Status of our FIVE-DAY program:** Since Kindergartens are “all-day” now, we have had parents who want their children to attend preschool for five days, instead of just three. We offered a Five-Day Session option for the first time seventeen years ago and since then we have been extremely pleased with the results! We have had children who attended our Five-Day Program for more than one year -- so our Five-Day Session is now also based on a three-year cycle to avoid duplication of its curriculum.

At the present time, we know that we will definitely be offering both of our Three-Day programs next year! Our **Five-Day program, however, was put “on hold” (due to covid) and not available** this current school year. At the present time (because of how things can change!) we are not sure of its status for next year.

There are three possible scenarios: 1) we open in September with our traditional Five-Day program up and running; 2) we are able to offer our Five-Day program but at some time later on in the school year (perhaps mid-year); or 3) we put our Five-Day program “on-hold” for another year and offer it in 2022-2023. Right now there are too many unknown variables to make any kind of a determination. Realistically, we may not know the status of this program until closer to the actual start of preschool in the fall. But we do want to be fully prepared for options #1 or #2 listed above!

Therefore, on the registration form, you will find a separate section regarding a *potential* Five-Day program. We may offer the availability of **two Five-Day options for 2021-2022:**

1) **Five-Day All Mornings** -- children come every morning Monday through Friday from 9:00 to 11:30;

OR

2) **Five-Day Split-Session** -- children come Monday, Wednesday, and Friday Afternoons from 12:30 until 3:00 **AND** Tuesday and Thursday Mornings from 9:00 until 11:30. (There is no one at the Preschool Tuesday or Thursday afternoons!)

***Tuesdays and Thursdays are known as “Enrichment Days” in our Five-Day Program. The Tuesday/Thursday enrichment curriculum expands on and extends the concepts presented on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Mrs. Scipione and myself (along with a potential third staff member -- depending on the number of registered students) are the staff that would be at preschool Tuesday and Thursday mornings.*

We first need to see how many people would be interested in five days; then figure out what the up-to-date guidelines are from the CDC, local Health Dept., and PA. Dept. of Ed.; and then make our decision. We will then let all the interested parents know ASAP – but as I previously stated, a final decision will probably not be made until **right before preschool begins in the fall.**

I am sorry, in advance, for any confusion or problems this may cause but I wanted to let you all know right up front! We would love to be able to bring back this program next year but only time will tell!

(As has always been the case, each class is dependent on a certain number of students. If that number is not attained, that particular class may not be offered.)