

Peas in a Pod Family Handbook

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TO **Peas in a Pod**

Welcome to our Preschool and Kindergarten! As parents, we know what it means to entrust your child's care and nurturing to others. We are so honored by your trust as well as the opportunity to partner with you on your child's educational and faith journey.

This year marks our 6th year of Peas in a Pod! We realize that our success is due, in large part, to the support of our families. Parents are the first teachers, and we encourage your involvement and welcome an active dialogue with each of you. This handbook is a way of beginning that dialogue. Please take the time to review your handbook, and use it as a reference throughout the year.

Peas is a joyful place. We are a little school with a big heart! Our success and unique qualities are not by accident or circumstance, but by prayerful dedication to the task and mission of caring for your child. There is an African proverb that says, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

Welcome to Peas in a Pod!

Sincerely,
Debbie Clark
Director

PROGRAM

PURPOSE and PHILOSOPHY

The purpose of Peas in a Pod is to provide a quality, educational experience for children ages two through Kindergarten. The school is financially self-supporting, and is not directly affiliated with Congregational Church of Christ.

The staff will serve and teach children with love and patience, reflecting and sharing Christian values. Our program prepares children for school and life, through a curriculum that addresses each child's interrelated areas of growth in a developmentally appropriate context. Our school strives to place value on the uniqueness of each child so that they may learn to value others in the same way. Our ultimate hope is to nurture and facilitate the growth of each child to his or her highest potential.

DEVELOPMENTAL OBJECTIVES and GOALS

Each child has their own pattern and timing of growth and change during early childhood which occur in all domains of development. The following is an overview of some of the ways that our teachers utilize time with your child to encourage their development in their inter-related areas of growth. Each child's uniqueness is evaluated when assessing goals.

Social / Emotional development is encouraged by:

- Modeling positive social behavior
- Valuing and fostering each child's individuality
- Greeting each child individually and having one-on-one time
- Providing opportunities, such as circle time and morning meetings, for children to express themselves and participate
- Teaching children to take responsibility for themselves and their belongings, as well as being effective group helpers in the classroom
- Providing space and opportunities for children to work independently and with peers
- Promoting sharing and turn-taking
- Helping children to express their feelings verbally and become effective communicators and good problem solvers
- Teaching children to care for others and their feelings
- Enabling positive separation from parents

Physical development

Gross motor skills are encouraged by:

- Thirty+ minutes of daily outdoor or rainy-day playroom activity, which includes climbing, sliding, pumping a swing, riding a tricycle, pretend play, sand play, etc.
- Daily music and movement time

Fine motor skills are encouraged by the use of:

- Puzzles, games, and manipulatives
- Working with clay
- Learning to grip and control pencils and crayons

Art activities, which include painting, gluing, coloring and cutting with scissors when ready

Intellectual development is encouraged by:

- The use of play to promote learning as a meaningful and interactive process
- Expression through art and music
- Exposing children to a literacy rich environment
- Providing appropriate environments and materials in the classroom that will promote curiosity and exploration
- The use of resources to introduce children to and then teach them to recognize primary colors, basic shapes, the alphabet, numbers, etc.
- Recitation through music, repetition and verse to learn numbers, the alphabet, phonics, months of the year, days of the week, etc.
- Basic classroom curriculum and lesson plans that are age appropriate and promote successful learning experiences (see Basic Curriculum).

Spiritual development is encouraged by:

- Adults modeling Christian values
- A weekly chapel program which features themes related to character development and God's unconditional love for all through stories, songs, and prayer (Thurs. 10:30-10:50).
- Offering a blessing before snack and lunch times
- Teaching tolerance and respect for all

Peas in a Pod is a Christian Preschool and Kindergarten. All policies and procedures are at the discretion of the Director. Activities that are based in Christian tradition and values – chapel, prayer, music, etc. - reflect the beliefs and mission of the school. We do not have adequate staff to supervise children whose parents do not wish for them to participate in chapel, or an aspect of the daily routine that might be of a spiritual nature.

BASIC CURRICULUM

In addition to our overall developmental objectives, each classroom teacher designs themes and daily activities that are listed on a monthly calendar and sent home in book bags. Below is the basic curriculum for each classroom:

<u>Twos</u>: Children will be taught using a curriculum designed to prepare them to advance through their preschool years. Emphasis is placed on language development and the recognition of primary colors, basic shapes, letters and numbers 1 - 10. Weekly themes and activities are designed to reinforce these basic concepts. Socialization (sharing, being a good friend, etc.) is a large part of 2s learning.

<u>Threes:</u> Teachers use a "Letter of the Week" curriculum to begin expanding on letter recognition from our preparatory curriculum. Letter sounds are illustrated by using themes that begin with the letter and also include basic concept recognition (colors, shapes and numbers). Pre-writing skills are encouraged by tracing activities and the use of a variety of writing materials.

<u>Pre-K</u>: Pre-Kindergarteners will focus on pre-reading skill development through alphabet recognition and letter-sound awareness. Children learn to recognize words. Writing skills are encouraged using a variety of materials. Math skills are explored through counting, sorting and grouping objects. Small group instruction and learning centers provide differentiated instruction.

<u>Kindergarten</u>: Our Kindergarten meets and exceeds the curriculum requirements of the State of North Carolina. For specifics regarding the Kindergarten curriculum, please refer to the Kindergarten Handbook.

DAILY SCHEDULES



Young children feel secure with routines and schedules. This help them learn sequencing and time-related activities. A specific schedule for each class is posted in the classroom.

Daily schedules for our children will include:

- Entrance routine greetings, put away personal items
- Free play and exploration
- Clean up
- Circle time or morning meeting
- Snack
- Bathroom break
- Art or theme project time
- Outdoor or rainy-day playroom time
- Story time
- Lunch / Exit routine

STAFF

Our Peas teachers have degrees in a variety of fields of study. Through a spirit of cooperation and community, our teaching staff is our greatest asset. They have been chosen for their education, training, experience, character, and dedication to the needs of young children. Background checks have been conducted on all school staff.

Our staff members are certified in CPR for children and adults, as well as basic first aid.

STUDENT / TEACHER RATIOS

Twos up to 12 children / 2 teachers

Threes up to 14 children / 2 teachers

Pre-K up to 14 children / 2 teachers

Kindergarten up to 15 children / 2 teachers



GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE

In guiding children, our goals are to help them feel good about themselves, to help them develop self-discipline, and to learn to consider the needs and desires of other people when necessary. In order to do this, we use the following guidelines in working with the children:

- Rules are stated as clearly as possible in a positive way. If a child misbehaves, we discuss
 the behavior with the child encouraging verbalization of feelings. We ask 'open ended'
 questions which allow the child to process the situation and problem solve to a solution.
 When necessary, we suggest possible solutions. Clear reasons and explanations are given
 as to why the child is to do something in a "safer" way. Clear consequences are stated and
 followed through based on actions chosen by the child.
- We will redirect a child to a different area or activity if repeated measures taken to talk through the situation have been unsuccessful. If necessary, we will separate a child from the difficult situation allowing the child to have time to think through his/her actions. The child may sit in the "Thinking Chair" during this time within the direct supervision of the teacher. This process is handled in an understanding way.
- We strive to be consistent in the way we discipline.
- We concentrate on setting good examples; modeling proper use of language and actions.

If repetitive intervention and redirection of a child requires consistent one on one monitoring by the teacher, a meeting will be required of the parents to review documentation and to plan positive behavior strategies. If one on one monitoring continues to prevail, due to a child's consistent inappropriate behavior, the teacher will make an evaluation and the director will make follow-up observations. If all attempts fail to modify consistent inappropriate behavior, dismissal of enrollment will be required.

At no time will deliberate, physical acts of aggression against any child or adult at our school be tolerated. Discipline will be handled professionally and in a positive way. No child will be subjected to any form of humiliation or frightening disciplinary techniques. Evidence of any such inappropriate action on the part of any staff person would result in immediate dismissal.

PROGRAM POLICIES

ADMISSIONS

Children ages 2 – 6 are eligible to attend Peas in a Pod. A child must be 2 by August 31 to begin in our Twos program, 3 by August 31 to begin our Threes program, 4 by August 31 to begin our Pre-K program, and 5 by August 31 to begin our Kindergarten program. Exceptions to the admissions policy may be made at the discretion of the director.

Peas in a Pod is inclusive, without regard for religious belief, gender, class, race, or national origin. Following evaluation, we will consider accepting children with special needs. We can only accept children for whom we can provide appropriate assistance and effective resources.

REGISTRATION

Registration materials will be distributed to our current students in January on the first day of school after winter break. Pre-Registration will be open in January to the following groups in this order of priority:

- 1. Those children currently enrolled
- 2. The children of active CUCC members
- 3. Siblings of children currently enrolled
- 4. Children from our waiting list

In mid February, registration will be open to the general public.

A non-refundable registration fee must accompany all registrations.

TUITION

Tuition is divided into nine equal monthly payments as follows, but you may pay an annual fee, or any lump portion thereof at your discretion.

Monthly / Yearly Tuition for 2023 - 2024:

TWO -YEAR-OLDS	MONTHLY ,	/ YEARLY
Two Days	\$270.00	(\$2,430/yr.)
Three Days	310.00	(\$2,790/yr.)
Five Days	375.00	(\$3,375/yr.)
THREE-YEAR-OLDS		
Three Days	310.00	(\$2,790/yr.)
Five Days	375.00	(\$3,375/yr.)
PRE-K (FOUR-YEAR-OLDS)		
Pre-Kindergarten Class	375.00	(\$3,375/yr.)
<u>KINDERGARTEN</u>		
Kindergarten Class	400.00	(\$3,600/yr.)

- Tuition is billed on the 1st of the month and due by the 5th.
- Tuition can be paid through the Brightwheel platform (3% service charge), electronic bank draft, Venmo (@Peas-Preschool-123), or cash/check.
- Checks or money orders are to be made payable to **Peas in a Pod.**
- A \$50 fee may be assessed if payment is not received by the end of the month.
- A \$35 fee may be charged for returned checks.
- If you should, at any time, experience difficulty in making a timely tuition payment, for any reason, please contact the director to discuss options.

WITHDRAWAL/TUITION OBLIGATIONS/CANCELLATION OF ENROLLMENT

In the event that you need to withdraw your child, the school requires a 30-day written notice to the director. This will enable the school to fill the vacancy with a child from our waiting list. If notice is not given, one month's tuition is due. No portion of a monthly tuition will be refunded for a partial month's attendance, but prepaid annual tuition will be refunded with a 30-day written notice.

Due to staffing, lesson planning, and supplies needed, full tuition is still required during the following: family vacations, travel, and illness lasting less than 2 weeks. Exceptions are at the discretion of the director.

We reserve the right to cancel enrollment based on the following:

- Consistent failure to pay tuition on the posted schedule, including disregard of billed late fees.
- An individual demanding excessive amounts of staff energy and time at the expense of other children, or placing another child at risk from inappropriate or uncontrolled behavior.
- Failure to comply with immunization requirements in a timely manner.

Parents will be initially informed of the situation by the teacher or director via phone call/letter. Documentation of concerns will be presented at a subsequent conference. Additional meetings will be set with the director regarding any cancellation of enrollment prior to cancellation.

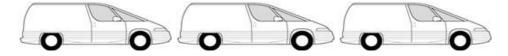
ABSENCES

If your child is ill, or for any reason unable to attend school, please text your teacher or call and leave a voicemail. The teacher will save important papers for you.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Early Morning Drop-Off

Early drop off is available from 8:30am for \$5/day, or \$8 from 8:15am. This fee is billed in arrears at the end of the month. There is a discount for prepayment. This service is available to any student on an as-needed basis. Please realize that we cannot provide early morning drop off on days that we are on an inclement weather schedule.



Morning Drop-Off

School officially opens at 9:00 AM. We want to make arrival as pleasant and special as we can for each individual child. Please help your child to be on time. Children do not like to come into a group activity already in progress. Morning drop-off is available from your car at the entrance to the school from 8:55 AM to 9:10 AM. Please line up by the sidewalk facing away from the playground towards the front of the church and Friendly Ave. A staff member will get your child out of the car and walk your child into school. If you need to come into the school, *please park in the parking lot*, not in the morning drop off line. Thank you for your cooperation!

Drop-off is available rain or shine. We encourage sidewalk drop off for all children after the first week or two of school, allowing them to separate more easily, build self-confidence and independence, take responsibility for their possessions, and experience one-on-one time with the teacher. Please feel free to walk in if you need to talk to your teacher, but be mindful that lengthy conversations need to be scheduled. Mornings are our busiest time of day!

Dismissal

Please pick your child up promptly at 1:00. A fee will be added to your next tuition invoice for excessively late pick up of your child.

If someone other than a parent will be picking up a child, please inform the teacher in writing or by text/phone.

HEALTH

We take precautions to provide a safe and healthy environment for your child. This includes requiring that you keep your child at home if he or she is ill. We will provide isolation for children who become ill while at school. You will be notified immediately if your child becomes ill. Please help us by keeping your child at home if he or she has:

- had a fever in the last 24 hours
- had diarrhea or vomiting in the last 24 hours
- been on an antibiotic less than 24 hours
- a cold less than 4 days old
- heavy nasal discharge
- a constant cough
- unusual irritability, or is generally not himself, or has symptoms of a possible communicable disease
- conjunctivitis (pink eye) child must have been on medication for at least 24 hours and be symptom-free before returning.

Please inform us immediately if your child has been exposed to a contagious disease, including COVID. Please contact your teacher or Director for protocol. If your child has already contracted a contagious disease, please notify the Director. Consult your physician if you question when your child should return to school.

MEDICATIONS

Medication to be given to a child at school must be in the original container and labeled. The parent must complete a Medication Consent Form, available in the back of this handbook, when bringing medication to the school. Medication will be administered by a director or by the child's teacher. Medication for the treatment of symptoms of a contagious condition (i.e., fever, persistent cough, etc.) cannot be administered at school.

IMMUNIZATIONS

All children must provide an up-to-date immunization record in order to be enrolled in the school. You may have your physician email your child's records to us or bring us a copy.

INCLEMENT WEATHER and POWER OUTAGES

School closings or postponements due to inclement weather usually follow Guilford County School closings. Please stay close to your phone for any texts concerning delays or closings.



If Guilford County Schools have a one-hour delay, we will open at our regular time – 9:00am. If Guilford County Schools have a two-hour delay, we will open at 10:00am.

If weather conditions worsen while your child is in school, and roads are becoming covered, please pick up your child.

Our school does not make up the first five days missed due to inclement weather. If the school is closed more than five days, make-up days will be designated by the director.

The school must close during extended power outages for safety and health reasons, and for the emotional wellbeing of our children. We will text to inform you if the school is closed due to a power outage while school is in session.

INSURANCE

Peas in a Pod maintains general liability insurance.

FIRE SAFETY and FIRE DRILLS

Our facility is inspected annually by the Office of the Fire Marshall. We also practice fire drills on a regular monthly basis.

BUILDING SECURITY

After our initial morning arrival time, our doors are locked. Please ring the bell for entry.

FIELD TRIPS

Our classes enjoy occasional outings. Field trips are valuable as they offer youngsters many "first-hand" experiences. While on a school field trip, children will wear an identifying tag showing the school's name, address, and phone number. First aid kits, including any students' personal medication will be taken

on all field trips.

Field trip transportation is provided by our parents. You will be required to use proper child safety restraints in accordance with current state law if you volunteer to transport a student in your car. Parents who accompany our children on field trips are needed to directly assist the teachers and help ensure the safety of students assigned to them on the trip.

BIRTHDAYS

We love to celebrate birthdays at school! Parents may bring a special treat to share with classmates. We suggest mini-donuts, cookie cake, ice cream cups, Rice Krispie treats, etc. If you plan to send cupcakes, please send mini-cupcakes. Be sure to coordinate your plans with your child's teacher. Snack is usually around 10:00.

We ask that offsite party invitations not be distributed at school unless you are inviting the entire class.

MID-MORNING SNACKS/LUNCHES

Mid-morning snacks are provided by the school, and are closely monitored to assure that they do not contain allergens to our students. As long as we can carefully control it, we will not put limits on what is served or what a child brings for lunch. However, we ask that no sodas or carbonated drinks be sent for lunch, no food that needs to be heated, and, if your child will need utensils, please send in the lunchbox. During lunch we try to ensure that the children eat their "growing food" first before any sweets or junk food.

CLOTHING AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Clothing and Shoes

Please send children to school in clothing that is easy for self-diaper changing. Sneakers or sandals with back straps are play. All coats/jackets/sweatshirts, backpacks, and water labeled with child's name. Extra clothing should be sent at the



dressing and best for outdoor bottles should be beginning of

school, and replenished every time soiled clothing comes home and at the change of seasons. Although we do use aprons during art, your child will often get paint or marker on their clothing. We do use washable supplies!

Diapers

If your child is in diapers, the school will require a \$30 one-time diaper/wipe fee. Checks should be made payable to Peas in a Pod or you can send cash. You may also choose to send in your own diapers and wipes.

Book Bags and Backpacks



All children should come to school with a book bag every day. Two-handled bags are easy for both the children and the teachers to take things in and out-this is especially true for our 2s and 3s. Our Pre-K and Kindergarten children are responsible for (or at least helping with) removing and placing everything into their own bags, and may bring the bag or backpack of their preference.



Toys and Personal Belongings

<u>All toys should be left at home</u>. We cannot be responsible if personal items are lost at school. Special toys and belongings can be brought if the class is having Show and Tell. Items will be left in backpacks or bags except when sharing them with the group.

Labeling

Please label everything! Your child's name should be written on water bottles, bookbags, tote bags, sweaters, jackets, car seats, lunch boxes, etc. If it is not labeled, we will label it for you. Should something go missing, please let us know.

CLASS NEWSLETTER & MONTHLY CALENDAR

Teachers prepare a monthly letter and/or calendar to let you know about class projects and activities. They may ask you to participate by helping your child with part of the project at home or by contributing something to the class. They may also ask you to volunteer your time in the classroom. It is important that you read this letter and calendar as soon as it is received. This way, both you and your child will be prepared for the many wonderful activities each month brings.

YOUR CHILD'S FOLDER

All children will be given a folder to bring things to and from school. <u>Please make sure that this folder is returned to school daily</u>. Check your child's folder for art projects, teacher, and director communications, as well as any other special messages. Your child's folders are the best way for us to keep things organized. *Please check them every day.*

DAY-TO-DAY COMMUNICATION

It is important to advise the teacher when something has happened that may affect your child's performance or behavior at school, i.e. death of a pet or loved one, separation, divorce, etc. We encourage you to share concerns or problems as they arise so that we can better understand and help your child.

We encourage you to write a note to the teacher rather than trying to discuss it when you bring your child to class. It is difficult for the teacher to give the necessary attention at this time. If you wish to discuss a problem, let your teacher know. Teachers are more than happy to schedule a time to visit with you.

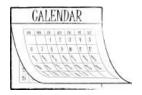
ASSESSING YOUR CHILD'S PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN EXPERIENCE

A parent-teacher conference is a time for you to ask questions and it is a chance for you to provide information that will help the teacher better understand your child's needs.

Everyone benefits from the conference - you, your child, and the teacher. Parents may request a conference at any time during the school year; however, conferences are scheduled twice each school year. The first, in October, is an informal "let's get acquainted" meeting. In March/April, teachers send home a written assessment and offer conferences to parents who want to discuss the written report, or as needed.

Information used to assess children is gathered through the use of anecdotal records, developmental checklists, and classroom observation.

Kindergarten will have more frequent and/or formal assessments.



Peas in a Pod 2025 - 2026 Teacher Workday and Holiday Calendar

September 1 Labor Day Holiday

September 2 FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

October 10 Conferences

November 3 Teacher Workday

November 11 Veterans Day Holiday

November 25 Thanksgiving Program/Feast

November 26-28 Thanksgiving Holidays

December 18 Christmas Program/Party

December 19- January 5 WINTER BREAK

January 6 First Day back from Winter Break

January 19 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

January 26 Teacher Workday

February 16 Presidents' Day Holiday

March 31 SPRING BREAK

April 6 Teacher Workday

May 21 Graduation (11:30)/Last Day of School

We will inform you of any changes to this calendar in a timely manner.

Appendix

MEDICATION CONSENT FORM

The Peas in a Pod Staff has my permission to administer the following medication that I have provided for my child,

	s Name)
Medication	·
Condition being treated	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
The medication needs to be administered following circumstances:	d at the following time <u>or</u> under the
Should the medication be refrigerated: _	YesNo
Additional Comments:	
	
Signature of Parent	

SUGGESTIONS FOR COPING WITH SEPARATION ANXIETY

Children are amazingly perceptive when it comes to picking up emotional cues from their parents. You can ease separation anxiety by adjusting your body language, and other non-verbal signals you may be sending. You may want to try these strategies:

- * Try to control your facial expressions. If your face conveys "I feel terrible leaving you, when you are crying for me", NO words or reassurance will be convincing.
- * Make eye contact or kneel down when you tell your child that you will be back soon. This shows you are "on the level", and really mean what you say.
- * Give them a quick hug and goodbye with positive words like, "Have a great day, and I will see you soon". Try not to let signs of worry creep into your voice. If your child starts to cry or protest, calmly explain that you have errands to run, or housework to do (something that doesn't sound like fun!), and that you will pick them up after they have fun at school.
- ★ Be sure the goodbye is quick. If you prolong the departure, your hesitancy will reveal your ambivalence, and possibly increase your child's anxiety. If your child doesn't calm down in a reasonable length of time, the director or classroom teacher will notify you.

When a child is experiencing separation anxiety, some children want to be cuddled, and some just want to be left alone. The teacher will read cues from your child, and make them feel as secure and comfortable as possible.

Separation anxiety not only happens in the twos, but in other classes as well. Separation anxiety may be demonstrated by your child if you move into a new home, separate from your spouse, have a death in your family, a parent is traveling a lot, there is a sudden change in your child's routine (not sleeping well), birth of a sibling, or younger sibling staying home with mom, and especially before and after an illness.

We hope the above suggestions will be beneficial to you when coping with your child's fear of being away from you. We will support you and your child along the way if this happens.

Suggestions for Nut-Free Snacks for School

Fruit and Vegetables – apples, bananas, carrots, oranges, watermelon, cucumbers, grapes, berries, peaches, cantaloupe

Snack Crackers and Other Options

- Wheat Thins
- Triscuits
- Cereals Such as Shredded Wheat, <u>Cheerios</u>, Apple Jacks, Fruit Loops. There are several <u>cereal options</u>, just be sure to check the labels
- Gogo Squeeze Applesauce
- Sun Maid Raisins Not the yogurt- or chocolate-covered ones
- Nutra-grain Cereal Bars
- Pepperidge Farms Goldfish
- <u>Delmonte Fruit Cups</u>
- Kraft String Cheese
- Kraft Sliced Cheese
- Kraft Cheese Cubes
- Yogurt Yoplait, Trix or Danimals. Avoid the yogurts with granola or candy toppings
- Fruit Snacks Betty Crocker, Target, Annies Organic.
- Cheese Nips
- Teddy Grahams All Flavors
- Nilla Wafers
- Honey Maid Graham Crackers
- Premium Saltines
- Cheeze-its
- Wheatables
- Popcorn Pop Secret, Act 11, Jolly Time, Orville Redenbacher
- Jell-O Pudding Cups and Gelatin
- Hunts Pudding
- Kraft Handi Snacks Pudding Cups
- Rold Gold Pretzels

Special Occasion Treats

- Nabisco Oreos Original in blue packaging
- Nabisco Oreos Golden Yellow Packaging
- Rice Crispy Treats Prepackaged
- Lorna Doones
- Keebler Vanilla Wafer
- Hershey Kisses
- Kraft Marshmallows
- Dum Dum Suckers
- Willy Wonka Candies
- Tootsie Rolls

Disclaimer – PLEASE READ THE LABELS – Products change, they change manufacturing guidelines, they move their manufacturing facilities, etc. What may be "nut free" today, may not be "nut free" next week. This list is provided solely as a guidance to help you find nut free snacks for your children's classroom. **Need more ideas? Visit: snacksafely.com/safe-snack-guide/**