

Parent Handbook

Derry Preschool



Location: 335 E Areba Ave. Hershey PA 17033

Mailing Address: PO Box 123 Hershey, PA 17033

(717) 533-1487 (office)

Email: derrypreschool@gmail.com

www.derrypreschool.com

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Derry Preschool, Inc.

Mission Statement

Each and every child is a unique individual with his/her own talents and abilities. Children are born learners, with a strong sense of curiosity, and their own brand of imagination and creativity.

At Derry Preschool, our mission is to treat each child with respect, while nurturing their curiosity and natural desire to learn. This will enhance their confidence, as well as aid them in developing a cooperative relationship with both their peers and the adults around them. We believe that children who are healthy emotionally are best prepared for later schooling.

Our mission is attained through the following methods:

- A low student/teacher ratio
- A balance of child-directed and teacher-directed activities
- A “creative curriculum” – in which the child’s inborn desire to learn is nurtured, and the child’s natural sense of creativity is developed
- “Pre Reading/Pre Writing” skills are developed: this includes skills to strengthen small muscles, reinforce left to right eye movement, and build language skills. A general “love of learning” is emphasized with daily reading and sharing of books
- A safe and enjoyable play area to develop large motor skills
- Special Music and Art programs to enhance our creative curriculum provide cultural stimulation, and a further sense of self-expression.

Our mission at Derry Preschool is to let children explore the world outside their homes in a safe but stimulating environment. Our staff of accredited professionals is here to nurture the individual, both emotionally and cognitively, and to prepare them for the adventure of lifelong learning.

Classroom activities promote the social, emotional, physical and intellectual development of your child through participation in free and organized programs. These experiences will involve your child in sharing and cooperation with other children and adults in activities such as:

Music: Monthly music classes are offered to each classroom, as well as singing and creative movement provided by each teacher in their individual classrooms.

The Arts: Monthly art classes are given to each classroom in order for the children to explore multi-media and open-ended art experiences. Art and craft activities are also provided in each individual classroom.

Language: Storytelling, poetry, dramatizations and finger play.

Science: Understanding the world around us.

Mathematics: Introduction of basic counting skills using manipulatives.

Physical Coordination: Scissor cutting, climbing, balancing, and exercising.

Communication

BLOOMZ:

Derry Preschool is using Bloomz to help facilitate both classroom and school-wide communication. Bloomz is a parent teacher communication app. At Derry Preschool we use the app to allow teachers to send out weekly updates about what is going on in their classroom. There is also a school wide feed that allows the director to send out updates that pertain to all families.

Through Bloomz, parents are able to message teachers to inform them of any absences or to ask any questions. Parents are also able to contact the director through the app as well. While we suggest downloading the app to access Bloomz in a user-friendly manner, you can also choose to receive your Bloomz updates via your email. Parents can edit their own preferences based on how they would prefer to receive messages (through the app, text message, email or you can select to receive messages in more than one manner).

To set up the Derry Preschool Bloomz account, the emails that were given through the registration process are used to create each student's Bloomz account. The policy for adding additional contacts on Bloomz is as follows.

To ensure the privacy and security of student information, our Bloomz communication system will use the primary email address provided during the registration process as the official point of contact for all messages and updates related to your child.

If you would like to add an additional contact (for example: another parent, guardian, or caregiver) to receive Bloomz communications, the request must be made directly by the primary contact on file. This ensures that all updates and access to your child's information are authorized by the primary registrant. The primary registrant would just need to email the Derry Preschool office requesting the addition of a contact and include the full name and email address of the person you'd like added.

We appreciate your cooperation in maintaining a secure and organized communication platform.

Office Phone Number: (717) 533-1487

Please use this number if you need to reach the office or a teacher, preferably **15 minutes before the start of class.**

If you are unable to reach someone, please leave a message on the office answering machine. Your call will be returned if necessary.

ADDRESSES:

Derry Preschool's physical address is in a wing at Spring Creek Church of the Brethren, 335 E Areba Avenue, Hershey. Derry Preschool, Inc. is a licensed, non-profit, non-sectarian preschool administered by a Board of Directors.

Derry Preschool's mailing address is PO BOX 123, Hershey PA, 17033.

EMAIL:

The most efficient way to connect with Derry Preschool is to email us! derrypreschool@gmail.com. The email is managed by both the business manager and director, and it is checked throughout the day. We also use the email to communicate school wide information.

Change of Contact Information:

Please be sure to keep your home and cell phone numbers updated at the office in case of an emergency. Should any contact information change through the year, please notify us via the derry preschool email.

	<u>Class Days and Hours</u>	
Supervised Playgroup	Tuesday or Thursday or Friday	9:00-11:15 AM
Pre-Three's Class	Monday and Wednesday	9:00-11:15 AM
3 Year Old AM Classes	Tuesday and Thursday	9:00-11:30 AM
4 Year Old AM Classes	Monday/Wednesday/Friday	9:00-11:30 AM
5 Year Old AM Class	Monday-Thursday	9:00-11:30 AM

In order that the child may receive maximum benefit from the program, **parents should observe the opening and dismissal times.** If an emergency comes up and you anticipate that you will be late picking up your child, please call the school at (717)533-1487 and let a staff person know.

For the safety of the child, **parents should accompany them to the classroom and pick them up at the classroom.** Please refer to the safety policy concerning pick up.

Parents are asked to discourage younger siblings from playing in the classroom during drop off and pick up times.

If you are more than 5 minutes late to pick up your child, they will be escorted to our late birds program. At this program they can join the other Lunch Bunch children and teachers. There will be a \$5 charge for this program. This payment can be placed in the payment box next to Parents Place.

Entrance Requirements

Supervised Playgroup:	The child must be 2 by the first day of school
Pre-Three's Program:	The child must be 2.7 years of age by the start of the school year and must be toilet trained. **
3 Year Old Program:	The child must be 3 years old by October 15 of the current school year and must be toilet trained.
4 Year Old Program:	The child must be 4 years old by October 15 of the current school year and must be toilet trained.
5 Year Old Program:	The child must be 5 years old by October 15 of the current school year and must be toilet trained.

** As stipulated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania - State Board of Private Academic Schools Regulations governing private academic schools. Section 51.62 (a)

Extended Day & Enrichment Options

Program Name	Day and Time	Age Group	Location	Payment
Early Bird	Monday – Friday Begins at 8:15am	All ages welcome	Drop off in the Enrichment Room	\$5 cash / \$8 venmo
Late Bird	Monday – Friday 11:30am-12noon	All who qualify for the 3yo, 4yo & 5yo classes	Pick up is in Parent's Place or the playground	\$5 cash / \$8 venmo
Lunch Bunch	Monday – Friday 11:30am-12:45pm	All who qualify for the 3yo, 4yo & 5yo classes	Drop off in the Enrichment Room	1 session = \$18 cash / \$21 venmo 10 session punch card = \$155 cash / \$160 venmo
KickStart	Monday – Thursday 12:45pm-3:00pm	All who qualify for the 3yo, 4yo & 5yo classes	Drop off in designated classroom Pick up in Parent's Place	1 session = \$28 / \$32 venmo 5 session punch card = \$130 Cash or check/ \$135 venmo
Creative Enrichment	Fridays as advertised	All who qualify for the 3yo, 4yo & 5yo classes	Drop off in designated classroom Pick up in Parent's Place	As advertised
All payments can be placed in the payments box that is located in Parent's Place. Please fill out provided envelopes and/or venmo slips.				

Extended Day Programs

Enrichment Room access, once you enter the Derry Preschool wing, the door straight ahead.

Use the self-serve area in the "Parents Place" area right before entering the DP wing. All checks should be made payable to: Derry Preschool

Toileting and Accidents:

- To avoid contamination of clean shoes, socks, clothing and school environment, we require all students to wear an undergarment such as a pull-up or underwear.
- Our facility has stalls, step stools and potty seats in each bathroom to help assist children at their varying developmental stages.
- Each classroom builds in a bathroom time during their day where we encourage each child to try to use the toilet as well as honoring any request for the bathroom. When the children use the bathroom, teachers use both visual and verbal cues to help toileting become an independent skill. If a child needs assistance or requests for help then a staff member is always available.
- Students will be accompanied to the bathroom by a teacher or aide.
- If we notice that a child had an accident or becomes soiled, a staff member will make themselves available to change that child. We ask that every child provide a clean outfit in their backpacks for such an occasion.
- Please be mindful of what your child wears to school so that we can encourage independence during each phase.

Necessary Items

- A backpack to hold your child's belongings
- A change of clothes including socks (kept in their backpack)
- Completed Student Authorization Paper and immunization form.

Child Discipline Policy

Managing children's behavior is an important part of the educational process. Discipline is not synonymous with punishment. Effective discipline helps children gain self-control and aids in developing a positive self-concept. Through positive management techniques a child can learn to handle conflicts in a peaceful and effective manner.

Staff members of Derry Preschool shall use the following guides with their speech and action:

- Use positive techniques of guidance, including: redirection, anticipation of and elimination of potential problems, positive reinforcement, appropriate alternatives, encouragement and praise.
- Establish and maintain clear, consistent rules for children.
- Calm Down Areas: we provide areas in classrooms and a school wide area that allows children space and items to use to help provide coping strategies to calm down when feeling overstimulated. A staff member will always monitor students using calm down areas.
- Under no circumstances will corporal (physical punishment) be used. Additional staff member(s) will always monitor.
- Speak with children in a friendly, positive, courteous manner.
- Refrain from humiliating, frightening or harsh language with children.
- Refrain from taking away toileting or snack time as a form of discipline.
- Guide children's social behavior to be developmentally appropriate.
- Encourage children in being happy, comfortable, and involved in appropriate play experiences.
- Respect children's feelings and individual rights
- Staff members lead by example

Safety Policy

The Safety Policy is designed to ensure that the Derry Preschool students are supported in a secure and protected setting with established emergency protocols.

Derry Preschool's building entrance door will be locked according to the following schedule:

Until 8:15 am 9:15 – 11:15 am 11:45 – 2:45 pm

Derry Preschool's Hallway entrance will be locked according to the following schedule:

Until 8:15 am 9:15 – 3pm

In the event you need to gain access while the school doors are locked, please ring the doorbell. Upon identification, you will be admitted.

Parent Pick-Up: Parents complete a form at the beginning of the school year, listing all those who have permission to pick up their child. Photo ID (i.e. Driver's License) is required until the teacher recognizes those on the list. Photo ID's may be required of parents if the teacher does not recognize the parent (i.e. in the case of a substitute teacher). If a person (not on the list) is picking up the child, the parent must provide a written note giving permission. In an emergency situation only, a phone call can be made from the parent to the child's teacher giving verbal permission for pick up. In both cases, photo ID's will be required in order to pick up the child. There is no parking next to the playground on E Granada Ave. There is also no parking next to any exterior doors. Parking only in designated parking lot areas referenced below/where directed upon arrival.

Parking Lot: When entering the parking lot, please follow any directional signs and be sure to park in the designated Derry Preschool parking area. Also remember many parents and young children walk in the parking lot so please drive slowly.

Wednesday Parking Notice: On Wednesdays, **Cocoa Packs** uses a portion of the parking lot. A designated traffic flow has been established to minimize interference with Derry Preschool's operations while allowing Cocoa Packs to carry out its activities safely and efficiently.

Please follow the posted traffic pattern and any staff directions when entering and exiting the parking lot. Thank you for your cooperation.

Escorting: A Derry Preschool staff member will accompany a child any time he/she leaves the classroom (i.e. bathroom, playground, etc.).

911 Access: During an emergency, communication will be provided through multiple methods to ensure staff receive timely information. Notifications will be communicated via the office telephone system, the intercom system located in every classroom, and through teachers, who carry both walkie-talkies and cell phones for emergency communication.

Evacuation Plan: A comprehensive evacuation plan will be reviewed with the staff and a drill will be conducted monthly.

Fire Safety: Smoke detector batteries will be checked and changed by the Spring Creek Maintenance staff, and the detectors will be checked for proper functioning semi-annually. There are three fire extinguishers in the Derry Preschool hallway and more located throughout the building. They will be inspected annually.

Snow Policy

Parents and school employees are responsible for checking their email or looking at their Bloomz app for weather related announcements. Parents are encouraged to use their own judgment and to keep their children home or pick them up early if road conditions appear hazardous. In the event of snow or other emergencies, Derry Preschool will send out a school wide email, send a message via Bloomz, and post an update on Facebook.

- If the Derry Preschool listing states a two-hour delay, we will operate on a **modified 2-hour** schedule. Morning classes will run from 10:45am to 12:45 pm. Lunch Bunch is cancelled and KickStart and Creative Enrichment will run on the normal operating schedule. (they will be given time to eat their lunch at the beginning of KickStart)
- If the Derry Preschool listing states an early closing, we will dismiss at 11:30 and we will **cancel our Extended Day Programs and Creative Enrichment options. This will be communicated via email and Bloomz. Also, if you signed up your child up to stay for the extended programming, we will call you to notify you that those programs are canceled that day.**

School Cancellation Policy

We typically follow the Derry Township School District schedule when making a call to delay or cancel school, however, not always. We consider the location of our school and the safety of the children as well as their families when school cancellations are considered. The bottom line is: we will always post on Bloomz, Facebook and send out an email if we choose to close or delay.

We allow up to 5 unscheduled closure days off before we make up days. We will begin to make up the missed days after five calamity days. Not all classes run on the same days, we must consider this when we schedule make-up days. We will communicate when make-up days are added to our calendar.

School Health and Safety

A physical examination of each child within the previous year and a dental examination are recommended before entering school. Pennsylvania State Law under the Department of Health requires that every child must have age-appropriate immunization and the parents/guardian must provide documentation of immunization records to the school.

Children should NOT attend school if they have any of the following symptoms:

Nausea

Discharge in ears/eyes

Vomiting

Fever (100.4°F (38°C) or higher)

Diarrhea

Colored Runny Nose

Skin Rash

Children cannot return to school until they have been completely symptom free for 24 hours. Special Note: They must be fever free without Tylenol, Motrin, etc.. for 24 hours before returning to school. If your child develops any of these symptoms at school, you will be notified to pick him/her up immediately.

Please contact your child's teacher immediately upon learning that your child has contracted a communicable disease in order that she may

inform the other parents. The minimum recommended periods of isolation from school for the following communicable diseases are:

Measles:	6 days from the onset of illness.
Whooping Cough:	4 weeks from the onset of illness.
Scarlet Fever:	7 days from the onset of illness, unless physician readmits earlier.
Strep Infections:	Same as Scarlet Fever.
German Measles:	24 hours after rash disappears.
Chicken Pox:	7-10 days from the onset of illness.
Head Lice:	Following a shampoo with physician's prescribed product.

If your child has contracted a condition which is communicable, a written note from a physician is required stating that the child is no longer contagious upon your child's return to school. The school reserves the right to call a doctor in the event of an accident or illness when the parents/guardians or the family physician cannot be reached. Please notify the teacher if your child will be absent from class for a period of over three days. Also, please inform the teacher of a family situation that might affect the child's behavior (births, deaths, etc.)

Snacks

Snacks are offered daily. Parents are asked to contribute one box/bag of a dry snack item each month to be kept in their child's classroom to share with their classmates. Please give your snack item to your child's teacher with your child's name and class day (MWF, T/Th) written on the package. All children will be served the same snack. If there is a health concern, please contact the teacher. Derry Preschool will provide water and all paper supplies. Teachers will provide a classroom approved snack suggestion list when snacks are needed.

Derry Preschool has been experiencing a significant number of children with life threatening peanut and tree nut allergies. To eliminate any chance of exposure to peanut and tree nut products, and for the safety of all children at Derry Preschool, we ask that you **do not send any foods into school that contain peanuts, peanut butter, peanut oils or other tree nuts.** Please notify the teacher of any allergies your child may have. *Derry Preschool is a nut free school.*

Birthdays

We love to celebrate your children and we plan to make your child's birthday a special day! Parents may choose to provide a special treat for their child's birthday. Please make sure to inform teachers of which treat you are planning to bring so they can ensure it is a safe snack for the classroom.

Separation

All children have difficulty separating from parents, occasionally. New children usually have an adjustment period during which separation is difficult. We encourage you to view this as normal and typical behavior for a young child and not to be unduly upset by it. It is easier for everyone if you separate quickly and matter-of-factly when arriving with your child. The staff is trained to help your child in his/her transition to the school and we will be aware of, and responsive to, each child's needs.

Parent Conferences

The staff and parents need an open door of communication in order to provide the best possible school experience for each child. Therefore, conferences to discuss the progress of your child will be held on two different occasions, in the fall and the springtime. The conferences are held for the 3yo, 4yo and 5yo programs. On these conference days the Rainbow Room class will still hold a normal school day. If you are concerned about any aspect of the Preschool, please feel free to schedule an appointment with the Director or your child's teacher.

Family Participation

We encourage family members to be a part of a child's preschool experience. We have created some events that we invite all members of families to join, and these include our Back to School Nights, Halloween parade and our end of year carnival. Other possibilities include serving on the Board, being a Room Parent, chaperoning on field trips and being a Resource Person (sharing a hobby or an interesting job). If you have other suggestions, please feel free to share them with your child's teacher, the Preschool Director or a member of the Derry Preschool Family Association (DPFA).

Back to School Night: In late September, there will be a night for the children and their families to learn more about Derry Preschool and to meet the staff, classmates and families.

Fundraisers: As a NON-PROFIT PRESCHOOL, Derry Preschool is not subsidized by any other organization. Our school is completely self-supporting. Unfortunately, tuition doesn't cover all Derry Preschool's expenses. Tuition and registration fees must be supplemented by fundraising activities for the school to operate. **We need you to help!** Your participation in our fundraising projects and your personal contributions are much needed and greatly appreciated!

Field Trips: When trips are taken away from the school, permission slips and information will be sent home for a parent or guardian's signature. Parents are asked to attend field trips with their child. When it is a field trip day, The class will meet at the location and participate in the activity on location and they will not be in the classroom that day. Students will then go home with their parent(s).

If your child is sick or absent on a field trip day, please notify your teacher.

Tuition

The first tuition payment is due June 5th and is applied to the last month's tuition (May of the current school year). This payment is non-refundable. Tuition not received by that deadline results in the loss of your child's class space.

There are 9 total tuition payments. Beginning September, tuition is due and payable by the 5th of each month until 9 tuition payments are made.

*A 3% discount is available for siblings. It will be applied to the youngest child's tuition rate.

**A 3% discount is offered if a child's tuition is paid in full for the year, on or before June 5th.

***Only one discount per family per year may be taken. Discounts cannot be stacked.

Registration Fees:

The registration fee for your child is \$55 cash or check/ \$56 venmo.

Please note that the postmark on the mailed payment will serve as the date it was received.

Tuition payments are to be mailed to the following address:

**Derry Preschool
PO Box 123
Hershey, PA 17033**

There are nine monthly payments due from the first payment on June 5th until the last payment in April. The tuition is non-refundable upon a child's withdrawal from the school. No tuition rebate will be granted for a temporary withdrawal. This stipulation is necessary in view of the nature of the school's financial commitments. **The parent or guardian agrees to notify the office of a child's withdrawal from the school before the first of any month in question or be responsible for the full month's tuition.**

Please do not give tuition to the teacher! Tuition payment can be placed in the payment box next to Parents Place.

Tuition payments will not be accepted via another address. Any payment made to the 335 E Areba Ave. address, will be considered delinquent and returned to the sender. Payments can only be received at the PO Box address or the payment box next to Parents Place. To assist in making timely payments, please consider automatic bill payment plans through your financial banking institution. Postings of payments received will always be applied to any arrearage or that may have occurred.

Tuition in arrears - A **\$25 late fee** will be applied to tuition payments that are **10 days or more past due**. Tuition accounts that remain delinquent beyond this period may result in additional late fees and/or program suspension until the account is brought current.

Returned Check - A **\$25 returned check fee** will be applied to any payment made by check that is returned by the bank for any reason. The original payment amount, along with the returned check fee, must be paid promptly.

For any questions regarding your tuition payment, please contact via e-mail at businessmanager@derrypreschool.com

Summer Offerings

Each year in April, look for our Summer Camp flyers! Derry Preschool Offers 4 weeks of 4-day camps based around various themes, you may choose one week or join us for all 4 weeks! It's a fun thing to do with your friends when summer is here! This is a big hit amongst our Derry Preschool family and is a great way to keep your child active with their body as well as their mind. Your child does need to be three and potty trained to join us in our summer fun.