

parent
**HAND
BOOK**

2026-2027



DAILY SCHEDULE

- **Drop-Off 8:50-9:00**
 - Late arrivals need to be brought upstairs to the Jacob's Ladder entrance door.
 - **Dismissal 11:50-11:59**
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ARRIVAL GUIDELINES

Drop-off is at the rear door to the fellowship hall beginning at 8:50. Enter the parking lot from Nolensville Rd (by the front offices) and line up in a double line beginning at and following the orange cones. A Jacob's Ladder staff member or assigned parent will open the child's car door and unbuckle your child. **PLEASE PUT YOUR CAR IN PARK FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL CHILDREN AND STAFF.** Doors to the preschool will be locked at 9:00. **Late arrivals must be accompanied to the door.**

The director will sign in all the students for the day on Procare Connect. Please send an email to the Director (jacobsladder@nolensvilleumc.org) if someone else besides the normal person will be picking up your child.

We try to expedite drop-off as quickly as possible so that a line of traffic does not form on Nolensville Road. Please have your child ready to leave the car (appropriate outerwear, backpack near child, etc.) Please have your child remain in his/her child restraint as you drive through the drop-off line. We believe it poses a safety issue if children are unbuckled even during the stop/start of the drop-off process. **Children must not sit on a parent's lap at the steering wheel.**

If you need to convey a specific concern for that day or a message to the teacher, we recommend sending a note in the pencil pouch of your child's folder or sending the teacher an email or text.

Although staff members are in their rooms before student arrival, this time is used for organization and planning. For this reason, no children (with the exception of the parent helper's child) will be allowed in the building before the designated drop-off time.

As part of our Safe Sanctuary Policy, the exterior doors will remain locked at all times. **Only the Director or TA may answer the door, as teachers do not leave their classroom.** Please explain this to any person coming to the preschool on behalf of your child.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Please convey to the Director or teacher in advance by email or written note. The student will be picked up from the Jacob's Ladder entrance door.

SEPARATION ANXIETY

We highly recommend that you tell your child you are leaving and that you will return. Then, depart in a resolute and positive manner so that your child sees you feel good about him or her being at the preschool. Our staff is very experienced in this matter and will do everything possible to redirect your child and encourage involvement in the program. We assure you that for the first couple of days, your child will be given extra attention during your departure time, encouraging him or her to trust and bond with the teacher and classmates.

A WORD ABOUT CELL PHONES

While cell phones are great to have in the event of an emergency, we ask that you not use them during drop-off and pick-up. This is an important time in your child's day, and they deserve your undivided attention.

DISMISSAL

Children must be picked up no later than 11:59 am. Parents or the designated pick-up person in their vehicle will line up in the same manner as morning drop-off. Please have your car tag visible.

Staff members or Parent Helper will bring your child to their vehicle. The child will be placed in their car seat and buckled in by the parent or designated pick-up person. **STAFF MEMBERS OR PARENT HELPERS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO BUCKLE IN YOUR CHILD.**

Your child is to be picked up only by persons listed on the application form. If there is a change in your plans, please let the Director know at least 15 minutes prior to pick-up time.

During the first week of school, you may be asked for photo ID when picking up your child. If the staff member does not recognize the person who has come to pick up your child, it is our policy to ask for photo ID and then verify that they are listed on your application as “people authorized to pick up my child.”

Punctual pick-up is very important. We are a non-licensed facility that must adhere to the 2 hours and 59 minutes per day guidelines as set by the State of Tennessee. We understand that emergencies may delay your arrival, but we must enforce our pick-up time. Therefore, a late pick-up fee of **\$5.00 per child/ per 5 minutes is charged and will be added to your next month's tuition.** If you are delayed, please call the school to inform the Director of your anticipated arrival time.

FEES AND ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

1. A child cannot be admitted without completion of a Student Application, touring the preschool, and submitting a nonrefundable application fee of \$100.00.
2. **All children must be potty-trained and fully self-sufficient in the bathroom.**
3. Checks should be made payable to “Jacob’s Ladder”. **Please put your tuition check in the zipper pocket in the file folder.** Do not hand checks to the staff while they are unloading your child from the car. We cannot accept cash, only checks or online payments, due to Nolensville First UMC’s financial audit. Online payment is available on the church website on Jacob’s Ladder’s page.
4. Monthly tuition is to be paid on or before the 1st day of each month. Account balances not paid in full by the 5th of the month will receive a \$10.00 late fee regardless of the balance due. Those accounts that are 15 days overdue must be discussed with the director and the Financial Administrator.
5. Parents who experience difficulty with meeting their tuition payments are encouraged to meet with the Director. We will be glad to work with you. Limited scholarship funds may be available.
6. Should a parent choose to withdraw their child, the balance of that month's tuition will not be refunded. **Two weeks written notice is required for the withdrawal of your child. This allows us to prepare the child for saying**

"goodbye" to his/her friends, as well as to give time to notify children on the wait list of an opening.

7. No tuition refunds or substitution of days will be given for absences, snow days, family vacations, or planned holidays as outlined in the school calendar.
8. Field trips or programs visiting the school may incur a nominal fee.
9. **A complete EMERGENCY AUTHORIZATION AND IMMUNIZATION form must be on file before a child begins preschool.** This is required by the state. A new immunization form is required at the beginning of each school year.
10. **Immunizations must be up-to-date, and the report must be signed and dated by a physician.**
11. In the event of a divorce, we are required to have a copy of the custody order on file.
12. A word about our tuition policy:
 - a. Jacob's Ladder is a non-profit program. Our fees are based on the total cost of providing a high-quality experience for the children. Your tuition has been divided into 9 equal payments, even though the number of actual school days may vary month to month.

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| Pre-K 3 | \$275.00 / month |
| Pre-K 4 | \$290.00 / month |
| Pre-K 5 | \$300 a month |
| Supply fee | \$75.00 per semester |

SNOW DAYS

The Preschool will be closed for snow or severe weather when Williamson County schools are closed. If schools close early because of the weather, the Preschool will do the same. **If Williamson County closes immediately, so does the Preschool. If Williamson County opens one hour late, we will open at 10:00 am with dismissal at 11:55 am. If Williamson County Schools open two hours late, we will be closed.**

Please use your best judgment in any situation. We want everyone to be safe.

There will be no makeup days or refunds for snow days, as we have extra days built into our schedule. However, in the event of more than 5 snow days, Jacob's Ladder will attempt to adjust conference day or reschedule the year-end picnic so as to include these as educational days.

CLOTHING

Please dress your child in comfortable play clothes that they can manage easily. This is very important for restroom breaks. Girls must wear tights or shorts under their dresses. Also, keep in mind that “hands-on” learning sometimes involves making a creative mess: clothing should be easily laundered.

Because the children go outside each day, be sure that the clothing is appropriate for the weather. If the temperature is above freezing, we will go outside. In cold weather, your child will need gloves, a winter hat, and a warm coat. LABEL THESE ITEMS. **Rubber-soled shoes are best for your child’s safety, especially outside. No sandals, flip-flops, jelly shoes, clogs, or cowboy boots. Jewelry is not appropriate as it is sometimes dangerous and may be broken.**

Your child needs a COMPLETE change of clothing, including socks and underwear, to keep at school. Label these items and place them in a large Ziploc bag. As the seasons change and your child grows, please make the appropriate changes in this extra set of clothing.

Should your child bring home wet or soiled clothing, please send replacements the next day. A dependable supply of extra clothing fosters independence and minimizes embarrassment in case of an “accident.”

SHOW AND TELL/SHARE

When requested by the teacher, show-and-tell items will be allowed in the classroom based on the theme for that week. We will keep all “Show and Tell” items in the child’s backpack until sharing time. Please do not allow your child to bring TOY WEAPONS, OFFENSIVE ITEMS, MONEY, EDIBLE ITEMS, OR FRAGILE JEWELRY WHICH MIGHT BE BROKEN.

Remembering to bring a show-and-tell item is your child’s responsibility. We do not allow children to bring toys from home into the classroom at any other time. For the younger child, learning to play cooperatively and to share is a major accomplishment. However, undue concern over protecting a personal item can distract a child from important social achievements. Therefore, if a teacher determines that the item your child brings is causing problems, the item will be removed from the room until you collect it at the end of the day.

SNACKS

Students will bring a snack and a water bottle for themselves daily inside their backpacks.

ALLERGIES

Please advise your teacher as well as the Director of any food allergies. As there are several students with nut allergies, we are a **PEANUT AND TREE NUT-FREE ENVIRONMENT.**

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays may be celebrated at the discretion of the parent in consultation with the teacher on or close to the actual birthday. Summer birthdays will be celebrated in the spring. Preschool will provide a special birthday snack for the entire class in honor of the birthday child.

If your child has a party that does not include all his classmates, invitations may not be handed out at school. Because of their limited social experience, young children do not understand legitimate adult reasons for inviting only a few of the class.

HEALTH PRACTICES

The Preschool requires all children to provide immunization records before admission to the program. Immunizations are to be up-to-date at all times. Children should not be brought to Preschool if they have a severe cold, an undetermined rash or spots, fever of 100 or above, severe headache, upset stomach, diarrhea, or discharge of the eyes, nose, or ears. **Please inform the director if your child has come down with any contagious disease.** We can discreetly alert other parents to watch for symptoms in their child.

Parents should exercise caution and keep their child home if other unusual symptoms occur. Parents will be notified to pick up their children immediately if signs of illness occur during the preschool day.

The Preschool reserves the right to request a written doctor's report when a question of a contagious disease exists or if the child has had surgery, been

hospitalized, or had an extended medical absence. **No provisions can be made for a parent requesting a child's restraint from outside play.**

MEDICATIONS

If the qualifications above are met for a well-child, but medication is still prescribed by your doctor, we will be pleased to assist you. Procedures for administering medications, as outlined by the Department of Human Services, are as follows:

1. The medicine **MUST** be in the original container with the child's name written on it.
2. The parent **MUST** provide a spoon, dropper, etc. so the child will receive the accurate dose.
3. A form that includes the child's name, date and time, name of medicine, and dosage is required before you leave the medicine with us.
4. **NO OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE WILL BE GIVEN.** For example, Tylenol, cough syrup, herbs, etc., cannot be distributed by staff, nor kept by your child in clothing or a backpack.
5. If your child has asthma or an allergy requiring the use of an inhaler or EPI-PEN, we recommend you leave the required medication at the school at all times.

Please be sure to collect your medicine at the end of the day or school year.

DISCIPLINE

Consistency is an important part of our school day. For that reason, we have implemented an "Assertive Discipline" program school-wide. This program consists of lots of positive reinforcement for acceptable behavior and a consistent list of consequences for unacceptable behavior.

Positive reinforcement will be in the form of encouraging words, special privileges, notes to the child, notes home, stickers, etc.

We have two basic rules in our school:

1. **Follow instructions.**
2. **Keep your hands, feet, and objects to yourself.**

We believe that children learn by making choices. If a child has made a "poor choice" of behavior, he/she will be offered the choice of redirecting the behavior or accepting a natural consequence of the poor choice.

Natural consequences might be:

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| 1st time | Five minutes away from the activity |
| 2nd time | Time-out in thinking chair |
| 3rd time | Director's office |
| 4th time | Parent Conference is called |

Learning sometimes requires being allowed to make a mistake. We feel that most problems can be prevented by the use of positive reinforcement and praise for the children. Most behavior difficulties can usually be dealt with in the classroom. We always keep the children's best interests in mind. We will do everything we can to work with you and your child, but if a child becomes harmful to him/herself or to the other children, we will have to permanently dismiss the child.

DISMISSAL POLICY

If a student is unable to exercise sufficient maturity to remain at Jacob's Ladder, it may become necessary to dismiss the child. Examples of indications of insufficient maturity are:

1. Consistent lack of control of urinary/bowel habits
2. Inability to control impulse to hit, bite, push, or injure self or others
3. Consistent exhibition of stress relative to separation anxiety

Staff will consult with parents and work with the child to overcome the signs of immaturity or stress. If the child continues to show persistent signs of stress, a conference will be held with the teacher, parents, and director to determine the child's ability to remain in the program. If it is agreed that the child may benefit from a professional evaluation, we will be glad to recommend a list of qualified professionals.

Sufficient time will be given for a child to make recognizable, acceptable changes in behavior. A second conference will be held to determine the child's progress, and a recommendation may be made for the child to be withdrawn. In no case, will a child be retained as a student who is a danger to him/herself, staff, or other children.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

FIRE: Fire drills will be conducted monthly and documented. In the event of an actual fire, the following procedure will be followed:

1. Children and staff will immediately evacuate the building following the exit chart located in each classroom.
2. Children and staff will initially gather in the picnic shelter. If the picnic shelter is in danger of igniting, children and staff will gather in the north-east corner of the playground.
3. The role will be taken, and parents will be contacted to pick up their children.

TORNADO: Tornado drills will be conducted once per school year and documented. In the event of a tornado, children and staff will gather in the downstairs bathrooms located at the extreme front of the fellowship hall. The Chairperson of the JL Board of Directors will be the initial emergency contact person if phone service to the church is interrupted.

LOCKDOWN: In the event of a threat in the community, all doors of the church will remain locked. Local law enforcement agencies will be notified immediately of any situation specific to Jacob's Ladder or NFUMC. Parents will be contacted as to when children may be safely released.

PARENT HELPERS

Jacob's ladder is a "cooperative preschool", which means we ask for parent participation. The "parent helper" program requires that each family provide an adult representative at the school to help with intake and dismissal at least two (2) days during the school year. A Sign-Up Genius link will be provided to families in the September Director's Newsletter.

Parent helpers will arrive at 8:45 a.m. for intake and 11:45 a.m. for dismissal. Parent helpers will arrive at preschool and park in the church parking lot directly off Ball Park Rd. Parking near the church bus to not hinder the traffic flow of intake and dismissal.

At intake time, meet the staff at the bottom of the stairs leading to the Jacob's Ladder entrance door. Your child, who is a student, will go upstairs to their classroom as soon as a staff member comes down to get him/her before we start in taking the rest of our students.

At intake, the Parent Helper will unbuckle the student from their vehicle and hold their hand to the bottom of the stairs. At dismissal time, the Parent Helper will hold two students' hands, taking each of them to their vehicles, where the student's parent or pick up person will get out of their vehicle to place their child in a car restraint and buckle them in.

Parent Helpers can unbuckle a student out of their car restraint, but cannot buckle any student into their car restraint unless it's the Parent Helper's own child.

Please keep this handbook for future reference. If all participating families follow the same guidelines, we will be able to offer consistent programming and avoid miscommunication.

Jacob's Ladder Cooperative Christian Preschool and Nolensville First United Methodist Church do not discriminate based on race, color, nationality, or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship programs, and other school-administered programs.