

Winfree Preschool Newsletter September 2009



Welcome to school from our great faculty!

Dear Parents,

Welcome to all who are new to Winfree this year and welcome back to returning children and families. It has been wonderful to see you at Parent Orientation and Open House. We are eager to greet your children, to work and play with them each day and to be partners with you in their growth and development.

We hope you are as excited and impressed as we are with our totally renovated new building. It has been an inspiration to witness the generosity and love of the congregation at our church. They truly embody Christ's calling to "let the children come unto me."

Thank you for your cooperation with carpooling. We will make every effort to see that the carpool line moves efficiently to avoid a backup of cars on Rt. 60. Please be patient with us, however, as we teach your little children to come down the hall and to the front door for loading. Each three and four year-old will require a personal escort for a number of weeks until he/she understands the routine. Please leave your carpool number clearly visible as you approach the building and exit as soon as your car is loaded and children have seatbelts fastened. **The Fire Marshall asks that we remind you that the entire area in front of the school is a fire lane. You may not park your car and leave it unattended in the fire lane, for the safety of the entire school.**

It is important that these first years of school for your child are stimulating and happy. Please feel free to discuss any concerns you might have so that we may know your child better and work with him/her more effectively. I especially want to assure families that phone calls to the school office are always welcome. You may call at any time to have me check on your child, especially if he/she had a difficult time separating from you at the carpool line or in the hallway.

All of us at Winfree are glad to have you in our school and we look forward to a wonderful year in 2009-2010.

Sincerely,

Ginny

HOW CHILDREN LEARN

Children learn best by doing. Learning for them requires active exploration, thinking and experimenting to see how things work. Children do this by using all their senses (touching, tasting, listening, smelling and looking). As children use real materials, they learn about the physical properties of things in their world. They also notice the relationship between things, the names for things, and the size, shape, color and texture of them.

When children begin to use one object to stand for another (like a block as a truck), this is the important beginning of symbolic thinking. As children grow, they are more able to use abstract symbols like words to describe their thoughts and feelings. As children become more accustomed to symbols, they will be able to “read” symbols like the McDonald’s arch and the Cheerios box top. True reading will come later. Play provides the foundation for early symbolic thinking.

Children also learn from interactions with adults and peers. The social component of learning has been researched thoroughly. In playing with important adults and friends, children build language, solve problems, negotiate, develop confidence and extend their thinking.

You have chosen a school that values active exploration, discovery and play. We carefully plan the environment and activities to support your child’s learning. We hope you will be participants in the school so you can join the excitement of the education of young children!

WELCOME RETURNING TEACHERS!

Welcome back to returning faculty: **Lacey Tadlock, Karen Florence, Peggy Browder, Laurie Lewis, Erin Tucker, Pamela Hamilton, Elizabeth Harpe, Kim Tyler, Billie Tubbs, Cheryl Schneider, Linda Diamond, Kitty DeWeese, Heather Dean, Pam Glass, Suzi Burton and Marcie Holzbach.** These teachers are the heart and soul of our preschool and they are the reason Winfree holds such a fine reputation. In a letter received from Dr. Peggy Meara, superintendent of Powhatan Public Schools and a past Winfree parent, she wrote of our teachers, “Because of your efforts Winfree has got to be the best preschool in the state.” I wholeheartedly agree, and you will too.

AND A PROUD GREETING TO JANA BENJAMIN

A wonderful new teacher is joining our faculty this fall. We are delighted to welcome Jana Benjamin as the lead teacher in the two year-old classes. Jana is the senior pastor’s wife and holds a BA from Baylor University and a M.Div. from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. In addition, Jana is currently taking courses in Early Childhood Education. She and her husband, David, have two children. Jana is excited to join the wonderful preschool ministry of Winfree Church, and to support children and families with the very best care and education. Please greet Jana enthusiastically as we support her career as a Winfree early childhood professional.

IMPORTANT DATES

September 8	Parent Orientation, 7 PM
September 11	Open House, see individual class schedules
September 14	School Begins, Extended Care available all day
September 14 – 25	Cookie Dough Sale, orders due no later than 9/25.
September 18	Substitute Training , 9:30 AM
September 23, 24	Volunteer Training for parents of 3's, 4's and 5's, 9:30 AM
September 30	Time Out For Moms
October 5, 6	School Pictures for 3, 4 and 5 year-old classes
October 5	Parent Meeting, 9:30 AM Coffee, 10:00 AM program, "Raising Your Child's I.Q.: What Brain Research Tells Us"
October 13	Betsy "Q" performing at 11:00 and 1:15
October 15	Cookie Dough Delivery Day. All cookie dough MUST be picked up!
October 15, 16	Parent Conferences for 3, 4, and 5 year-old children No school for these classes, childcare provided, Extended Care still offered. (Toddlers and 2's conferences are held later in the year.)
October 23	PACED Teacher Conference, No School

ANNOUNCING LUCKY LUNCH BUNCH TO BEGIN IN OCTOBER

Once again Lucky Lunch will be offered for 3, 4, and 5 year-old children who attend morning classes. This year we are asking that **only children who are completely potty trained be enrolled**. Lucky Lunch is offered on Tuesdays and Wednesdays beginning in October. Your child may be signed up to stay an extra hour once a week to eat a lunch packed from home with his/her friends and some of Winfree's fine staff. We have limited spaces available in this popular program. Children really love coming to school with their lunch box, and this provides needed experience in a longer school day and in lunch skills. Stop by the school office during the week of September 22 to sign your child up. Children may be enrolled for the entire month at a cost of \$35.00. Get a terrific lunch box and allow your child to experience a preview of the "big kid" lunch scene while you enjoy an extra hour for errands.

TRANSITIONING YOUNG CHILDREN BACK TO SCHOOL

Transitioning from the carefree days of summer to school routines and schedules in the fall is difficult in the best of situations, but can be especially problematic and stressful to a young child entering a new nursery school. Here are some tips to make a smoother transition for your child:

1. Know your child's pattern of adjusting to new situations. If your child has had difficulty separating in the past, take some extra steps to ease him/her into school.
2. Visit Winfree on Open House and show your child where his/her cubby is, and where everything is in the classroom and on the playground. Make this visit as relaxed as possible. Try not to rush.
3. If you plan to use a carpool, gather the children and parents together ahead of time for lunch or refreshments to make plans. Allow the children to play and become familiar and to be able to recognize the other parents who will drive.
4. Invite a classmate over for a "play date."
5. Once school begins, help your child prepare the night before to avoid rushing in the morning. Set out clothes, check the tote bag, select a snack, and refer to your class calendar to see if something special needs to be sent to school.
6. Talk about school with your child in positive tones and listen to your child. Many children are not ready to talk about their day as soon as they return. You may have a better response asking about the day at dinnertime. Avoid asking school related questions at bedtime if your child seems to become anxious at night.
7. Call the school to talk to Ginny or your child's teacher for suggestions if separation continues to be difficult beyond the first weeks.

“RAISING YOUR CHILD’S I.Q. ” TO BE THE TOPIC AT OUR FIRST PARENT MEETING

Please plan to join us for our first Parent Meeting Monday, October 5 at 9:30 AM as we hear Ginny Brenner present a wonderful seminar on how to support and maximize your child’s brain development during the critical first years of life. This presentation is guaranteed to both amuse and help you and your child(ren) immediately. Also at the parent meeting, you will have time to browse among many parent vendors for great Christmas gift ideas. Coffee and shopping will begin at 9:30, and the seminar will begin at 10:00. Child-care will be available. Call the school office to reserve a place for your child (794-1388). There is still room for a few more vendors as well, so call the school office if you would like a table.

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer training will be held on September 23 and 24. If you are interested in being a more active part of our program, we welcome you to attend either training session. If you are willing to help the school, but unable to attend the meeting, simply notify your child’s teacher or call the school office (794-1388) for volunteer opportunities and information. There are many ways to participate. Some parents become regularly scheduled classroom volunteers. Others prepare art materials, assist with cooking projects, sew, read to children, take dictation for children’s book creations, or spread playground mulch. Technical assistance is also needed to maintain classroom and office computers. Volunteers who assist in classrooms while children are in attendance are required to sign a sworn disclosure statement, and are not permitted to supervise children alone.

EXTENDED CARE OFFERS FLEXIBILITY TO FAMILIES

Winfree Preschool’s outstanding Extended Care program is a popular benefit to busy families. Three, four and five year-old children may attend with their packed lunch from 8:00 AM until 6:00 PM for a cost of only \$25.00, or for afternoon classes, Extended Care is available from 4:00 to 6:00 for \$14.00. Children may be enrolled before school only (\$7.00), one or more days each week, or on a drop in basis. **If you need care on a day your child is not normally attending school, we may have available space from 12:30 until 6:00.** To sign your child up, simply call the school office (794-1388) or stop by. We are certain that you and your child will enjoy Extended Care!

COOKIE DOUGH SALE YIELDS GREAT BENEFITS FOR OUR SCHOOL

Please consider supporting the school through the purchase of delicious cookie dough. Our sale will last from September 14 – 25. Collect your orders and bring your forms to the school no later than September 25. Frozen cookie dough will be delivered to the school on October 15. It is urgent that all cookie dough be picked up that morning while it is still cold. Money may be collected and returned to Winfree by October 29. This year profits from the sale will be spent on renovations to the playground and deck.

TIME OUT FOR MOM BEGINS SEPTEMBER 30

Time Out for Mom starts September 30 at 9:30 am in the Connections Room (Rainy Day Room) of the Preschool Building. Join us for a cup of coffee and scones as we discuss Discipline Measures That Work. Bring a friend as we relax and discuss issues that we all deal with every day. Free childcare is available by reservation. Call now to reserve your child's space (794-5031).

SCHOOL SECURITY

The safety of children while at preschool is of the highest concern. In order to guarantee the safety of children and staff, several security measures and policies are in place. The building will be locked from the outside during school hours. The front door is only unlocked during arrival and dismissal times. To enter the building, push the call button to the left of the door. The office staff will buzz you in after you have identified yourself. If you are volunteering or will remain in the building for more than a few minutes, please obtain a visitors name tag from the school office to wear as identification. Children are under sight and sound supervision at all times. Each staff member has had a criminal records clearance as well as a department of social services central registry (child abuse) check. Hallways are monitored with cameras and children will only be released to adults who show photograph identification and have been authorized in writing by parents or guardians.

TIPS FOR EASING SEPARATION ANXIETY

Nothing jerks the tears more than seeing our little sweeties melting down as we leave them with the babysitter, Sunday school, preschool, etc. Here's the problem: If we let our own anxiety and sadness show, our kids will pick up on it and have a much harder time adjusting to separations.

Listed below are some quick tips for easing your child's separation anxiety...and yours:

- Prior to and during separation transitions, be very business-like in your tone and general demeanor. Kids take their emotional cues from the important adults in their lives.
- Talk as little as possible. Trying too hard to reassure your child will actually elevate their fear.
- Make the transitions as quick as possible. When you leave your child, leave quickly. This is even more important if your child appears to be getting upset.
- Ask the adults you are leaving your child with how long it typically takes for them to calm down once you are gone. In most cases, it takes just a couple minutes or so.
- Enjoy your kids as much as possible when they are with you. Kids who feel secure relationships with their parents tend to experience less anxiety when they separate.

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