

Noah's Ark Preschool Parent Handbook 2021 – 2022



A Ministry of First Presbyterian Church
4300 Main Street
Vancouver, WA 98663
(360) 694-9016

www.noahsarkprograms.org

Facebook: [@NoahsArkPreschoolVancouver](https://www.facebook.com/NoahsArkPreschoolVancouver)

Contents

Mission Statement.....	2
Admission Requirements.....	2
Enrollment After the School Year Begins.....	2
Withdrawal Policy.....	2
Promptness/Late Policy.....	2
Tuition/Billing Policy.....	3
Health Policy.....	4
Medications.....	4
COVID-19 Symptom Screening Flowchart.....	5
Emergency Closure/Snow Policy.....	5
Safety Precautions.....	5
Parent Participation.....	6
Redirection/Positive Discipline.....	7
Field Trips.....	7
Preschool Committees.....	8
Fundraising and Plant Sale.....	8
Snacks and Snack Preparation.....	9
Birthday Celebrations.....	9
Clothing.....	9
Child’s Possessions.....	9
Memory Books.....	9
Parent Communication.....	10
COVID-19 Protocol and Practices.....	10
Preschool Staff.....	11

MISSION STATEMENT

We are a Christian based preschool that blends skill-building and play, to foster student's growth and love of learning. Our curriculum includes literacy, math, science, art, music, movement, play, and an emphasis on God's love for all people as unique and beloved creations.

We believe that by providing a stimulating, loving, and secure environment children will learn and grow emotionally, intellectually, physically, and socially. We are dedicated to creating a warm, Christian atmosphere that nurtures and provides for unpressured learning through play and varied classroom and community experiences.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Noah's Ark Preschool is a ministry of First Presbyterian Church and is nondiscriminatory, ever striving for greater inclusivity in accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), which states:

"The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church's membership. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction. There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person." (Book of Order, F-1.0403)

- Age: Child must be three by August 31st to participate in the 3–4-year class, four by August 31st to participate in the 4–5-year class. To be eligible for the pre-K class, the child must be 5 by December 31st. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis as determined by the Director and the Christian Education Ministry.
- Child must be toilet trained by the start of school. Please call if you are in the process of training and have questions.
- Registration form submitted with an \$85 non-refundable registration fee.
- Enrollment materials completed and submitted.
- Parent participation as described in the handbook.

ENROLLMENT AFTER THE SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS

Those families enrolling after the school year has begun pay a prorated amount of tuition. The amount will be based on a nine-month rate of tuition payments, and the number of months the child has been enrolled.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

We understand situations may arise which necessitate withdrawing your child from our program. To receive a partial month tuition credit, a two-week notice must be given to the director. Failure to provide a two-week notice will result in forfeiture of the tuition credit and a full month's tuition must be paid.

PROMPTNESS / LATE POLICY

Occasionally parents will arrive late to pick up their child. This can be very upsetting to the child. It also makes it difficult for the staff as we transition classrooms. If you choose to run errands or cross the bridge during preschool, please allow extra time for traffic. If you will be late, please contact the director so arrangements can be made for your child. If you are not prompt in picking up your child, we will assess a late fee at the rate of \$15 for each 15 minutes, or portion thereof.

2021-2022 TUITION / BILLING POLICY

As a ministry of First Presbyterian Church, we are fortunate to be able to keep our tuition costs reasonable while at the same time offering a wide range of activities and special events. Our tuition is used to meet payroll and expenses. We are able to supplement our budget and provide the extras which make our program special through our fundraisers.

Tuition is due by the 15th of the month, according to the payment plan you have selected. If no plan is selected, the 9-month plan will be assigned. All payments may be made through the Brightwheel application, and you may opt for the convenience of autopay through this system as well. You may view payments made, statements, and year-end tuition paid tax documents through your account on Brightwheel. Please speak with the director if you have questions or need to use an alternate payment plan.

Two Days per Week Payment Options

10 monthly payments of \$161.00 payable in August through May.

9 monthly payments of \$178.88 payable September through May.

Four quarterly payments of \$402.50 payable in August, November, January, and April.

Two biannual payments of \$805.00 payable in August and January.

One annual payment of \$1,610.00 payable in August.

Three Days per Week Payment Options

10 monthly payments of \$212.00 payable in August through May.

9 monthly payments of \$235.55 payable September through May.

Four quarterly payments of \$530.00 payable in August, November, January, and April.

Two biannual payments of \$1,060.00 payable in August and January.

One annual payment of \$2,120.00 payable in August.

Four-Day, Pre-K Payment Options

10 monthly payments of \$257.00 payable in August through May.

9 monthly payments of \$285.55 payable September through May.

Four quarterly payments of \$642.50 payable August, November, January, and April.

Two biannual payments of \$1,285.00 payable in August and January.

One annual payment of \$2,570.00 payable in August.

A \$25 fee will be charged for any returned check. This amount may change should the bank charge more for returned checks.

A 15% discount is offered on the second child in the program at the same time.

Tuition payments do not change if a child is absent due to illness or vacation, or in the event of closures due to snow days or other emergencies.

After two months of non-payment, you will be asked to leave our program. If you should encounter difficulty with your tuition payment, please let the director know as soon as possible. We will do our best to work out a mutually agreeable solution.

HEALTH POLICY

We are dedicated to the health, safety, and wellbeing of all students, families, and staff at Noah's Ark Preschool. As stewards of community health, it is our intention to employ best practices as advised by the CDC, the Washington Department of Health and Clark County Public Health, to mitigate the risk of Covid-19 and other infectious diseases. Our protocol will adhere to the guidelines set forth by these health agencies and will adapt as necessary to changing conditions.

Before entering school, students should have had immunizations for DTaP, MMR, Polio, Varicella (Chickenpox), Hib and HB. The school requires a statement that the proper immunizations have been given and that the child is in good health and is able to participate in group activities. Medical exemptions and delayed vaccine schedules will be considered on a case-by-case basis and require physician-approved documentation.

All students are required to wear masks while on campus and to adhere to COVID-19 precautions as outlined in this handbook (page 10). Parents and caregivers are required to wear masks indoors and encouraged to wear masks while on campus. Until otherwise indicated by the CDC and local health department, parents must attest at daily drop-off to the health of their student(s).

Parents are expected to keep ill children at home and are asked to inform the school if the child will be absent. Please be considerate of other children and staff and keep your child home if you suspect they may be ill. If a child displays any of the following symptoms, they must be kept home:

- Temperature of 100⁰ or above
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Cold symptoms, including congestion or runny nose (unless medically verified as allergies)
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Skin rash of unknown origin (until diagnosed by a doctor as non-contagious)
- Continuous cough or pain to degree that prevents normal play
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye) in which a medication was needed based on the advice of a doctor; then the child needs to remain out of school for at least 24 hours after the medication is started and eyes are no longer crusted or oozing.
- Children with head lice or any nits remaining in their hair

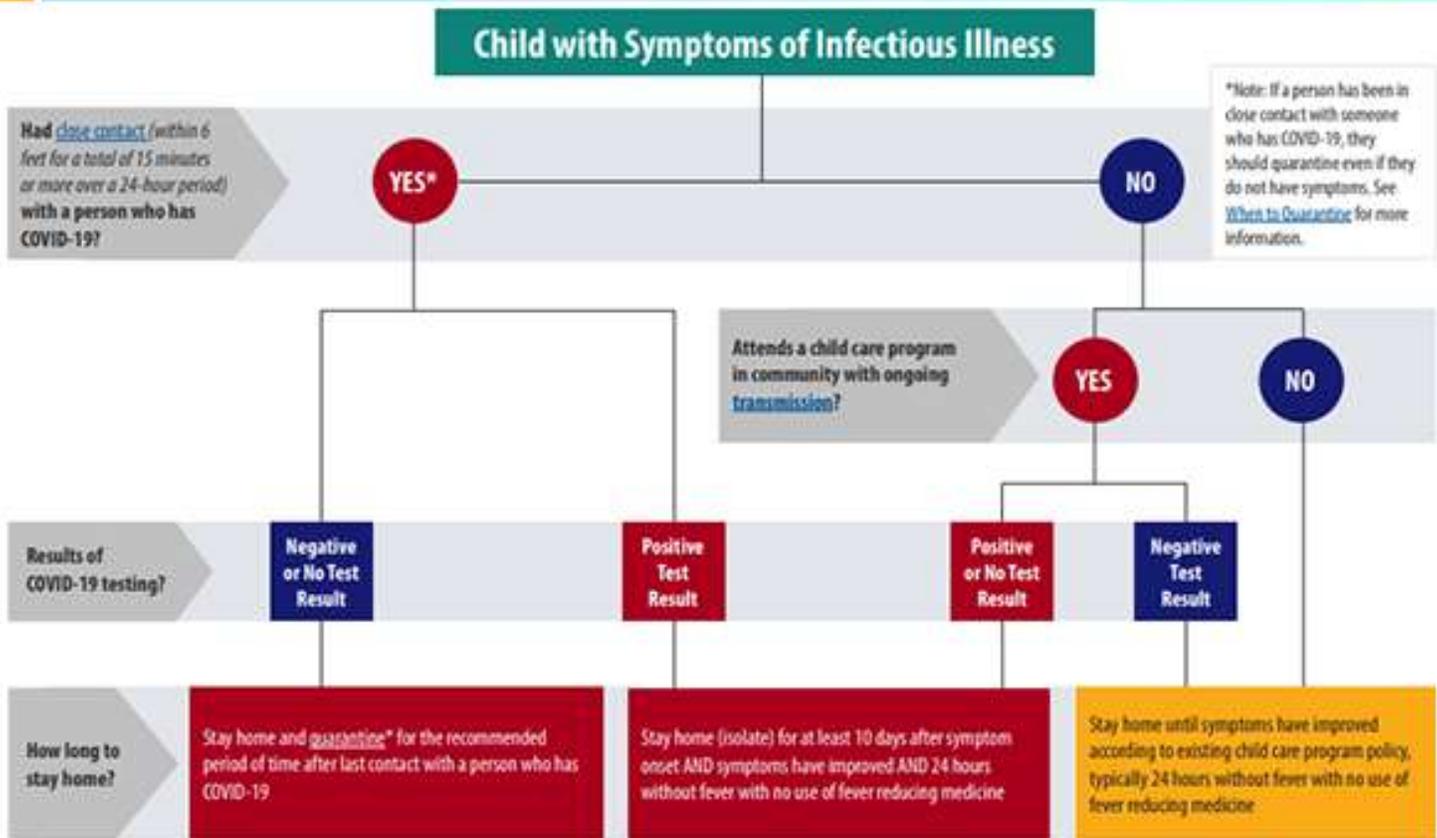
Please notify the director immediately if your child has been exposed to any communicable disease or if your family has been diagnosed with or exposed to someone diagnosed with COVID-19. Also, please notify the director immediately if your child has contracted chicken pox, Fifth's disease, or lice so we may notify other parents.

For illness that is determined to be non-COVID illness, your child must be symptom free without medication for a minimum of 24 hours prior to returning to school if they have had a fever, diarrhea, or vomiting. For any child who tests positive for COVID-19, has had close contact with someone who has COVID-19, or who is suspected of having COVID-19, please confer with your physician and/or the local health department and report this immediately to the school. Please see the flowchart on the following page for reference.

MEDICATIONS

No teacher will be required to dispense medicine of any kind to a student. Parents are welcome to come into the classroom to give medicine to their children. First Aid will be given as needed and 911 will be called in case of emergency.

COVID-19 CHILD CARE PROGRAM SYMPTOM SCREENING FLOWCHART



EMERGENCY CLOSURE / SNOW POLICY

For your safety and the safety of our staff, we will close due to extreme weather conditions. If the VANCOUVER SCHOOL DISTRICT IS CLOSED, or we feel that the conditions around the school are unsafe, our preschool will be closed.

If the Vancouver School District has weather related delayed start or no morning kindergarten, we will not have morning classes.

School closures are broadcast on most major television and radio stations.

You may also check our website at www.noahsarkprograms.org for closure information. The Vancouver School District also posts closures on their website (<http://vansd.org>).

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Parents must bring their child to the class entry door each day and attest to their student's health that day using the Brightwheel app. At the end of the day, children will be released to the parent(s) or designated caregiver by the teacher or assistant.

If someone else will be picking up your child, a note giving permission for the child to be released to that individual must be signed by the parent and presented to the teacher at the beginning

of class. If the person picking up your child is not known to the staff, the person should be prepared to present a valid form of identification for verification purposes.

Your cooperation in following these precautions will help us provide for the safety of your child.

PARENT PARTICIPATION IN THE CLASSROOM

This has been temporarily suspended due to local health advice. We want you to have this information, though, if we can reinstate this beloved practice during this school year.

Parents are a very important part of our program at Noah's Ark Preschool.

Why do we have parent involvement?

1. You have the opportunity to observe your child in the preschool situation. You will have a chance to become familiar with our preschool routine and get to know your child's classmates. It is a great opportunity to meet and get to know the other parents.
2. The parent, along with the teacher and assistant, gives us a class ratio of 1 adult to 4-5 children. By maintaining this class ratio, we are able to offer your child more learning experiences. This greatly improves the quality of our program.
3. Regular parent help in the classroom means we need only one paid assistant per class which helps keep tuition costs down.

We ask our parents to work in the classroom one day per month. If you are not able to come in due to a change in your schedule, you are responsible for finding a qualified replacement. Other arrangements need to be made for siblings as we ask that they not join you on your parent-help day.

Bring a healthy store-bought snack on your scheduled day. We will have a list of suggestions for healthy snacks in the kitchen. Please remember when you shop for snacks that, due to some of the children having allergies, we have a policy of not allowing foods that contain nuts, peanut butter, or coconut to be used. In some of the classrooms there may be two parent helpers for a day, so you may share this responsibility with the other parent working that day— please check the parent sign-up calendar.

During your day, you may be asked to help with any of the following activities:

- **Circle Time**
Sit with restless children and model attentive listening. The teacher may have craft items that need to be prepared.
- **Learning Centers / Free Choice**
The teacher will direct you to an area to supervise. You may be in the bounce room, at a learning center, craft table or amid the children.
- **Snack Time**
Assist children as they pour their own juice. Adults are encouraged to sit with children. You may sit at the table where your child is sitting, but parents need to sit at different tables. Healthy habits and socialization are the keys here. Conversations can be delightful so be sure to participate. Clean up snack dishes when all children are done.
- **Outside / Large Motor**
Supervise an area outside (trikes, slide, and sand). Help put bikes and toys away at clean up time.

To help make your parent help-day run smoothly, please observe the following guidelines:

- Dress appropriately for child's play! We like to use lots of paint, glue, and glitter.
- When speaking with a child, get down to their eye level.
- Space yourself away from the classroom teacher and be amid the children.
- Help the child write their name. If they are not ready to write, please spell their name out loud as you write the letters. This shows by example that the spoken word becomes the written word – a key concept in literacy development.
- **NEVER** be alone with a child.
- Assist with daily cleanup tasks.
- Respect the dignity and self-worth of all students.
- Maintain confidentiality – please do not communicate progress or concerns about students with anyone other than the teacher or director.
- Do not engage in discriminatory practices based on a student's race, sex, cultural background, religion, or ability.
- Serve as a positive role model.
- Be prompt and dependable.
- **Most importantly, SMILE AND HAVE FUN!**

REDIRECTION / POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

The process of redirection is to point a child toward what they CAN do. This method entails STOPPING the undesirable behavior and DIRECTING the child to an ALTERNATE approach or activity. We want children to feel comfortable and learn what is appropriate *to do* instead of what *not to do*. Some examples:

"Don't throw the blocks"	translates into	"Blocks are to build with"
"Don't touch"		"Eyes only, please"
"Don't stand on the table"		"We keep our feet on the floor"
"Don't run"		"Please use walking feet"
"No yelling"		"Please use inside voices"
"Quit pushing"		"Use your words"

We never single out or humiliate any child. Instead, we give children the tools necessary to solve their own challenges. We work closely with parents to discover ways of helping children when they become frustrated. Most of all, our love and cooperative concern will surely provide the best guidance for our children.

Because we respect each child as an individual – even when he/she displays inappropriate behavior – physical punishment, verbal abuse, and humiliation are never permitted. We always try to avoid children's misbehavior by redirecting, encouraging, and reinforcing children's appropriate behavior.

If you, as a parent, have a happy and relaxed attitude regarding preschool, your child is apt to feel likewise. When a problem, question, criticism, or suggestion comes up, please communicate it to the teacher or director.

FIELD TRIPS

Parents chaperone and drive for all field trips. In most cases siblings are welcome. Please remember that on field trips we are all representing Noah's Ark Preschool. We ask our parents to help the children remember to use good manners and be on their best behavior.

PRESCHOOL COMMITTEES

Some committees have been temporarily suspended due to health advice (suspended committees are indicated with an *). Again, we want you to have this information if we can reinstate these past practices.

We ask our parents to participate on one parent committee or on one special project each school year. These vary by class and according to needs.

Auction

This person helps with the annual youth and children's auction. In addition to coordinating a class contribution, this person will be asked to assist with the overall planning of the auction. You may assist with decorating, inventory, procurement, set-up, working the night of the auction, or be asked to help in other areas.

***Classroom Coordinator**

This parent helps with the parent help calendar to be sure we have a parent helper scheduled each day. Make copies of the monthly calendar for each parent.

***Clean-up Committee**

Assist the Preschool staff in a twice-yearly toy cleaning to disinfect and sort toys and equipment to maintain a safe and fun environment for the children. Your efforts will be joined with the efforts of parents from the other classes.

***Fall Harvest Carnival**

This person helps with our annual Fall Harvest Carnival. You will be asked to help decorate the evening before and work on the night of the event.

Laundry

Weekly washing of towels used during class.

Memory Book Assembly

Give reminders to parents along with class list as their event approaches. Collect the pages from the parents as each event is completed. Check that a page has been made for each student, the teacher, and the assistant. Assemble the pages into a completed book for each student at the end of the year.

Prep Helper

This parent helps the teacher by cutting out supplies for upcoming projects, making copies, and other tasks. This person helps the teacher as needed throughout the year.

FUNDRAISING & PLANT SALE

Our plant sale has grown each year! This is our major fundraiser of the year. Our expectation is that all families will participate in the plant sale by collecting orders and then helping on delivery day. The proceeds from this fundraiser allow us to provide program enhancements for the classroom and enable us to provide all the "extras" that make our program special. Additional fundraising activities are held throughout the year and families are encouraged to participate. The December poinsettia sale allows us to do some tuition assistance. The annual Youth and Children's Auction also greatly helps our school programs, while being a fun evening of activity. We rely on your participation to make these fundraisers successful.

SNACKS AND SNACK PREPARATION

First Presbyterian Church has a certified kitchen that is checked by the Health Department. To adhere with Health Department policies, we cannot have homemade baked goods as part of our snack for preschool. Snacks and any special treats will need to be store bought.

While we are unable to have parent helpers, we are asking parents to donate 2-4 store-bought, healthy, nut-free snack items monthly (e.g., boxes of crackers, bags of apples, etc.) OR pay a monthly snack fee (\$8 for 2-day classes; \$10 for 3-day classes; and \$12 for 4-day classes).

Due to allergies of certain children, please do not bring any item that contains **any** nuts, peanut butter, or coconut. Also, because of the life-threatening sensitivities to nut oils for some of these children, the entire school is a no-nut zone. Please do not have these foods enter the building with you or your children. Thank you for your cooperation, as we really want this to be safe environment for everyone.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

We realize that birthdays are special days. If you would like to bring a special snack to share with the classmates, please talk with your child's teacher. And remember that all snacks (such as cupcakes, etc.) should be purchased at a store rather than be homemade.

We provide a birthday crown, singing with candles for the child to make a wish, and a small treat bag. Because we want parents to see their child "serenaded" and we can't have parents inside, we will plan to do our wooden cake tradition at the entry door for your child's class.

When inviting children to birthday celebrations or other events, please do your best to be discreet so that students who are not invited don't get hurt feelings. Thank you for your cooperation on this issue.

CLOTHING

We recommend that simple, durable, washable clothes be worn to school. Pants and shorts with elastic are easiest for children when using the bathroom. You may bring a change of clothing to be kept at the school. If you do, please mark the clothes with your child's name. Children should be brought to school with clothing appropriate for the weather. Layering clothing for easy removal is best.

It is important to a child's health to spend time outdoors to receive fresh air and provide for large motor activities. Please remember to send a jacket as determined by the weather since we try to go outdoors every day. **Please mark your child's name in all jackets and coats.**

Shoes should be simple for the children to take off and put on.

CHILD'S POSSESSIONS

Sometimes children like to bring a special item to school to show their friends or teacher. There is comfort in having something of their own at school. However, it is difficult for us to recognize each child's personal property, so we ask that the article from home be placed in the child's box until their share time or it is time to go home.

MEMORY BOOKS

A memory book is made for each child, and you will be responsible to produce a page of that event for each child, the teacher, and the assistant. Unlike in past years, the teacher, assistant and/or director will provide you with the pictures for the page that you'll design and create.

The paper for the books is provided by the preschool and is kept in the preschool office. Please ask your teacher, assistant, or the director for the color you want.

When your event is complete, and you have made your pages – turn them over to the Memory Book Committee person who will put all the pages together using a binder (also provided by the preschool). The books will be presented to the students at the end of the year.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Communication between staff and parents is always important, particularly as we collectively adapt to ongoing pandemic conditions and considerations. We will communicate via email, Brightwheel, and, occasionally, through printed materials sent home with students. Information is also posted on our website at www.noahsarkprograms.org and on our Facebook page ([@NoahsArkPreschoolVancouver](https://www.facebook.com/NoahsArkPreschoolVancouver))

Please ensure that your contact information (especially email addresses and cell phone numbers) is up to date, and please make sure to check email, Brightwheel and your child's backpack regularly. Also, we hope you feel welcome, always, to contact us if you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions. Your input is essential to and valued by all of us.

Noah's Ark staff are committed to be as informative and transparent as possible about all school policies, practices, and events. We will also respect confidentiality and adhere to confidentiality laws and guidelines.

2021-2022 COVID-19 PROTOCOL AND PRACTICES

Just as we remain committed to our students' growth, happiness, safety, and success, we are also dedicated to the health and safety of our community. We are implementing some practices which will afford our students the opportunity to learn, play, and form friendships, while also protecting everyone as much as we are able. Our plans are directly informed and/or required by the CDC, the Washington Department of Health, Vancouver Public Schools, and First Presbyterian Church leadership. Our Noah's Ark community includes individuals who are immunocompromised and/or medically fragile, and in loving our neighbors as ourselves, we recognize the importance of helping protect each other and our community.

For your planning, please be aware of the following:

- All students and staff will be required to wear masks on campus; parents must also wear masks if entering the building. We know that many people have strong and varied feelings about this, but this practice is mandated for childcare facilities and schools. Like any learning process, we will lovingly help students adapt.
- Student check-in and pickup will occur outside of the building at separate doors according to classroom. We will continue our staggered start and finish times, and though we will discontinue temperature checks at the door, we will still require daily health attestations.
- We will temporarily cease parent volunteerism in classes until local health officials deem this beloved practice may be safely reinstated. To provide daily snacks for students, we will offer parents the choice between donating snacks or paying a monthly snack fee.
- We will continue with increased cleaning and sanitization in classrooms and throughout the building. We will encourage regular handwashing and provide hand sanitizer for students and staff throughout the day.
- We have reduced class sizes, to allow for physical distancing to the greatest extent possible. If class size prevents six feet of distancing during snack time, when students will not be wearing masks, we will use the Fireside Room. We will provide students with their own individual supplies.
- **CDC guidelines require even greater vigilance in keeping students home, out of school, if they have any symptoms of Covid-19. We appreciate your consideration of and partnership in keeping everyone on campus, including immunocompromised individuals, as safe as possible.**

All of us at Noah's Ark are truly grateful that you have entrusted us with the care and education of your child. We appreciate your consideration and adoption of the practices contain in this handbook and your help in making this a wonderful year at Noah's Ark Preschool! If you have any questions, please contact us at 360-694-9016 or director@noahsarkprograms.org. Thank you!

2021-2022 Noah's Ark Preschool Staff

Penguin Pals, Playful Pandas.....Lisette Grasher, Teacher
Jeannette Dwight, Assistant (Mon-Thurs)
Jenny Salado, Assistant (Fri)

Busy Bees.....Haley Pearson, Teacher
Jenny Salado, Assistant

Dandy Dolphins.....Erica Nemnich, Teacher
Michelle Andre, Assistant

Director.....Sarah Collmer



Noah's Ark Programs
First Presbyterian Church
4300 Main Street, Vancouver, WA 98663
360-694-9016
www.noahsarkprograms.org

