

*Dear parents,*

*Thank you for your interest in Covenant Preschool Co-op! We hope that the information in this packet will help you learn about our program and to decide if it is the right place for your child and family. If after reading this packet you are interested in applying or have any questions, please e-mail [preschool@covenantchicago.org](mailto:preschool@covenantchicago.org) to set up an observational visit.*

*Applications cannot be processed until after an observational visit, but we have included one here so you have it available to you.*

*Thank you!*

*Covenant Preschool Co-op Board*



*“Covenant Preschool Co-op was influential not just in the physical and cognitive development of our children, but in helping our family to develop a culture in our home that has lasted long beyond the years our children were in the program. The Montessori “prepared environment” along with the special attention from Christian teachers with years of experience as parents, educators, and spiritual mentors combine to create a special place for children and families that will shape hearts, minds, and home.”*

- Amy Hodges, former preschool parent

# Covenant Preschool Co-op History, Philosophy, & Teachers

## Our History:

Covenant Preschool Co-op began in 2006 after conversations in a Bible study at the church indicated a need for a Christian early childhood environment. Janis Smith, with previous teaching experience and available classroom materials, proposed to the pastors a pilot preschool program. The purposes were to provide a reformed Christian preschool with Montessori elements that would serve church members/attenders and those of like-minded churches, and to serve as a place for conversations on Christian education in the city. As a cooperative, parents would serve in the classroom to gain experience by observing this method of teaching, and would assist with other tasks/projects for the benefit of the students and to lighten the load on the teacher(s). The preschool, started with those initial families, has continued to faithfully minister to children and their families to the present day. Graduates from the preschool are thriving at various day-schools throughout the city and in home-school environments.

## Our Philosophy:

The primary driving philosophy of the preschool is to have a thoroughly Christian environment, influenced by a Montessori-style curriculum. A Christian worldview is presented in all things, as children learn about God as creator of the natural world, through daily Bible stories, and interpersonal interactions that reflect a belief that each is an individual made in the image of God. The children work with materials as demonstrated by the teacher, moving along the various levels as they show interest or aptitude. (A reference to learn more of the materials and “work” used in the classroom would be David Gettman's *Basic Montessori: Learning Activities or Under-Fives*). The Montessori curriculum places an emphasis on children's independence, while in a safe and peaceful environment. Our Montessori program is unique in that we believe that parents are the first and best teachers of their children, and therefore we use Parent-Teacher Fellowships and the classroom to train/assist parents and allow them to borrow classroom materials for home use with their own children.

## Our Teachers

**Janis Smith:** Janis has been the lead teacher since the preschool's founding, and supplied the vision and materials for the school. Her Montessori experience began with leading Children's Worship based on a curriculum influenced by Maria Montessori. Since then she has pursued additional Montessori training and continues to learn the methodology. She has been a kindergarten teacher, influential in founding Covenant Christian Academy, and has experience home-schooling her own children and a few others along the way. She has been a tutor for Classical Conversations (a classical education, Christian home-school group), and teaches phonics instruction as well. She enjoys being out in God's creation, and can often be found at the Morton Arboretum, and in her own garden when she finds the time.

**Kathy McAuley:** Kathy was an education major in college and currently holds an Illinois Teaching Certificate for grades K-9. She also holds initial certification in the Program of Education in Therapy for Dyslexia with the 32<sup>nd</sup> Masonic Orton-Gillingham Training Course and is a member of ALTA (Academic Language Therapy Association). She spent many years home-schooling her own children and currently tutors children with dyslexia at the Children's Dyslexia Center of Metropolitan Chicago. She began work with the co-op as an occasional substitute for Janis, eventually coming on as a weekly assistant teacher in the classroom.

## Covenant Preschool Co-op FAQ's

### **What are the days and hours of the preschool? Where does it meet?**

The preschool meets in the Education Building of Covenant Presbyterian Church (2012 W. Dickens Ave); when weather cooperates, children also spend time outdoors. Classes are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30-12:15pm. When there are sufficient students ready for phonics instruction, an additional program is offered (usually before class) with an extra fee for participating students.

Parents/caregivers are required to stay on-site of church property while their children are in class (this is due to Chicago building codes and our site not qualifying as a day care). Parents with younger children have access to the toddler nursery during this time. There are also designated places where parents needing to work or home-school older children can go. Parents have the option to be offsite about once a month. There is access to the church wi-fi network available.

### **What is the tuition? Are there other costs?**

Tuition for 2017-2018 is \$450/semester, with a one-time \$50 non-refundable application fee and a \$50 yearly materials fee. Siblings will receive a 10% discount off the additional child(ren)'s tuition.

### **What ages are accepted? What is the class size?**

The pre-school accepts children ages 3-5, with three year old birthdays falling on September 1st or earlier. For those younger than 3, applications are considered on a case-by-case basis at the board's discretion upon consultation with the teachers. The maximum number of students for the program is 12.

### **What is the parent involvement?**

As a cooperative, parent involvement is expected. Parents assist in the classroom on a rotational basis, usually once a month, and also participate in classroom upkeep and maintenance. There are Parent-Teacher Fellowships two to three times per year, which encourage community between families and teachers and serve as a way to learn more about the classroom environment.

### **What is the application process?**

The first stage in the application process is to schedule a time for a classroom observation. These generally take place from 9:30-10:40am, and are for parents or caregivers only. You can e-mail [preschool@covenantchicago.org](mailto:preschool@covenantchicago.org) or talk with one of the teachers to arrange a time to do this. After an observational visit, a completed application is due along with the \$50 application fee. You are encouraged to ask questions of the teachers, parents, or board members all through the process so we can help you as you decide if the co-op is the right place for your family.

### **What is the application deadline?**

Applications for the Fall Semester are due March 1. Mid-Session enrollments for new families are generally not accepted. Once an acceptance letter is received, a nonrefundable \$100 deposit is due, which will be applied toward tuition. Please contact [preschool@covenantchicago.org](mailto:preschool@covenantchicago.org) if you have any questions.

# Typical Daily Schedule

Classes meet 9:30am -12:15pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays

- Calendar Time, Weather, and Greeting
- Bible Story Presentation
- Teacher Presentation of Works/ First Work Time
- Snack & Informal Socialization
- Second Work Time
- Teacher Demonstration/Activity
- Music Time & Closing

Individual Work Time Selections include:

- Practical Life Tasks
- Sensorial Activities.
- Math manipulatives & Numbers
- Reading Preparation, letters, and language Skills
- Art
- Music
- Science & Nature
- Outdoor Classroom

\*2017-2018 calendar will be available by June 1, 2017

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_  
Returning applicant: \_\_\_\_\_  
Check #: \_\_\_\_\_

## Covenant Preschool Co-op 2017-2018 Application

Parents' Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Sibling(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Current age(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Church Family Regularly Attends: \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone number(s): (Please indicate your primary contact phone)**

Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Emergency: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother Cell: \_\_\_\_\_ Father Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address(es): \_\_\_\_\_

Yes No      I have completed a classroom observation (required before processing applications). Please contact [preschool@covenantchicago.org](mailto:preschool@covenantchicago.org) to arrange if you have not done so already.

Yes No      I am interested the phonics program prior to preschool (4 years & up).

1. How did you hear about Covenant Preschool Co-op?
2. What goals do you have in mind in enrolling your child(ren) in the co-op?
3. Describe any previous educational experiences of your child(ren).
4. What are the long-term educational plans of your family? (public school, private school, home school, Christian school, don't know yet, etc.)
5. Do you understand that this is a preschool parent-cooperative, meaning parental involvement is required in the classroom? Do you have any specific questions that need to be addressed regarding your involvement?
6. What specific training, education, interests, gifts and talents do you have that you could see yourselves (one or both parents) using in a co-op environment besides regular classroom participation time?

Signatures: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Application deadline for the 2017-2018 school year is March 1st. Please mail completed applications, with a one-time non-refundable \$50 application fee per child, to Covenant Preschool Co-op, 2012 W. Dickens, Chicago, IL 60647, or leave in the church office, checks payable to Covenant Preschool Co-op.** Once an acceptance letter is received, a non-returnable \$100 deposit is due to hold your space, which will be applied toward fall tuition. Please contact [preschool@covenantchicago.org](mailto:preschool@covenantchicago.org) if you have any questions.

Financial aid may be available for applicants with a need. Please fill out a [financial aid request](#).