

2008- 2009 Parent Handbook
**First United Methodist
Preschool**

A “GOLD SEAL”
Nationally Accredited School



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***First United Methodist Church
Mission Statement***

****Experience Jesus***

****Grow as Followers of Jesus***

****Serve because of Jesus' love***

Preschool Mission Statement

First United Methodist Preschool is a ministry of the First United Methodist Church. We are dedicated to providing a safe and loving environment with a spiritual emphasis, and an individual, age-appropriate learning experience for every child.

Holidays & Hours of Operation

The Center opens at 6:45 a.m. and closes promptly at 5:45 p.m.
The Center will be closed for the following dates during the 2008-2009 school year:

Mark these dates on your home calendar now!

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Professional In-Service Day | August 15, 2008 |
| Labor Day | September 1, 2008 |
| Thanksgiving day(s) | November 27-28 2008 |
| Christmas day(s) | December 24-26 2008 |
| New Year's | January 1 and 2, 2009 |
| Martin Luther King Day | January 19, 2009 |
| President's Day | February 16 2009 |
| Good Friday | April 10, 2009 |
| Memorial Day | May 25, 2009 |
| Professional In-Service Day | June 5, 2009 |
| Independence Day | July 3, 2009 |

Vacation

Each family will receive one week of vacation a year. (Aug. 1st 2008 - July 31st 2009) Please submit your vacation request in writing to the office one month in advance.

Tuition Rates (effective August 1, 2008 – July 31, 2009)

Tuition includes hot lunch with milk, 2 snacks, and juice

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|-----------------|---|
| Infant's | \$167 per week |
| Toddler's | \$162 per week |
| Two's & Three's | \$152 per week |
| Pre-K 3's | \$142 per week |
| Pre-K 4's | \$142 per week |
| VPK program | Free (540 Instructional hours) |
| | \$100 (Wrap around Program) |
| | \$140 non VPK weeks |
| | \$135 non VPK week with more than 1 closure |

(Tuition includes a nutritious lunch 5 days a week)

Registration fees are \$100 due annually and non-refundable.

Tuition is due on Fridays in advance of the coming week, year round, whether your child attends or not.

Late Tuition Payment: A late fee of \$10 will be added to all accounts not paid by 5:45 p.m. on Monday. Your child will be turned away on Wednesday morning if payment has not been made. Please consult with the director, if there is any reason a late payment would be made.

Late pick-up charges: Fee is \$1.00 **per minute** for the first 5 minutes after 5:45 p.m. and **\$5.00 per minute** there after.

Returned Check Fee: A fee of \$25 will be assessed on any returned check. Certified funds; i.e. money order, cashiers check will be required on accounts with a repeat history

Withdrawals –Parents failing to provide written, two week notice will be liable for remaining tuition.

Refund policy – There is a NO REFUND POLICY on tuition, deposits, etc.

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Child Information Reports

Welcome to Preschool!

Our program is designed to provide for the physical, social, intellectual, emotional and spiritual growth of the young child. By giving children the opportunity to participate in activities that are developmentally appropriate for them, they are able to grow at their own pace, becoming unique individuals. We encourage each child to develop a good self-concept with the belief that he or she is special. We strive to support the individual child and help him or her to cooperate with and respect others, solve problems and learn to make choices with regard to his or her environment.

Our Center has an "Open Door Policy." This policy encourages parents, family and friends to be involved in our program. Please feel free to come join us anytime.

Our History

The preschool opened in 1957 as First United Methodist Preschool with a half day Kindergarten and classes for 4 and 5 year olds. In 1973 the program expanded to include morning preschool for three year olds. Changes in family needs led to an "all day" program and in 1975 a Preschool Board was created to supervisor the link between the church and preschool. The program was again expanded in 1990 to include care for infants through age five. In the spring of 2005 we received accreditation through the United Methodist Association of Preschools, a Gold Seal Agency. In an effort to provide a developmentally and age appropriate program, we will continue to make improvements and changes as needed to achieve our goals for the betterment of children throughout Lee County.

Infants & Wobblers: Each day when you bring your child to the room we ask that you fill out a short information form. Please include the time of the last feeding, any medications given and any general comments which will be helpful in caring for your child. We will also complete the same information on the form for you to take home when you pick up your child at the end of the day. On this form, we also include any new accomplishments or problems your child may have had while at the center. We also ask that you remove your shoes and put on the socks provided for you. This will ensure the health and safety of or infants.

Toddlers & Two's: "Daily notes" will be done to update you on your child's progress.

Three's & Four's: Daily reports will be done to update you on your child's development.

Progress Reports: Will be utilized to evaluate progression in development. These will be done for the three's and four year old classes three times a year.

Parents or staff may set up a conference at any time they feel it is necessary.

Preschool Team

The purpose of the Preschool Team is to develop policies pertaining to enrolment, tuition, health issues, curriculum, budget, evaluations, and the hiring of personnel. The Team consists of preschool and church family representatives. The goal of this group is to work cohesively toward the continuous improvement and development of the preschool. Monthly meetings for the Preschool Team are advertised in the monthly parent newsletters. Anyone is welcome to attend the meetings, but all are asked to submit agenda topic requests in advance. Interest in Team involvement can be directed to the preschool Director or the Team Leader. Current Team member names and contact information can always be found posted on the Parent news board.

Fund Raisers

Parents are encouraged to participate in school fundraising events. Fundraisers allow opportunities for program expansion without extreme tuition increases for parents. All money raised directly benefits the children's learning program. We currently hold Scholastic Book Fairs, a catalogue product order, and occasional special events.

Volunteer Work

Volunteering for the preschool and church offers a great opportunity to help out the preschool

There are always things that need to be done at the preschool as well as the church. A volunteer sign-up sheet will be posted near the front office for your convenience. Feel free to check with the office for more information about volunteer hours.

Our Philosophy of Learning

In a caring and positive atmosphere, we create a warm and happy place for infants, toddlers and preschoolers to learn. As we bridge the gap from home to school, we guide children to a continued good self-image building social skills in a school setting. Sensory, motor, perceptual and language skills are introduced through materials and activities that are both child-centered and teacher directed. Work is planned to emphasize the process rather than the product, fostering a sense of accomplishment and pride.

Based on the theory that children learn through play, classroom routines encourage active involvement, meaningful experimentation and reinforcement through repetition. Schedules are designed with a balance of structure and free choice, as well as, active and quiet times.

Recognizing that children grow in predictable stages, we treat each child as an individual, working from the level each child has attained and moving forward a step at a time. We teach love of learning by allowing children to experience their own stage of development, helping them to feel success without pressure.

Our Child Care Policies

Parents are required to walk their children into the center and sign-in beside the child's name, using the parents first and last name, on the clipboard provided in the lobby. Sign your child out in the same manner.

Every child is provided his or her own "cubby." This is a personal space to keep your child's belongings. Teachers may vary in regard to requests and required supplies. All children MUST have a bag that contains a complete change of clothes and a fitted crib sheet and blanket for naptime.

Because of the wide range of activities, it is recommended that children be dressed in washable, comfortable clothing. Please make sure that your child bring a extra change of cloths. If your child has an accident and does not have a change of cloths you may be called to pick up your child. We will get messy, so please do not dress your child in his or her Sunday best! Close-toed, rubber soled sneakers or shoes are needed, please. ***NO Sandals. If your child comes in sandals they will have to sit on the playground.***

Parents are welcome to send cookies, cupcakes or cakes to share with their children's friends on birthdays or special occasions. Let your child's teacher know in advance so you both may make appropriate plans.

Toys and games from home are limited to Show & Tell days only. Please understand that when children bring personal toys to school, disruption to normal routine is nearly inevitable. If your child continues to bring disruptive items, please understand that they may be removed for the day or possibly the week. Check with your child's teacher for more information about "show and tell". Books are always welcome.

Please be sure your child's name is clearly marked on all items you bring to school.

Staff and Training

All staff members have completed or are in the process of completing the Child Care Training Course. This is a state required course that provides training for child-care personnel in the areas of fire safety, health information, food handling, as well as, education in the developmental stages of young children. Staff members are trained and certified in Infant/Child CPR and First Aid for the Young Child. All staff members are cleared through the State of Florida Child Abuse Registrar, The Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

Our center is currently accredited through the United Methodist Association of Preschools (UMAP). This accreditation requires that "each lead teacher of two-year-olds or older be certified in one of the following ways":

Any college 2 or 4 year degree with at least 6 college credits in early childhood.

6 college credits in early childhood, and 3 years teaching experience.

Vocational certificate in early childhood education (Child Development Certificate).

All teachers are required to receive 10 hours of in-service training annually.

Parent Expectations

As a general guide, termination of enrollment can occur by parent violation of the policies, which include and are not limited to the following:

- Exhibiting gross carelessness or negligence while on the First United Methodist Church campus.
- Inappropriate behavior toward staff, parents, or children associated with the center.
- Refusing to follow the policies and procedures set forth by the preschool team leader, as outlined in this handbook.

In the event of a parent violation of any policy, the parent is to be verbally counseled by the center director(s), making clear what the violation was, the rule or practice with which he/she is not in compliance, why the rule exists and the need for compliance.

In the event another violation occurs, the parents will be given a written warning outlining the reasons for necessary compliance. A copy of the warning will be placed in the child's school file and forwarded to the Chairperson of the Preschool team leader.

Upon the third violation, the parents will receive a letter terminating enrollment. The termination letter will include reasons for termination and the child's final date of enrollment.

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in this Parent Termination section, the above-outlined procedure shall be considered only a guide and shall not be considered as a mandatory process in every incident involving a parent's behavior. The Center Director(s) shall have total and immediate discretion to terminate enrollment, without prior oral or written notice to the parent(s), should a parent's behavior be so grossly careless or negligent, whether or not intentional, if such behavior causes the Center Director(s) to feel concern for the immediate safety or well-being of any one or more of the children or any one or more of the center's staff.

Hearing/Grievance Procedures

The Center Director(s) will be in communication with the preschool team leader concerning any Parent/Child issues and reasons for planning to dismiss the family prior to taking such action. Any family may take grievances in writing to the Director(s). If a satisfactory conclusion is not reached within ten (10) working days, the Board of Directors will be contacted and may meet with the family and Director(s) if so requested.

Our Disaster Policies

Unfortunately disasters often strike with little warning. Many circumstances must be considered both in preparing for a disaster and recovering from one. *FUMP* directing staff will act in the best interest of the children and staff residing within the building during operating hours. Decisions to remain open or to close will be made by the director and church pastor based on individual circumstances that may per disaster. These situations constitute extenuating circumstances and are not planned by the center as "days off". *Please be aware in advance that tuition is still due, as it is set in advance based on year-round operating costs.*

Hurricane: In the event of a hurricane WARNING, the center would be closed. We would remain closed until all danger of the storm is past. Please stay tuned to a local station. Generally if the Lee County School System is open, the center is open and if the school system is closed, the center is closed. Please check with our local stations for that update. In the event that the hurricane "WATCH" goes into a "WARNING" situation, our school will close immediately. Please stay abreast of our weather conditions during a work day while we are in a hurricane "WATCH." Furthermore, our center may remain closed until we are able to reopen safely and in full operating order.

Tornado: In the event of a tornado warning, we would take all of the children into interior rooms with no windows, located off the office area. We would remain there until all danger has passed.

Our Health Policies

Physicals and Immunizations

Each child MUST have physical examination and immunization forms (forms 3040 & 680) completed by a physician licensed by the State of Florida. The forms are required by state law and provide information concerning each child's immunization and physical exam. There are NO exceptions on either form #3040 or #680. These forms must be updated by your child's physician per the expiration date on the form.

Illness

A child showing signs of illness must be picked up from the center immediately. Do not bring your child to school if any of the following symptoms are present: unexplained rash or sores, fever(100 degree's), vomiting, diarrhea (one bout), discharge or conjunctivitis in the eye or green or yellow discharge form the nose with in the last 24 hours. This causes needless exposure to the other children and staff. If a child shows any of these symptoms in the night please do not bring him or her the next day.

Please understand, illness is determined based on a variety of criteria, handled on an individual basis at the discretion of the director. For example, diarrhea in the infant room could be caused by new foods, while diarrhea in the preschool area is usually caused by an intestinal upset. You may occasionally receive medical "FYI" forms intended to make you aware of symptoms we have noticed. A medical referral form indicates the necessity to have your child seen by a physician before returning to the center. **If your child has been sent home due to illness they may not return to school the following day without a "return to school" slip signed from a physician SPECIFYING THAT YOUR CHILD IS NOT CONTAGIOUS.**

Remember antibiotics need to be taken for 24 hours before your child returns to the center.

Termination of Enrollment

Child Expectations

If a child displays a pattern of inappropriate behavior, the teacher will use discipline techniques to redirect this behavior. The teacher will also document each episode of the undesirable behavior and the results of the redirection techniques. If the behavior continues, the following steps will be taken:

1. The Director will be notified
2. A Parent/Teacher conference will be arranged to implement a course of action to correct the child's behavior within an allotted time frame.
3. If the child continues to show no improvement, a second Parent/Teacher Conference will be arranged to explore further options such as, parenting classes or outside intervention. The Center can give guidance and/or recommendation to the proper social services. Using the example of inappropriate aggressive behavior such as biting, a probationary period may be established to provide a final opportunity for the child's behavior to be improved. If no such improvement is evident, a letter will be sent to the parents stating the reason for termination and the child's final day of enrollment. The goal of this plan is not to punish the child or parent, rather to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning and growth for all of the children.

Our Discipline Philosophy

Discipline, when used with a positive approach will encourage children to gain their own sense of self control. A few of our approaches are:

Helping the child clearly understand what is expected of him or her

Catch them “doing good” with honest approval

Acknowledge and accept his or her feelings

Redirecting his or her attention or behavior

Giving the child alternate behavior choices he or she may use should the same situation occur.

Talking with the child to let him or her express their emotions, in an individual manner.

Time-outs: Brief separations from the group will be used sparingly and never in a humiliating or punishing manner.

Medications

Medication should be administered in the childcare setting only when it is truly necessary. It is safest and best for children to receive their medicines at home, and, in fact, most medications can be given before and after child care hours. However, when the number of doses or the action of the medication requires administration during child care hours the staff will administer medications brought in the original container, labeled with the child’s name, directions for dosage, and an included measuring device. We are required to have two consents for medication administration...Parent and Physician. Please stop into the office if you need additional information or forms. (excluding diaper rash ointment and sun-screen).

Communicable Diseases

Please inform the center immediately if your child has a communicable disease. Other families need to be notified that “a child in our center has...” so they can take the necessary precautions. This is always handled without mentioning the family’s name, just the existing disease, for confidentiality. The Health Department requires us to report certain diseases.

The center checks for head lice periodically. If suspected that your child has head lice, it is DCF policy that the child be removed promptly from the center. ALL nits must be removed before a child can be re-admitted to the center. The process occasionally takes more than one day.