

FIRST UNITED  
METHODIST  
PRESCHOOL

PARENT HANDBOOK

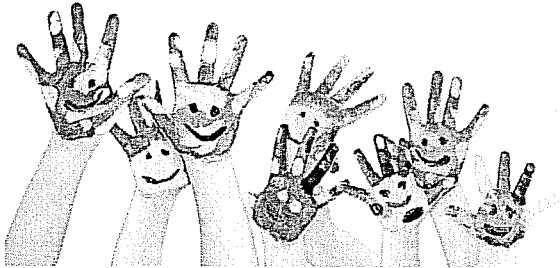


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# FIRST UNITED METHODIST PRESCHOOL



Dear Parent or Guardian;

We would like to welcome you and your child to First United Methodist Preschool. The school year looks to be an exciting experience for all of us. We thank you for allowing us to be a part of your child's early educational experience. Our dedicated teachers and staff are committed to providing a well-rounded age-appropriate program to meet the spiritual, mental, social, emotional and physical needs of each child.

First United Methodist Preschool is a ministry of First United Methodist Church. If you are new to the community or have not found a church home for your family, we would like to be the first one to invite you to join us for our Sunday morning services starting at 8:30 & 11:00 AM.

Thank you for entrusting your child into our care. Should you ever have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

*Leonie Buchanan-Givans*

Director

## **Philosophy**

The overall program at First United Methodist Preschool is based on several fundamental beliefs about children;

- The early years are ideal for learning.
- Learning is fun.
- Each child is a unique individual and develops skills at his/her own rate.
- Children learn best by doing.
- Quality preschool programs have positive long-term effects.
- Children who have a positive self-concept are better able to take advantage of the educational environment that is provided for them.
- Simple lessons in moral responsibility are necessary to prepare a child for success later in life.

## **Mission**

As part of First United Methodist Church, we open our doors to provide an outreach ministry to the downtown working community by offering a Christian Learning Environment for our students. We also offer philosophy, teaching, counseling, and spiritual guidance through our church ministry for parents. Our program is designed to promote the language development and the education of the total child through experiences that meet social, emotional, and cognitive needs. We believe in an open door policy where parents are invited to call, visit, or participate in our program at any time.

## **History of First United Methodist Preschool**

First United Methodist Church has a long history of providing quality child care services. Located in downtown Fort Lauderdale, First United Methodist Church began a “Mother’s Day Out” program over twenty years ago. This program earned much respect in the community for providing quality child care. In 1991, the Church expanded its successful “Mother’s Day Out” program into a full-time, quality, preschool/child care program in Broward County.

## **Non Discrimination Policy**

First United Methodist Preschool admits students of any race, color, national, and ethnic origin. All students are eligible to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities provided by the school. First United Methodist Preschool does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

## **Admission Procedures**

- Registration for the new school year begins in March before the August start-up.
- Preschool classes are filled as openings are available in the following order of preference: Current students and siblings are given the opportunity to register first, followed by members of First United Methodist Church, and lastly opened to the community.
- Class rosters will be determined based on birth date, teacher recommendations, and overall best interest of the children.
- Specific teacher requests cannot be guaranteed.
- All children not placed will be put on a waiting list to fill vacancies as they occur.

## **Enrollment Procedures**

Parents who wish to enroll their child in First United Methodist Preschool must complete the enrollment package and turn it into the office prior to admittance. The following items **must** be on file by the first day of school:

- 1) School registration packet.
- 2) Family information sheet.
- 3) Certificate of Immunization Form DH 680 (Blue)
- 4) School Entry Health Form DH 3040 (Yellow)

## **Medical and Immunization Forms**

To meet the state regulations, all children in our school must have a current Health Examination Form (yellow) and a current Immunization Record Form (blue) on file. Each form must be renewed periodically. This form is available from either your physician or from the County Health Department. If either of your child's forms expires during the school year, you will be notified 30 days prior to expiration. If you do not provide the school with a new form or forms prior to the expiration date, your child will not be allowed to attend until a new form is obtained.

## **Change in Information**

Parents are responsible for notifying the school office immediately of any change in information including address, phone number (home, business, or cell), release information, etc. It is imperative that we have this updated information in case of an emergency. Any custody paperwork must be submitted and kept on file.

## **Parent's Comments and Support**

We are always interested in your comments regarding the care and education that your child receives at First United Methodist Preschool. Your director is always willing and able to help you with any of your concerns. Our goal is to work with you so your child can receive the best possible education and care. Thank you for choosing First United Methodist Preschool as your partner. Annual satisfaction surveys will be sent home in order for you to voice your suggestions, questions and concerns. A Parent Interest Survey is also included in this handbook. Please fill it out and return it to the front office. Parent Interest Surveys can be obtained at any time. Anyone interested in serving on a parent board please contact the director.

## **Parent Responsibilities**

First United Methodist Preschool encourages a positive home-school connection. Parent involvement in school has proven to increase student achievement at all ages. While some parents will not be able to participate in all daytime activities, all can support the following school policies: The preschool academic day begins at 9:00 a.m. Please arrive no later than 8:45 a.m. to allow your child the transition time. (If you wish to have your child eat breakfast in the classroom please arrive no later than 8:30) Parents are requested not to linger in the classroom as this is disruptive to all the students. Personal toys from home also create a variety of issues. Please leave all personal toys at home unless specifically requested by your teachers (theme week, show and tell, etc). Children should be appropriately dressed and wear closed toed shoes. All children should have a change of clothes to keep in their cubby along with a sheet and blanket.

## Transition/Orientation

Transitions between classrooms and for new children joining us will occur based on each individual child's development level. Transition/Orientation activities will take place prior to a child joining a classroom. Children will spend limited time in the new classroom with increasing time increments, according to comfort level. Every effort will be made to accommodate a child's move into a classroom. Parents are welcome to assist in the transition and will be provided with the opportunity to spend time in the new classroom, getting to know the teachers and the routines.

## Family Orientation

Parents and children attending FUMC Preschool will be invited to attend an Orientation Day before school sessions begin. Letters notifying parents of dates and times will be mailed or posted. Families will spend time with the classroom staff and have a chance to preview and explore the classroom. Children enrolled at FUMC Preschool can schedule a visit anytime. The Director will provide an alternate schedule for the first week in an effort to ease everyone into a comfortable transition from home to school. A conference after 30 days is encouraged to evaluate your child's progress.

## Annual Registration Fee

An annual \$150.00 registration fee is due at the beginning of each fall semester or at the time of enrollment. This fee ensures a spot for your child in the coming school year. Annual registration fees are non-refundable.

## Withdraw Policy

Two weeks notice is required *if* your child is to be withdrawn. A parent or guardian is responsible for the two-week tuition period even if their child does not attend.

## Arrival and Departure

Parents are required by law to sign in each child upon arrival and to leave their child in the care of a staff member. Parents are also required to sign their child out and notify a staff member upon departure. Photo ID may be required for pick-up. When picking your child up in the afternoon or evening, please do not allow your child to leave the building ahead of you. Your cooperation will help insure the safety of your child. Arrival and departure is through the main doors only. You will be buzzed in by the receptionist. In order to insure the safety of the children, exceptions cannot be made. **Please refrain from cell phone usage while dropping off or picking up your child. Communication at these times is very important.**

**If you choose to utilize the drive through for dropping off and picking up your child, please be considerate of others and limit your stay to five minutes or less.**

## HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday through Friday - 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM

### ANNUAL REGISTRATION

\$150.00

<b>Infants:</b>	Weekly:	\$219.00
Garden Babies	Bi-Weekly:	\$426.00
Sunshine Babies	Monthly:	\$899.00
<b>Ones:</b>	Weekly:	\$203.00
Lollipops	Bi-Weekly:	\$396.00
Toddler Jungle	Monthly:	\$836.00
<b>Twos:</b>	Weekly:	\$189.00
Pooh's Troop	Bi-Weekly:	\$368.00
Little Angels	Monthly:	\$777.00
<b>Threes:</b>	Weekly:	\$186.00
Explorers	Bi-Weekly:	\$362.00
Shining Stars	Monthly:	\$763.00
<b>Fours:</b>	Weekly:	\$145.00
VPK (Wrap Around)	Bi-Weekly:	\$282.00
	Monthly:	\$595.00
<b>After School Program:</b>	Monthly:	\$195.00

### PAYMENT SCHEDULE

- The following options are available for tuition payment:

**Monthly** – Due the first of each month (A late fee of \$20.00 will be charged if tuition is not received by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month)

**Bi-Weekly** – Due on Monday of the first week (A late fee of \$20.00 will be charged if tuition is not received by Tuesday of the first week)

**Weekly** – Due on Monday of each week (A late fee of \$20.00 will be charged if tuition is not received by Tuesday of each week)

The above policy is strictly enforced and if tuition is not paid within the time allowed, your child will not be permitted to attend the preschool until the outstanding tuition balance is paid.

- There will be a \$25.00 service charge for all checks returned by your bank.
- A two week notice is required if you should decide to withdraw your child.
- All fees are nonrefundable.
- There is a 10% discount for siblings.

## **Late Pick-Up Fee**

First United Methodist Preschool closes promptly at 6:00 PM. A late pick-up fee of \$1.00 will be charged for every minute after 6:00 PM - payable upon pick-up. If not paid at this time it will be added to your statement

## **Holidays**

First United Methodist Preschool observes the following holidays. There will be no reduction in tuition for these days.

Martin Luther King Day	(January)
Good Friday	(March)
Memorial Day	(May)
Independence Day	(July)
Friday before New School Year	(August)
Labor Day	(September)
Thanksgiving Day	(November)
Friday after Thanksgiving	
Christmas Eve ½ Day	(December)
Christmas Day & Day after (depending on what day the Holiday falls on)	
New Year's Eve ½ Day	(January)
New Year's Day & Day after (depending on what day the Holiday falls on)	

## **Emergency Closings**

It may be necessary to close the school due to emergency situations such as adverse weather conditions, etc. In addition, should the Broward County School System close due to adverse weather conditions, this school will also close. There will be no reduction in tuition due to emergency closings. Updates will be posted on our FACEBOOK PAGE AND WEBSITE.

## **Vacation Policy**

Each child is eligible for a one week vacation per school year (August – July). During this vacation time, your tuition fees will be waived. It is important as childcare givers to maintain a secure and stable environment for your children. In order to accomplish this, we must also offer our staff the security of knowing that their employment with First United Methodist Preschool is also secure and stable. This becomes an impossible task when some parents feel they should not pay tuition when their child is absent from school due to illness or vacation. Your tuition is what helps support our staff salaries. If tuition is paid only when your child is in attendance, it does not allow us to guarantee stability to our staff and quality to all concerned. In order to accommodate our parents you may take one (1) week's vacation during the year and tuition will be waived for this week.

For this reason, First United Methodist Preschool will require all parents to obligate themselves to their entire tuition on a monthly basis, should you decide to keep your child home for any reason, you will be required to pay your tuition in full for the period of absence as part of your contractual monthly arrangement with us. Your child cannot reenter the preschool without this payment in full.



## **Fundraisers**

We do conduct fundraisers during the school year. Family participation is expected. Teachers use the additional income to purchase special items for their classrooms or to schedule special guests at our school. We greatly appreciate your efforts.

## **Parking**

The Church's parking lot is a metered lot, monitored by the City of Fort Lauderdale Parking Division. Upon your child's enrollment, you will receive a parking pass. It is necessary to display this pass in your car on the dashboard when you are parked in the lot. Failure to properly display the parking pass may result in a parking ticket by the City of Fort Lauderdale. First United Methodist Church/Preschool is not responsible for parking tickets.

## **Teachers**

Our teachers are required by Broward County Licensing to have completed the minimum of 45 hours of early childhood training. Lead teachers are required to have an FCCPC (Florida Childcare Professional Credential) or above. In-Service training of a minimum of 20 hours is required annually. FUMC preschool requires that all teachers have current CPR and First-aid certification.

## **Daily Routines**

Daily routines will vary from classroom to classroom. Daily Schedules and lesson plans are posted in each room. If you have any questions regarding these please address them to the classroom teacher or director. Nap/rest times are included in each room but vary according to the age and circumstances in each room. Our teachers are not allowed to force the children to nap, eat or drink. Our job is to meet the individual needs of the children. Occasionally adjustments are needed to fully meet the children's needs. Our policy is to transition the children to the best of our ability according to the needs of all involved. Field trips and special events will be announced and parents are encouraged to participate when able.

## **Supplies**

There is a list of monthly supplies needed for each classroom, which will be provided by your child's teacher. Your child's teacher will contact you periodically concerning your child's supplies.

## **Breakfast, Lunch and Snack**

A child arriving between 7:00 and 8:30 may eat in the classroom with staff supervision. Parents are responsible for providing a nutritious lunch and snacks for their children. Children may bring lunch from home or elect to purchase lunch. A nutrition guide has been provided at the bottom of the alternate nutrition plan (located in the registration packet) to assist parents in planning a healthy lunch. Water will be served to any child who does not have a drink. A refrigerator and microwave are available, if needed, in each classroom.

### **Nutrition Policy**

A well balanced breakfast lunch and snack must be provided for each child daily. Meals and snacks should follow the USDA meal guidelines for children. Please refer to the meal guidelines on the following website: [www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/caree/programbasics/meal/meal\\_patterns.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/caree/programbasics/meal/meal_patterns.htm). **FUMC is a NUT FREE facility**, therefore no products including nuts are permitted within the program. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation regarding this policy. If you fail to provide lunch for your child, lunch will be provided at a charge of \$4.00 per meal. We strive to provide each child with a healthy start in life and appreciate your cooperation with these policies.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences/Assessments**

Parent-teacher conferences are available upon request of teachers or parents anytime throughout the school year. Parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled three times per year to discuss each child's progress and any concerns that teachers and parents may have. Assessments are implemented for all children using the Creative Curriculum continuum. If we suspect a problem, a conference will be arranged and we will refer you to FDLRS. Following an evaluation, we will work closely with the agency as well as the child's teachers to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP)

### **Authorized Persons**

It is important that the registering parent notify First United Methodist Preschool in writing of persons authorized to pick up the child. First United Methodist Church assumes no liability if not properly advised. Anyone picking up your child should be prepared to show proper identification before the child will be released. It is important that the registering parent indicate in the enrollment application who has legal custody and who may pick the child up.

### **Discipline**

A child-centered approach to discipline is used at First United Methodist Preschool. Techniques used include positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviors, ignoring attention-seeking behavior, redirection, reminders and quiet reflection time. Food or activities are not withheld from children because of inappropriate behaviors. Corporal punishment is never used. First United Methodist Preschool reserves the right to remove from its program any child who continually displays inappropriate behavior. Behaviors which pose harm to the student or other students are deemed inappropriate.

In keeping with the Biblical teaching of respecting all principalities and authorities placed over us (Titus 3:1-2), students and parents are required to show proper respect to teachers, administrators, and adults on the premises of the school and church. Failure to adhere to this standard may result in dismissal.

### **Curriculum**

At First United Methodist Preschool, we offer a blended curriculum with Creative Curriculum as our base. We use a variety of resources depending on the class and developmental level of each individual child. Keeping in mind that preschoolers learn best through their senses, hands-on activities, play, and repetition, we have combined a variety of preschool curricula and teacher resource materials to provide a well-rounded learning environment for our students. Our theme-based approach fosters cognitive, social and emotional growth as well as fine and gross motor skills.

## **Medication Policy**

Although we are not obligated by law to administer medication, this is a service that we have chosen to provide to our families. In order for us to administer medication the parent must fill out the appropriate **#5 Medication Form**; you can get these forms from the School's Director or the class teacher. All medication must be in original container(s) inside of a Ziploc bag with your child's name on it. A new #5 Medication Form must be filled out for each incident. The medication and completed medication form should be given to one of the school's Directors. Any medication that requires the use of nebulizers for administering and/or any medications containing acetaminophen will not be administered by our staff. Parents will be given appropriate facilities to provide their child these medications if requested. All medication(s) must go home with the child the end of each day. If you have any questions regarding this policy please see one of the school's Directors.

## **Health Policy**

It is the goal of the preschool to keep each child as healthy as possible. If a child is sick, the parents will be notified to keep their child out of school until well enough to return.

A child is considered to be sick and therefore should not be brought to school if:

- The child has a fever higher than 100.9°. Once in school, a child must be picked up if he/she has a temperature higher than 100.9°.
- The child is vomiting or has diarrhea. Should the child experience an onset of either of these conditions, the parent will be notified to pick the child up immediately.
- The child has cold/flu like symptoms.
- The child has a contagious disease.
- The child's doctor has prescribed an antibiotic for a contagious condition. A child should not be brought into the school without the doctor's permission.
- The child has head lice. The staff will periodically perform checks for this condition. If it is determined that a child is infected, the child will be sent home for necessary treatment. The child will be rechecked prior to admission into the school program.

## **Allergies**

Please be sure to inform your child's teacher as well as the director of any allergies your child may have or develop while in our care. Allergies should be clearly posted in each classroom.

## **Accident/Incident Policy**

In the event of accidents and incidents of concern, the incident will be recorded on a DCF #4 form. These forms require the signature of the teacher(s) present, the parent and the director and will be kept on file for a minimum of 1 year and are kept confidential. This includes biting and aggressive behavior. Excessive biting and or aggressive behavior that continually disrupt the classroom are grounds for discharge from our program.

## **Discharge Policy**

First United Methodist Preschool reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child for the following reasons:

- Non-payment or excessive late payments of fees
- Not observing the rules of the center as outlined in the parent agreement
- Child has special needs which we cannot adequately meet with our current staffing patterns
- Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or children by parent or child

## **Field Trips**

Field trips will occasionally be scheduled. In order for a child to participate, the school's permission slip must be signed by a parent before a child will be permitted to leave the school. (Parents assume responsibility in case of an accident.) If you choose not to send your child on a field trip or miss the trip for any reason, you will need to provide alternative child care until the class returns. The teachers need to accompany the class; therefore, there will not be a teacher available. Deposits for field trips are non-refundable.

## **Emergency Procedures**

**Fire/Flood/Evacuation** – In the event of a fire, flood or other emergency requiring evacuation from the building, staff and children will be evacuated to the parking lot, a safe distance from the building. Should the need arise, children will be taken to an alternate location. An agreement with Tudor Time provides us with safe and child appropriate alternative shelter. Evacuation routes are posted in each room. Parents will be called to pick children up if it is determined that it is not safe to return to the building.

**Severe Weather/Tornado/Hurricane** – If the facility is threatened with imminent severe weather such as a tornado, staff and children will remain indoors and away from windows. Doors will remain locked and no one will be allowed to go outdoors or leave the facility until local media or police/fire departments have reported that the threat of danger has subsided. In the event of a hurricane warning, we will follow the Broward County closure/evacuation procedure.

If severe weather/hurricane is expected within 24 hours, the facility will be closed until the threat of danger has subsided and the facility is deemed safe to occupy.

**Lock Down** – If local public schools are put on lock down for any reason, we will do so as well. We will also place the school on lock down if any dangerous activities are observed or reported in the vicinity of the facility (i.e. shootings, police chases, terrorism, etc.). During lock down all entrances and exits will remain locked and secured and no one will be allowed in or out of the facility.

\*First United Methodist Church Preschool reserves the right to modify this handbook as necessary