

First United Methodist Church Preschool

201 S Road St. Elizabeth City, NC

252-335-7615

2022-2023 HANDBOOK

F.U.M.C. Preschool Program Mission Statement

We, the Preschool Staff and the members of First United Methodist Church, pledge to provide a safe Christian atmosphere in which young children can learn and develop socially, emotionally, academically, physically, and spiritually.

The F.U.M.C. Preschool program welcomes all children regardless of race, religion, or sex.

QUALITY CARE OF CHILDREN IS OUR NUMBER ONE CONCERN.

We use developmentally appropriate instructional methods and tools to help children learn how to relate with other children and adults and how to grow in their own skills and abilities.

Teachers will plan activities to:

Encourage children to express themselves through materials, movement, and language.

Encourage children to develop positive attitudes toward teachers, school, and learning.

Encourage independence.

Encourage children to explore the environment and to develop curiosity and questioning ability which will promote future learning.

Encourage children to develop good self images and feelings of success.

Encourage children to learn by example and teaching.

Enrollment Information

Enrollment begins each year in February for the fall programming. Classroom registrations are taken in the following order:

1. Children of FUMC members who are currently enrolled.
2. Children of FUMC staff members and Preschool Board members
3. Children who are currently enrolled and their siblings.
4. Children of FUMC members who are not presently enrolled.
5. Siblings of FUMC Preschool alumni
6. Open enrollment

Registration packets will be available on a date in February that will be announced. It is your responsibility to be aware of advertised dates for the registration process.

Fees and Payments

Registration Fee: \$75

Toddlers: Two Day Program \$150 per month

Two Day Program: \$125 per month

Three Day Program: \$150 per month

Five Day Program: \$235 per month

Payment is expected by the 5th of each month. A late fee will be assessed for accounts not paid by the 5th at a rate of \$10 per week unpaid. Checks are payable to FUMC Preschool.

Please check your child's folder for an envelope at the end of each month to be used for the next month's payment. Return payment with your child to school or send it to 201 S Road St. Elizabeth City, NC 27907
ATTN: Preschool

Drop Off and Pick Up Instructions

We look forward to our time each day with your child, but ask for your cooperation regarding drop off and pick up times. Please note the appropriate times for your child. We ask that you use the time on your cell phone as a basis to synchronize your watch with any preschool staff.

Drop Off Time

8:45-9:00

Please do not bring your child before the scheduled drop off time- this is our teacher's preparation time.

Pick Up Time

11:45-12:00

Late Pick Up Fees

Late fees will be assessed for not picking up your child promptly at the end of each school session. If preschool staff must wait beyond dismissal time for your arrival, you will be charged \$5 for every 5 minutes. Payment of all late pick-up charges are due within five (5) days of receipt or extra fees will be applied.

Curbside Service with a Smile

(Temporarily suspended due to COVID-19 restrictions)

To help transition your child into the classroom, we offer a curbside service. As you pull in front of our curbside area, our staff will open your car door and escort your child inside. If you use this service, we ask for your assistance in keeping the line moving. Enter the line from S Dyer Street, line up in the gravel parking lot, then pull onto Cobb St when you are directed. Please do not pull straight onto Cobb Street, in front of the cars waiting in line. Also be aware that Cobb Street is a one way street and a public street, so watch for cars and be careful of our staff unloading children. Patience is imperative for safety. If you are rushed, it may be best to park and walk your child to one of our staff members outside, who can escort your child inside. It does help to have your child ready when our staff approaches your car. If you need to speak to someone at length, please pull into the parking lot.

For pick-ups, please place your name card in your driver's side visor or windshield so that preschool staff can identify who you are picking up. You will receive your name card at the beginning of the year. This card will help our staff learn your cars. See the director if you need extra name cards for babysitters, etc. Please pull forward and we will open your car door and help your child in the car. Our staff cannot buckle your child into a car seat! Drive slowly as other children are being escorted across the street.

If you desire to walk your child to the door or are picking up early, please park in the church parking lot, not on the road.

Authorized Pick Ups

Your child will be released only to those named on your authorized pick-up list. Please give each person on the list a color card to keep in their car to use for curbside service. Preschool staff reserves the right to ask for picture identification before releasing children.

If you have any changes to your child's transportation arrangements, please send it to your child's teacher or the director IN WRITING or by email or text.

Chapel

All classes will have a chapel program twice per month. We want to instill the knowledge of Bible stories, lessons, and biblical concepts (love, forgiveness, patience, etc.) to our children. Each class also has a daily devotion during circle time and a blessing before snack time.

Sharing Time (Show and Tell)

Some teachers may have your child bring in an item from home to share with the class. Please do not have your child bring any toy items to school that are scary, resemble weapons, are valuable, or may get easily broken.

Field Trips

Field trips are a wonderful way to learn, see and touch! Field trips will be age appropriate and within reasonable travel distance. Plenty of adult supervision will be needed. Planned trips will be announced in advance and permission slips will be sent home. A small fee may be charged to attend. Siblings may not be allowed on some of our field trips.

Visitation

We encourage parental involvement in your child's educational experience. Parents are welcome to observe their child's classroom at any time. However, if you accompany your child into school in the morning, refrain from staying as the teachers begin the school day. If you wish to talk extensively with the teacher, please schedule a time so that you and the teacher can have an uninterrupted conversation. For security reasons, all of our accesses are locked. You will need to use our preschool entrance and ring the bell to access our preschool.

Conferences

All parents of four year olds will receive progress reports in February and will have the opportunity for a scheduled parent-teacher conference in April.

At any time throughout the year, please feel free to request a conference if you have questions or concerns about your child's progress and experience.

What Do We Need?

Backpacks

Your child will need a good sized backpack to handle each day's work and notes for parents. Please label with first and last name. Check backpacks for your child's folder every day for notes and information. This is how we communicate with you!

Snacks

A snack time is scheduled each day for your child's class. You are responsible for providing your child's snack. **Please label your child's lunch box, water bottles and containers.** Consider a snack that will be easy for

your child to handle and will provide energy for the rest of the day. Please also consider not sending whole grapes, popcorn, whole hot dogs, or other foods that are known to choke children. We ask that you send a healthy snack. Please do not send gum, candy, or soda. We are happy to help your child open packaging, but please be considerate of the teacher's time and do not send unpeeled oranges, microwavable popcorn, or other snacks that require time consuming preparation.

Provide drinks in spill proof containers, not glass.

We also ask for your sensitivity and concern for children in our preschool with food allergies.

Clothing

Children are encouraged to wear play clothes that they can fasten and unfasten independently. We will play outside, weather permitting. Please apply sunscreen to your child prior to sending them to school for the day. **Please label all jackets, sweaters, coats, etc.** In the beginning of the year, please send an extra outfit in a labeled zip lock bag. We will hold it for the year in case of an emergency.

Withdrawals

Written notice is required for withdrawing your child from FUMC Preschool programs. As stated on the registration form, two weeks' notice is required (equivalent to ½ month tuition). Please note that any withdrawals after April 30 will require payment of May tuition in full.

Health and Wellness Policies

For the safety of our staff and all children that attend our school, we require that immunizations be current. We require that a copy of your child's immunization record be submitted prior to the beginning of the school year. **Immunization records must be dated within 12 months. The preschool director will request an updated immunization record if the one you've provided is over 12 months old.**

In an effort to keep our preschool as healthy as possible, please keep your child at home if they have noticeable signs of illness. Children will not be permitted to stay at preschool with the following symptoms:

Elevated temperature within the past 24 hours

Vomiting or diarrhea within the past 24 hours

Pink Eye

Contagious rash

Suspicion of communicable disease (chicken pox, measles, impetigo, strep throat, lice, etc.)

Inability to participate in preschool activities

Please be respectful of other families in our preschool by keeping your child at home during illness. Your child is welcome back when he/she is ready for a full preschool schedule.

Please contact the director if your child has a communicable disease so that other families can take precautions. All personal information will remain confidential.

Discipline

At all times we will love and care for your children. We will also promote acceptable behavior to ensure that all children are safe and comfortable. During class time, our teachers will offer close supervision, give their attention to the children, offer praise and encouragement, and redirect behavior if needed.

If children are disrupting the classroom or putting other children at risk, a time out approach will be used. A time out approach is a temporary removal of the child from the situation.

We will follow three steps:

1. Remove the child from the activity/situation to a quiet place within the classroom.
2. Explain to the child why he/she has been removed from the activity.
3. Encourage the child to return to the activity when he/she can stop the inappropriate behavior. The length of time for time out will not exceed one minute per year of the child.

If the behavior does not change, the teacher will remove the child from the classroom and the child will stay with the director. If all techniques do not change the behavior, preschool staff may request a conference with the parents to determine the best course of action.

Dismissals

The preschool may discontinue admission to class if the child fails to adjust to group experiences or if the parent fails to:

Provide current health and immunization information

Pay tuition and fees in a timely manner (past 6 weeks)

Keep program policies and procedures

Celebrations

Children enjoy special days and parties. The preschool will observe these holidays:

Fall Party in October (no costumes), Thanksgiving in November, Christmas in December, Valentine's Day in February, and Easter in Spring

Parent participation is needed during the celebrations. Your child's teacher will let you know how you can help.

Birthdays

We would love to celebrate your child's birthday. Please let your child's teacher know when you would like to have a party. Your teacher will need advanced notice. You may provide a special snack to share with the class, as long as classroom allergies are taken into account. Please do not bring balloons or piñatas. Please choose age appropriate snacks, themes and other miscellaneous items. If parents choose to provide treat bags, children will not be allowed to open them until they get home. Siblings are welcome to attend birthday parties

Inclement Weather Policy

FUMC Preschool follows the Elizabeth City-Pasquotank School System (ECPPS) for school closures. Even if you do not have school-age children, it is your responsibility to monitor information about school delays and closings. Please listen to local TV and radio for school closings mentioned for ECPPS. Teachers will also send out a text message announcing the closure. Missed days will not be rescheduled.

In the case of delayed openings due to weather (whether it be a one or two hour delay), FUMC Preschool will open doors at 10 am to start taking in children. We will release at the regularly scheduled time.

History of First United Methodist Church Preschool

First United Methodist Church participated in the Elizabeth City Ministerial Association's Elizabeth City Kindergarten from 1946-1975. It consisted of 4 churches taking turns serving as hostess. It dissolved with the beginning of public kindergarten.

In 1979 Brenda Sanders and Jodi Lauria received support from the church council to start a preschool program at our current location.

Busy Bee Preschool began under their leadership. With their job opportunities elsewhere, Laurie Jennings was asked to head the preschool program beginning 1980-1981. First United Methodist Preschool began with a Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday program. In a few years a Mother's Morning Out babysitting service was started on Mondays and Fridays. Eventually it was turned into one 5 day program.