

First Methodist Preschool Parent Handbook

First Methodist Preschool
102 N. 2nd Street
Temple, Texas 76501
(254) 773-1947

History of First Methodist Church Preschool

The First Methodist Preschool program offered a loving and secure place for moms to leave her preschooler while she took a short break from the responsibilities of motherhood. It opened in 1976 as a Mother's Day Out program. That initial program operated just two mornings per week and served around 20 children. The benefits to the children and their parents were obvious and support for the program has grown! The program has expanded over the years to meet the ever-changing needs of young families. We now offer more classes and have up the age of toddlers to preschool.

Hand in hand with our growth is the schedule of programs offered, the quality of care and education given to our precious children has grown. We have a dedicated and truly loving staff. All staff members are trained in developmentally appropriate practices for the ages they teach. We now offer an exciting Pre-K program with certified teachers. The curriculum in all the preschool classes is designed to build upon itself, spiraling upward year after year, to prepare our students for kindergarten and for life!

Our Goals for the Future

As the program continues to grow and expand, we continuously look toward the future. Our goals for this school year include.....

to continue to provide excellent care and education to our students

to maintain open communication with all parents regarding all aspects of their child's experience here at FMC.

to work together with the staff and membership of this church to support the children of FMC and the Preschool.

Invitation

To those of you who are looking for a church home, First Methodist Church extends a warm and sincere invitation to any of our worship services or activities held throughout the year.

Welcome to FMC Preschool

Purpose

As a ministry of First Methodist Church, the purpose of our school is to provide an educational environment that encourages children to grow socially, emotionally, physically, cognitively, and spiritually into responsible, caring adults. Children are given a safe, nurturing environment where they will receive an education instilling a solid foundation for a future love of learning. Our goal is to provide a high-quality program with low staff to child ratios, small group sizes and a staff educated in early childhood and child development.

Hours of Operation & School Terms

FMC Preschool offers a four-day program (Monday-Thursday), three-day program (Tuesday/Wed/Thursday), and two-day program (Tuesday/Thursday) depending on age. Our hours are 9:00 AM- 2:30 PM. We have ages You will pick a program when you enroll. If you plan on changing this then you will have to make that change by the end of July. Months to five years old, if the child has not attended kindergarten. Switching days will also be available if those days are open. If not, then you will be able to be placed on a waiting list.

Our school year typically begins the Thursday before the first day of school with our Meet the Teacher. Our first day of school will be on the Tuesday after Labor Day in September. Our school year will be September-May, depending on the calendar. We host a Christmas and End of Year program.

Holidays & School Closings

We follow our own school holiday and school closings. We will be off for Columbus Day, MLK Day, Presidents Day, Easter Monday. As for major holidays (Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Spring Break) we will look at surrounding school districts to decide what will work best for teachers and enrolled families. A school calendar will be given at the first of the year and posted on the website. Weather closing will be based on surrounding ISD closers. If Belton/Temple ISD are closed or delayed due to weather conditions, then the school will be closed. Changes will occur during the year and families will be notified as soon as possible.

Summer Session

Summer session will be opened to all current students, siblings, students signing up in the fall, church members, and or have been here in the past years. We will open enrollment at the end of March for the summer session. Current families and church members will have first enrollment date. Followed by incoming new families and lastly for past students.

The summer session will be 4 weeks in June and 4 weeks in July. We will have school Tuesday-Thursday from 9:00-2:30. If a school day falls on July 4th, we will not have school. We will also be off one Thursday in July for a teacher conference.

We will only be taking ages 12 months to 6 years old. Must be age by June 1st.

Admission Policy

First Methodist Preschool is open to children of any race, religion, creed, or ethnic origin. Admission is based on openings available, registration forms completed and turned in, and payments of registration & supply fee. All children enrolling in all classes must be the age of the class by September 1 of the entering school year.

COMPLETION OF ALL REGISTRATION FORMS, HEALTH FORMS, AND THE PAYMENT OF THE REGISTRATION FEE IS MANDATORY TO GUARANTEE ENROLLMENT

State law requires that the following be on file for each child:

1. An immunization record signed by physician/health personnel. Children must have **ALL** required immunizations as stated in the state minimum vaccine requirements. Medical exemptions may be applied with doctors note and Texas Affidavit.
2. A statement that the child has had a physical examination within the last 12 months and is physically capable of participating in the school program.
3. An updated immunization record after the following age:
 - 12 months, 15 months, 18 months, and 4 years check up
4. Hearing and Vision test results for 4-year-old and up.

A registration form must also be completed and signed by the parent which includes:

1. Permission for emergency medical treatment
2. An understanding of the discipline policy
3. Tuition refund policy

Registration Fee: \$200/per child

Once a year, a nonrefundable fee covers student expenses such as curriculum materials, enrichment programs, consumable products, teacher training, and special programs.

Supply Fee: \$100/per child

Once a year there is a nonrefundable fee that covers supply fee expenses in lieu of families having to purchase their own school supplies for their students. The fee covers products like construction paper, markers, paint, wipes, snacks, and cleaning supplies.

Payments

Registration fees are due at the time of enrollment. No child will be placed in a class until the registration fee has been paid. This is NON-REFUNDABLE regardless of the reason of termination of enrollment. Supply fee will be added to the September tuition.

Monthly tuition will be due the 1st of every month. After the 15th of the month, if any tuition has not been paid, or arrangements made with the director, payment becomes subject to a \$25 late fee. Return checks are also subject to a \$25 fee. If we are out of school or the day your child attends falls on a weekend or holiday, then you will pay the 1st day that your child comes back. You may pay year in full in September.

The tuition will be constant regardless of the actual number of class days each month. Tuition will not be pro-rated or discounted for absences. Nonpayment of tuition by an individual does not mean the enrollment has ended, you must notify the school office in writing 14 days prior to your child's last day. All changes in enrollment or terminations from the program must be made in writing to the school office.

You may pay with check, cash, or through the Brightwheel App. You will be charged a fee if payment goes through the Brightwheel app unless you link your bank account information.

Tuition payment will be required at the start of each month, even if we close for an extensive time. If you wish to no longer make a payment, then you will have to withdraw your child. FMC Preschool will need a written notification signed and dated 14 days before the 1st of next month.

Attendance, Arrival & Departure

Please call the school if your child is going to be absent. **PLEASE BE AWARE THAT CLASS TIME BEGINS PROMPTLY AT 9:00 A.M.** Please look below for drop off times and locations. It is very important to start the day on time, as the teachers have a schedule as well. We will lock the doors at 9:15 and if you come later, you will need to be buzzed in. Please make every effort to let us know if you will be later than 9:15. Pick up times 2:15 for 2:30 pick-up. Please make every effort to be here before 2:30. We have many teachers with other jobs and their own children to pick up from school.

Children must be brought into the school and released to assigned staff. Parents need to sign their child in on the tablet at the outside doors using their Brightwheel 4-digit code. There is also a place on Brightwheel to leave a note if someone else is picking up or you can message on Brightwheel. Please also use Brightwheel to let the teacher know if someone else will pick up. Your contact list on Brightwheel also needs to include all approved pick-up people. Please make sure that anyone who comes to pick up a child has their identification with them. Please **do not** call the office to let the program know someone else is picking up. You must use Brightwheel.

Drop-Off

Children must be dropped off outside of the school. Drop-off time will begin at 9:00AM. and end at 9:15AM. If you arrive after 9:15, you will need to use the door code to enter the building and then ring the bell to the doors of the school. Early bird drop-offs will start at 7:45AM and end at 8:45AM. If you are an Early Bird and come after 8:45 AM, you will have to wait till 9:00 AM to drop off. If you are needing to drop off late, then please give a 24-hour notice to the director. You will not be able to drop off after 10:00 AM.

For drop-off, we will have 2 locations. Parents with multiple children will drop-off the location of the youngest child.

The Foyer Entrance:

- Younger Toddler Class
- Older Toddler Class (two/three-day class)

End of the educational wing:

- Older Toddler Class (four-day class)
- Two-Year Old Classes
- Three-Year-Old Classes

- PreK: playground on sunshine days

Pick-up

Pick-up will be between 2:15 – 2:30 PM. Parents will pick up inside the building at the classroom. Please make sure all children are picked up by 2:30 pm.

Late Pickup Policy

Children must be picked up by 2:30 PM. Please make every effort to be prompt in picking up your child. Young children become anxious when they are not picked up on time. If an emergency arises that will cause a parent to be late picking up, we ask that the parent notify the office or message on Brightwheel. If the office is not notified, parents may be subject to an additional late fee of \$2 per minute. After pick-up of 2:45, without notice there will be a \$35 late fee. All fees will be added onto Brightwheel.

Refunds

No refunds of tuition are given for vacation or illness. Registrations and any paid tuition are nonrefundable as well. Upon enrollment, the registration form is a signed contract agreeing to pay the yearly tuition. If unforeseen circumstances (such as relocation, etc.) prevent the student from completing the school year. A 14-day **written notice** must be submitted and filed to relinquish the family from further tuition obligation.

Early Bird Class

This class is available for parents who need an earlier start to the day. Children must be 18 months or older to attend Early Bird. They can arrive as early at 7:45 a.m. This is a non-structured play time with a mixed age group. All children must be signed up to attend Early Bird. You must be here by 8:45am to check in for Early Bird. Early Bird fees are charged by the month with exception to the occasional attendance which is due in the office the day they attend. Early Bird Parents will be able to enter the school and sign their children in at the room they are assigned too. You will be given a door code at the main entrance. Then will walk your child to the assigned classroom. You then sign them in on the tablet.

Illnesses

Please notify the school if your child is unable to attend school due to illness. It is required by state law to report any contagious diseases to the school office so other parents may be notified of its occurrence and symptoms.

DO NOT bring your child to school when he/she is ill or exhibiting any of the following symptoms:

1. Armpit temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness. (To return to school, child must be fever free 24.)
2. Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, uncontrolled breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, vomiting illness (2 or more episodes in 24 hours) rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, wheezing, behavioral changes, red eyes with discharge, or other unusual signs.
3. The child has been diagnosed with a contagious disease, until medical evaluation determines that the child is no longer contagious and is able to participate in the school's activities.

If a child becomes ill during the school day, you will be notified and asked to make arrangements for the child to leave school as soon as possible. The child will be removed from class and will wait for pick up in the office.

If your child needs to take medicine at school, please be advised that NO MEDICATION will be administered by any school employee. We will also not apply sunscreen or bug spray. If you would like that done, then you will have to do so before the start of the day. Each staff member in our school has been trained and holds a valid CPR and first aid card.

Again, we ask all children and parents to stay home if they are experiencing any signs of illness and be diligent and honest during this time to protect the health and safety of the entire school. We are taking these precautions for the protection of all the children, families, and staff who are part of this preschool

Brightwheel App

All parents will need to make sure to download the Brightwheel App on a phone or tablet. This is how all communication from school and teachers will come from. You will also use this to sign in your child and can make payments as well. Please make sure to turn on notifications as well.

Meals and Snacks & Naptime

All children are served a snack in the morning. The snack the child will be having that day will be posted outside on the preschool board.

Lunch will vary based on class. Usually our toddler-two's class will eat before the noon. You will need to provide your child's own lunch each day. Make sure it is a nutritious lunch.

Items to Bring:

Your child will need to bring the following items each day:

- Change of clean clothes (teachers may keep in cubby for the year)
- Diapers/pullup- if needed. Pull-ups need to be the Velcro side pulls for easy on and off.
- Nutritious lunch and water bottle. No milk or juice for toddlers and up.
- Backpack that children can wear or hold.

Naptime

All children will receive a nap/rest time. Even if your child does not sleep, he/she will be expected to lie quietly and rest during this time. Parents will need to provide a nap mat to sleep on.

Any child that cannot behave appropriately at rest/nap time or is routinely disruptive during this time will be subject to a meeting between the parent, teacher, and director. If a child continues to be disruptive during rest/nap time they may be asked to leave at noon. We do give a period of 3-4 weeks for students to adjust. If students are not able to rest/nap they are asked to be picked up early during the transition time.

Potty Training

Toddlers/Two Classes: Do not have to be potty trained. If you start to work on it at home, please let your child's teacher know so that we can do what we can here. It is much different potty training at school than at home. We will do what we can to make this transition successful.

PreK Threes Class: We ask that children are working on potty training for this class and wear pull-ups. No diapers. We understand at this age that there will be accidents, but they need to be close to being fully potty trained and should be by the end of year. They must be fully potty trained to enter PreK Fours.

Pre-K Fours Class: Must be fully potty trained, no exceptions. No diapers and no pull-up.

Special Needs

The school may accept children with special physical or learning needs if the Director— after consulting with the child, the guardians, and involved staff members – finds that those needs can be adequately met by staff.

Should behavioral, learning, or physical problems surface during the school year, a student's status be reassessed. The Director - again, after consulting with the child, the guardians, and involved staff members – will decide whether the school can offer the special programs needed to continue the proper development or the student or whether other arrangements should be made.

The following steps will be taken as necessary to handle a child with potentially special needs:\

1. A situation is brought to the director's attention
2. A consultation with parents, teachers, and director to discuss the situation and recommend possible resolutions.
3. The recommendation of a professional evaluation outside of FUMC Preschool through Child Find Services through your zoned public-school district.
4. If the parent chooses not to follow the recommendations in steps 2 and 3, and the classroom environment is continually disrupted, then the child may be dismissed from school.

Parent Concern Statement

It is vital if a parent has any concerns that they contact the director. If parents are still unsatisfied after meeting with the director, then please contact church pastors. If the director or church pastors are unable to help you, please contact DFPS (Department of Family and Protective Services). You may contact at 4501 S. General Bruce Drive, Temple or at www.dfps.state.tx.us. If you would like to see our recent inspection, please let the director know and it will be shown to you.

With a history of over 40 years specializing in early childhood education, it is our goal that we continue to create a loving, nurturing educational environment that has become expected of First Methodist Preschool. The staff is well educated and continues educational credits each year as well as maintaining Red Cross certification and CPR.

If at any time, you as a parent are not completely satisfied with their child's education and care here at First Methodist Preschool, or have any concerns, the director asks that you notify her at once.

Child Abuse

All our teachers receive child abuse training every year from CPS. Teachers are trained on what to look for and must report and issues with abuse or neglect by 48 hours. Teachers will pay attention to any signs that might lead them to think abuse or neglect is involved. Child Abuse Hotline number is **1-800-252-5400**.

Discipline

Our goal is to nurture and guide all our children to develop appropriate, acceptable, and positive patterns of behavior.

Our discipline procedures will consist of the following strategies:

1. Encouraging children to use their words when having a disagreement with another child.
2. Facilitating children in their attempts to settle their own disputes.
3. Redirecting behavior when this seems potentially effective.
4. Separating a child from the group (Time- Out) one minute away for each year of age.
5. Counseling children individually about their behaviors.
6. Make parents aware of disciplinary concerns with a written Incident report.

Disruptive behavior distracts from the full benefit of the school program and will result in consequences. The following behaviors are considered disruptive:

- Requires constant attention from staff
- Inflicts physical or emotional harm on other children, adults, or self
- Disrespects people and materials provided in the program
- Consistently disobeys the rules of the classroom
- Verbally threatens other students and/or staff
- Uses verbal or physical activity that diverts attention away from the group of children
- Running from class or teachers

Our goal is to provide a positive and safe learning environment for all children. If a child's behavior is consistently disrupting learning, the child will be removed from the learning environment and the directors will contact the parents. A behavior modification plan will be put in place after the child has been sent home once for aggressive behavior towards students or staff, destruction of school or church property or biting.

Discipline procedure for disruptive behavior: Disruptive behavior will be addressed in an incident report. This will be completed to document any inappropriate behaviors that directly impact other children, staff members, or the group. This report will be shared with the parents and will explain the behavior and how the behavior affected others. It will also explain how the situation was resolved. The incident report will be placed in the child's folder to be taken home, signed and returned the next day to the teacher. If the child has difficulty managing his/her behavior on a recurring basis, parents will be asked to meet with the child's teacher and director. If the child's behavior continues to be inappropriate, consistently disruptive, and/or dangerous, it may be necessary for the child to be sent home for a period to be decided at the time of the incidents. Each incident will be based on individual age and the child's development. Biting is developmentally appropriate for some children until the age of 3. Biting will be addressed for under three cases by cases. Biting ages 3 and up will result in suspension/dismissal from the school.

Suspension/Dismissal from school will occur when:

- 1) The child has had 3 separate instances of biting/hitting another child or staff member. (Depending on age/development)
- 2) Running away from teacher, classroom, or building will not be tolerated. Incident reports will be filed each time. The 3rd time, the child will be asked to leave the school.
- 3) The child has been sent home from preschool 3 separate times
- 4) The child has been sent home 2 times after the behavior plan is implemented

There will be NO harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment
- Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training
- Pinching, shaking, or biting a child
- Hitting a child with hand or instrument
- Putting anything in or on a child's tongue
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language
- Placing a child in a locked or dark room
- Putting a child in time out for inappropriate periods of time for the child's age.

Visits

If you would like to visit during the day, please plan with the director to do so.

Clothing

Children should wear comfortable clothing to school. Keep in mind that early childhood learning involves messy activities. For your child to participate successfully, they should not have to worry about spills or paint on their best clothes.

All children must leave a complete change of clothes in their backpacks in case of accidents or spills. Please place the clothes in a plastic Ziploc bag marked with your child's name. If your child is in the process of potty training, please send several sets of clothes and underwear.

The playground is an extension of your child's classroom and provides a place to develop physically as well as socially. Please have your child wear shoes that will enable safe running and climbing. Sandals, flip flops, shoes with heels and shoes that do not secure a child's foot create a problem and will hinder your child's plan and progress.

Please make sure that your child brings a jacket each day to class. They may need it inside if it is chilly and for recess.

Recess

The children will attend recess time daily for 45 mins- 60 mins. The toddlers will play on the grassy area outside. They will have balls and other push toys to play with. There will also be buggy rides involved. Twos Classes and up will have recess on the playground. If the weather is below a 32 degrees wind chill factor, we will not have recess.

Monthly Newsletter and Calendar

A monthly class newsletter will go home each month in child's backpack. The newsletter will include important events happening that month, holidays, birthdays, units of study, etc. as well as contact information of your child's teacher. The director will also send a monthly newsletter as well.

Parties & Birthdays

The school celebrates the birthdays of each child in an age-appropriate way in the classroom. Parents may bring special birthday treats for the class that are prepackaged. Please notify your child's teacher in advance if you plan to bring something. Please no gifts, or balloons. If you have birthday invitations to pass out at school, please do so only if you have one for every child in the class.

During other holidays, the teacher will notify you about class parties.

If you would like to attend class parties or come for your child's birthday, we would love for you to join us. However, if you do decide to come to parties, you will be asked to take your child with you if they are having a hard time with you leaving.

We will also hold Journey to Bethlehem in December the week before we leave for Christmas break followed by a birthday party for Jesus.

Animals

We will not have any animals at the school. No animals will be allowed by anyone. If you have pets, then they must be left in the car or tied up away from the school doors.

Field Trip & Water Activities

In case of a field trip all parents will be notified a week before and will ask to help the chaperone. We also take walking field trips only. Any activities on our lawn will be considered a walking field trip. We will send home a permission slip to have permission for your child to participate in these activities. Teachers will also participate in water table only activities. You will be notified if the teacher plans on having this activity in their classroom.

Transportation

We will never transport children to or from the school.

Enhancement Programs

Chapel Time: Two Classes- Prek will attend chapel one morning a week for a short time of Bible lessons, prayer and songs led by the director. Chapel will be held on Tuesday. We will also hold Birthday Chapel once a month to celebrate the birthdays. August birthday will be celebrated in September. June and July birthdays will be celebrated in May.

Music Class: Music will be taught alongside art.

Gymnastics: This class is optional for two-year-olds and up during our regular school hours. Registration and payment are in addition to the regular school tuition. Registration forms and fees are available in the school office. This will be done during some class time, so please be aware if you choose to sign your child up, they may miss some classroom activities. They will, however, not miss any instruction time.

Art Class: Our art class will be offered every other week with a teacher that has an art degree. It will be offered to all students.

Emergency Preparedness Plan:

Evacuation Plan (Fire/Gas):

Students will be evacuated from school based on exit plans on signs. They will move to the grassy area that is north of the school and wait for all students and employees to be removed in under 3 minutes. Younger Toddlers will be placed in buggy/strollers and leave through the courtyard doors and down the sidewalk. The preschool classes of ages toddlers-3-year-old will go outdoor on each side of school and walk to grassy area north of the building. Then the PreK classroom will go out north side door and around the playground to the grassy area. Each teacher will have a red and green card to indicate if students are all accounted for or missing, and they will also have their cell phone with them.

Bad Weather:

During the event of bad weather, the students will be relocated to the hallway between Pre-k hallway, the director's office and room 4.

Relocation:

In the event of a relocation, the students will be walked over to the Family Life Center or across the street to the storage building at Barton and N. 4th Street depending on which location will be safest. Each teacher will have a red and green card to indicate if students are all accounted for or missing and cell phones/tablet. We will also provide water and snacks by using our cart.

Lock Down:

In the event of a lock down, all outside doors will be locked. Teachers will close all blinds, shut/ lock classroom doors, and turn off lights. Students will be placed on the side of the wall or behind a desk to block them from doorways and windows.

Severe Allergy:

Each child with severe allergies will have a plan that is posted in the classroom.

Medical Emergency:

If there is a medical emergency, then the staff that is on scene will call out CODE RED.

Suspicious Activity/Person:

Staff that is on scene will yell out "WE NEED A GOOD SAMERITAIN" The director will come at once and call across to office and say "We need a good Samaritan..".

Communication:

An emergency phone number that will be available always will be 254-493-4128 or 254.773.1947.

We will have access to all parents' information by book or by tablet that will include parent and emergency phone numbers and all medical care for each student. Each teacher and aides will continue to care for students until each child has been released. Parents will be notified of any emergencies that happen and where they should go to pick up their child. The director will oversee all emergency plans. In the case of her absence, Julie Larsen will be in charge. Church pastors will be on location if they are needed.