



PARENT POLICY HANDBOOK

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF CARROLLTON FIRST PLACE PRESCHOOL/MOM'S DAY OUT

2011-2012

Mission Statement

Our mission is to encourage children to discover and celebrate who they are as they learn to love God, themselves and others in a caring, Christian environment.

Philosophy

We recognize each child as a unique individual and offer an environment that enables them to build self-confidence, self-esteem and a sense of belonging. Our desire is to demonstrate the love of Jesus through our interaction with children and to model Christ-like behavior that we believe will help to build and mold their character.

History

The MDO program has been operating as a ministry of FUMC for over 30 years. In 2002, we reformatted our program to offer a preschool for 3's and 4's. It was then that we adopted the name First Place at the same time becoming licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. We have had the privilege of serving hundreds of families over the years developing close relationships that will last over a lifetime.

Staff

Our staff comes from varied backgrounds but all of them love the Lord and have a desire to minister to young children. Our preschool is staffed by degreed and or certified teachers. MDO and Preschool teachers receive early childhood training throughout the year that helps them to better serve your child and their needs by keeping up to date on new ideas and teaching techniques in working with preschool age children. Each classroom has at least two assigned teachers that work together to create a nurturing and creative environment.

ENROLLMENT

Availability

Consideration for enrollment is on a space available basis according to the date the application is received. Siblings of children currently enrolled in the program are given priority consideration, as well as FUMC church members and CCA families. We offer care for children ages 3 months-PK 4's. The 3's and 4's must turn that age by September 1st and must have completed their toilet training by the start of the school year.

Required Forms

A non-refundable registration fee is required to secure a position in the program including the following forms **before** the child can attend class:

- Completed Enrollment form
- Signed Acknowledgement form
- Health Care Requirement form
- Updated Immunization record
- Hearing and Vision screening (4 year olds only)

Withdrawal

If you must withdraw from the program at any time, a thirty day written notice is required. A full month tuition payment is also required to cover one month following your withdrawal notice.

TUITION AND FEES

Registration and Activity Fees

A registration fee is required on all children enrolled in the program. It must be paid at the time of registration and is non-refundable. Activity fees are collected for 2's and up.

Payment Schedule/Discount

For your convenience, the yearly tuition may be divided into 10 equal payments (July-April). A 5% discount is given for those electing to pay for the year in full by July 15 or if enrolling late with their first payment.

Late Fees

If you elect to pay your tuition by the month a payment is due on the 1st of each month beginning in July. A \$20.00 late charge will be assessed if the tuition has not been received by the 15th of the month. No credits are given for absences due to illness, vacation, inclement weather, etc. It is important that tuition payments be made on time. If for any reason you are unable to make a timely payment, please contact the office to make other arrangements.

Absences

If possible, please call the office in the event your child is unable to attend school that day. Please note that there are no tuition credits given for days absent.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Arrival

Children are received in the classrooms between 8:45 and 9:00 a.m. Please don't drop you child off prior to 8:45 unless you have made special arrangements to do so. To keep classes running smoothly, please try to arrive no later than 9:00 am for Preschool and no later than 10:00 am for MDO. When you arrive at your child's classroom, please initial in on the sheet provided. We ask that when you routinely drop off and pick up your child, that you please not enter the room with them due to the disruption and potential safety hazard that it can cause.

Dismissal

Dismissal is at 2:15. Please be prompt. If you are consistently late, a late fee will be assessed. When you pick your child up please initial them out on the sheet provided. Children will be released **only** to the person(s) listed on the enrollment form. Please notify the office if someone else is picking up (including one of your authorized people) that is a different person than who *normally* picks up your child. If a situation arises that requires someone to pick up your child who is *not* authorized, you must notify the office and that person must have proper identification information (Valid Driver's License). There is extended care until 3:15, but only for those enrolled.

Extended Care

An extended hour is available for an additional fee of \$20 per day for the month. For example for one day of extended each week an additional \$20.00 would be added to your monthly tuition amount for four days each week of extended care you would add an additional \$80.00 to your monthly tuition amount.

Class Schedules

Schedules are posted in the classrooms listing times for the lesson presentation, crafts, centers, music, Bible, playground, etc. You are welcome to a copy of the schedule on request. If your child is in a napping room (infants-3 year), you need to supply a blanket or nap pad that is labeled. The 4 year old classes implement only a short rest time.

CURRICULUM

Mom's Day Out

The specific daily schedule and activities vary from room to room because they are designed to meet the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual needs of each group of children. The curriculum is thematic in nature and combines a variety of activities, but recognizes the importance of learning through play. This is accomplished by offering many different age appropriate activities that allow for learning and discovery along with peer interaction in a structured environment. Teachers will send home a monthly calendar with lesson topics and special instructions to assist in your child's learning. Younger classes will send home daily notes as well.

Preschool 3's

The Preschool 3's program is designed to provide the child with basic skills needed to enter the Preschool 4's class. Throughout the year, the child will engage in developmentally appropriate activities to help him/her learn the basic pre-reading and pre-math skills of early childhood. Development of language and listening skills are introduced through activities that teach colors/shape concepts, matching, sorting, following directions, etc. Early Spanish and writing is also introduced as part of the 3's curriculum.

Preschool 4's

The Preschool 4's program is designed to provide the child with the basic skills necessary to enter Kindergarten. The curriculum is a well-rounded combination of the "Frog Street Press" curriculum and our own program generated resources. It maintains a balance between child and teacher-directed activities which encourage exploration, creativity, independent thinking, personal responsibility, social and emotional growth and self-confidence. Concepts are taught by using hands on learning centers to reinforce what is being introduced and studied. Throughout the year, children experience activities to help him/her learn such skills as letter and sound recognition, counting and number recognition, name recognition and sorting and sequencing skills. Spanish is also introduced on a very basic level through songs and games. Classrooms are equipped with computers that reinforce age appropriate skills through early childhood computer games.

Bible/Music

Time is provided each week for the child's spiritual development by introducing them to God's word through songs and Bible stories. Music is taught through song and movement. Special music programs are presented over the year.

Learning through Play

Play is one of the most powerful vehicles children of all ages have for trying out and mastering new skills, concepts and experiences. Play can help children develop the knowledge they need to connect in meaningful ways to the challenges they encounter in school. Play also contributes to how children view themselves as learners.

As they play, they resolve confusing social, emotional, and intellectual issues by coming up with new solutions and ideas. They experience the sense of power that comes from examining and sorting things out on their own. This ultimately helps children to develop a positive attitude toward learning and towards their peers.

POLICIES/PROCEDURES

Discipline

Redirection is used as the major means of discipline. We believe that children should be given every opportunity to resolve conflict in a non-disruptive manner. The child is encouraged to talk through the issue until a resolution is found. The teacher may also use “time out” where the child is removed from the conflict in order to gain self-control. The teacher will make clear the reason for this action. The child will then return to the classroom when sufficient time has lapsed and a change of behavior is evident. Parents will be called if discipline problems continue.

Please inform us of any changes in your routine or your child’s routine that may affect his/her behavior. We want to help support them through temporary difficulties if we are aware of them. Occasionally a child may have behavioral or developmental needs that we are neither staffed nor trained to handle. If this occurs, the Director will meet with the parents to develop a plan of action that may include outside consultation. Our staff will do all it can to support the child’s continued class participation. However, if the behavior is dangerous to other children or requires more of the teacher’s time where the other children are neglected, we will need to ask the family to consider other child care options.

Biting

Biting is a normal behavior that can occur at the toddler stage. Lacking the ability to express themselves verbally can sometimes lead to biting as a means of expressing their frustrations. We supervise the children closely hoping to notice the signs of a potential incident, and attempt to redirect a child when biting seems like it might occur. When a bite does occur, the child will be addressed and given a short “time-out”. Parents are then contacted as well as the parents of the child who was bitten. If biting is a repeated behavior that cannot be controlled, the parent may be asked to refrain from bringing their child to class until the behavior is under control.

Toilet Training

We are happy to support you in the potty training of your child. Please send your child in pull ups until they are fully trained and able to verbalize their need to go the bathroom. During this time it is advisable to send a change of clothes as well. Also note that to attend the 3 or 4 year old preschool classes, your child MUST be toilet trained.

Visitation

You are welcome to visit your child’s class when the schedule permits. Although it is not required, we ask that you call the office to inform us of your arrival time so that we may plan accordingly. If you are unable to call, please check in at the office. Please be sensitive and note that for some younger children it can be confusing and disruptive when parents enter and exit the classroom after the day has begun.

Security

The doors to the children’s wing where parents enter remain locked from 9:30-2:00. All enrolled families will be issued magnetic pass cards at no cost to use for entrance into the wing of the building when the doors are locked, if you lose your pass card, another one can be issued to you at a cost of \$5.00. There is a buzzer outside the locked doors that can be used to get the front desk’s attention.

Parking for Drop Off/Pick Up

Please park in any available parking lot spaces when dropping off or picking up your child. The covered driveway is for short time parking and cars must NOT be double parked. Cars MUST be able to drive through the covered area and not be blocked. Because of the ages of our program children, we do not offer curb side drop off or pick up, therefore, the parent/guardian must come inside to sign out and pick up their child.

EMERGENCY/WEATHER

School Closing (Weather/Holidays)

If Carrollton Christian Academy (which follows Lewisville ISD bad weather closings) is closed due to inclement weather, First Place programs will be closed as well. Please check local television and radio stations for the listing of CCA closing. If we must close early due to weather conditions, please pick up your child in a timely manner. Please note that the MDO and Preschool programs follow the CCA calendar for holiday closings.

Emergency Drills (Facility)

Throughout the year, we practice fire and weather drills to better prepare the children in the event of a weather emergency. Procedures are posted in each room and each staff member is trained in expediting these procedures. In addition to weather drills, we also practice lock down procedures to protect the children in the event of an on campus threat.

Injuries/Emergencies

In the event of an accident or injury to your child you will be notified immediately. An injury report will be written up and you will be asked to review and sign the report that will be kept in your child's file. Please keep your emergency contacts up to date with us. If there is a life threatening emergency, 911 will be called and your child transported immediately to the emergency room deemed most appropriate by the EMT's dispatcher. You will be contacted immediately.

NUTRITION/FOOD

Nutritional Guidelines

Parents should understand and agree that this program is not responsible for meeting their child's daily nutritional requirements.

Lunch

Due to the fact that we do not provide a daily hot lunch, parents are asked to provide lunch or purchase one of the specialty lunches offered.

Catered lunches options (ages 2 and older) are offered daily. The cost is \$3 and is collected at the front reception desk each day. Please note that if your child is absent on a day you have prepaid for lunch, the money will be kept on credit for the child. If your child brings their lunch please be sure that the lunch bag and drink and food containers are clearly labeled. Infants and toddlers vary eating times, and therefore are discouraged from ordering catered lunches. Ages 18 months and older are encouraged to bring finger foods that do not require any heating.

Snacks

MDO snacks are provided. In preschool classes the children are asked to provide snacks on a rotating basis. Your child's teacher will provide a snack calendar with assigned dates each month. Please note that the snack needs to be in the classroom no later than 9:30. These snacks must be individually packaged or separated into baggies for each child in the class. You will receive a list of snack suggestions with your first snack schedule. Healthy snacks are encouraged with cupcakes and sweets set aside for birthdays only. If parents do not wish to participate, snack will be provided by the program. Please be aware if any food allergies are noted among the children in your child's class and be sensitive to them when bringing snacks in for the class. **Please be sure to let us know if your child has any food allergies.**

CLASSROOM

Celebrations/Parties

Children love to have parties and celebrate. Classes may want to have parties on Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentines, Easter and End of the Year. You will need to check with the classroom teacher for the type of arrangements planned for the class. You are welcome to bring treats and/or celebrate your child's birthday with their class, however, we ask that you coordinate that date, time, etc. with your child's teacher, keeping in mind any food allergies in the class. If you are having a birthday party for your child and want to invite their classroom friends, we will allow invitations to be handed out **only if all** children in the class are being invited, or at least all children of the same gender (girls or boys only).

Volunteers

The classroom teachers welcome help from those parents who are able to assist in a variety of needs/activities/projects such as craft prep, storytelling, party prep, etc. There will be sign-up sheets for volunteers to participate in scheduled parties and events over the course of the year. To allow more parents to get involved, we have elected to have individual activity/party sign up rather than assign a room mom for the entire year.

Labeling

Please label all belongings. We see many duplicate items come through the doors on a daily basis, so it is imperative that you label their belongings for proper usage and to insure that they are returned to you at the end of the day. That includes backpacks, diaper bags, coats, nap pads, blankets, pacifiers, bottles, sip cups, lunch bags, special lovey, etc.

Naptime

After a busy morning, the children need to rest. Naptime is provided for all classes with the exception of the PK 4's who are asked to rest. A clean mat/cot is provided, however, we recommend a labeled nap pad that can be left in the classroom.

Upset Children

One of the goals of our program is that your child has a positive experience while in attendance. We recognize that a child may have a difficult time making the adjustment to being away from you, and we make every effort to help them make that transition. In some cases it may take several class days to accomplish this adjustment. If we are unable to console a child through this transition, we may ask that you consider suspending your enrollment until the next session.

Field Trips (Pre-K 4's classes only)

The pre-K 4's classes sometimes take field trips during the school year. The teachers and children are transported by school bus with seat belts. Individual field trip release forms are required for each child for each field trip and there is usually a minimal charge for each student to help offset the admission cost and transportation. More information regarding the field trips are discussed the parent orientation meeting at the beginning of the school year. A notice and release form will be sent home for each field trip and you will be reminded of the field trip with a note posted outside each classroom in advance of the field trip.

HEALTH/ILLNESSES

Health Guidelines

A doctor's health report as required by the TDPRS must be on file for each child. This record details a child's physical condition and includes a current immunization record. Immunizations must be kept up to date, and you must submit proof of immunizations received after the initial record is placed on file. Parents must inform the preschool office in writing of any special health problems or needs. These include allergies, existing illness, any medication prescribed for long-term usage, and any previous *serious* illness or injury. Our preschool/MDO is not licensed as, or staffed for sick children. You will be asked to pick up your child if they are ill.

Illnesses

As mandated by the Texas Department of Health and Human Services guidelines, and in conjunction with First Place policy, children will not be allowed to attend class if he/she has had any of the following symptoms within the 24 hours prior to class time. **This means that your child cannot return until they are completely free of any of these symptoms for a full 24 hours.**

- The child has a fever of 100 degrees or higher
- Diarrhea
- Repeated vomiting
- Cloudy nasal drainage
- Matted eyes/pink eye/discharge
- Cough due to a contagious condition
- Unusual rash

If your child has a rash you know is not contagious, we require a physician's note diagnosing the condition and written indication that the child is not contagious.

If you are called to pick up your child because they are ill you must pick them up within an hour of being called. Doctors advise that to avoid a relapse or spread of an illness, a child that has been ill within the preceding 24 hours, should not be brought to school. If your child becomes ill during the day, you or your emergency contact will be notified to pick up your child from the school. Make sure all emergency contact numbers are kept up to date.

Medications

We cannot dispense medication without a physician's authorization. If the child is well enough to return to school, but requires a prescription medication, please bring the medication in its original, labeled container to the office. The staff will provide a medication form to be completed with appropriate dosage instructions.

If your child is taking an over-the-counter medication, the bottle must state the dosage for the age of your child. A doctor's authorization with clearly noted dosage and times and is required for over-the-counter medications used longer than five days. Please label the drug container and complete a medication form.

Hearing and Vision Exams (4 Year Olds Only)

The Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act, Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 36, requires a screening for possible hearing and vision problems. This is for all children who are 4 years of age by September 1, 2008. It is recommended that your child's doctor do these screenings and you provide us a copy of the results.

Minimum Standard Policy Review

As a licensed facility, the “Minimum Standards Guidelines” provided by the state as well as our current licensing inspection reports are always available for your review in the MDO/Preschool office. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services prepare these guidelines and are put in place to ensure the safety and welfare of all children that attend child care facilities. If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact the TDFPS office at (817)621-1540 or visit the website at www.dfps.state.tx.us.

Please be aware that we are required by state licensing to report any suspected signs of child abuse, neglect, and, or sexual abuse to the TFPS.

Policy Changes

If a policy change occurs during the current months of operation, each family will be notified of the change in writing. Please remember to notify the office of any changes regarding your personal phone numbers, address, emergency contact names, etc. that occur during the course of the year including any health issues that may arise concerning your child. It is important that we keep your child’s records current.

Director Note

It is very important to me that you feel free to discuss any of your concerns with me at any time. The easiest and fastest way to reach me is through my email which is glawler@firstchurch.net. My direct line is 469-568-1250.

Please feel free to contact me at any time with any questions that might come up or to let us know of absences, illnesses or any other special circumstances that you feel we might need to know about.

Ginny Lawler
Director
First Place MDO and Preschool