

# Davidson United Methodist Church Preschool



## Family Handbook 2026-2027

*DUMC Preschool is an inclusive community that does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin, religion, age, disability, gender, or sexual orientation in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship programs or other school-administered programs.*

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# Mission Statement

Davidson United Methodist Church Preschool will be the Body of Christ in our community through worship, education, fellowship, and service.

# Educational Philosophy

We believe...

Young children learn the foundations of trust, love, faith, hope, and forgiveness as they interact with caring adults and other children in a nurturing environment.

Children learn best with a low student/teacher ratio. The importance of encouraging the whole child's growth includes physical, emotional, spiritual, social, and cognitive development.

Development is a sequential interrelated process, and that each child has an individual pattern and timing of growth, learning style, and family history.

Children need to identify and communicate their feelings, needs, and desires to function positively in society.

Children have important rights as human beings.

Children must learn respect for others and appreciation of differences. Children must learn problem-solving skills rather than correct answers.

A teacher's job is to prepare the environment with a rich variety of opportunities for concrete "hands-on learning." Our curriculum is based on the belief that "children's work is play." Our program includes art, music, literacy, science, math, physical activity, community experiences, and Chapel.

It is important to have families take an active part in the Preschool.

Learning is a life-long process.

# Table of Contents

Registration .....	pg.4
Tuition & Fees .....	pg.5
Program Overview .....	pg.7
Preschool Calendar .....	pg.8
Communication.....	pg.9
The Preschool Day.....	pg.10
Preschool Cancellation.....	pg.11
Safety & Welfare .....	pg.11
General Information.....	pg.13
Health & Medical.....	pg.16
Emergency Evacuation Procedures.....	pg.18
Behavior & Grievance .....	pg.18

# Registration

## Registration Information

1. Registration takes place in January for the following preschool year. Families will be notified of classroom placement in February.
2. Class levels will be based solely on birth date without regard to developmental level, capabilities, or accommodations. A child should be 18 months, 2, 3, or 4 years of age by August 31st to be enrolled in a specific age group. For example, the child must be 3 by August 31st of the new school year to enroll in a 3-year-old class. This reflects the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools System guidelines and the North Carolina Public Education guidelines. The Preschool will not make any exceptions to this policy.
3. To enroll in our toddler class, toddlers must be able to walk independently, sit upright at a table, and self-feed with finger foods prior to classes beginning.
4. To enroll in our three-year-old, four-year-old, and TK classes, children must be able to use the toilet independently and may not wear diapers or pull-ups.
5. Registration forms must be filled out completely and submitted by the registration deadline.
6. Preschool space placement is by priority of 1. returning children and siblings, 2. Church members (by July 1<sup>st</sup> of the previous year), 3. siblings of preschool alumni, and 4. general public.
7. If necessary, a lottery will be utilized.
8. Class placement is done with great care to balance gender and age. Requests from parents for specific teachers or pairing with friends will not be considered.
9. Registration fees will be set for fall at the beginning of the calendar year. **All registration fees are non-refundable.** Registration fees will only be refunded if space limits do not allow acceptance in the preschool.
10. Children who cannot be placed in a class will be placed on a waitlist, and the voided registration check will be returned. Waitlists will fill any vacancies that come open during the school year. Waitlists are dissolved at the end of the school year and do not roll over to the following school year.
11. Registration and acceptance into the program will be based on the space available, as determined by the Davidson United Methodist Church Preschool Committee every year.
12. Registration requests received after the deadline will be taken on a “first-come, first-serve” basis where space permits or children will be placed on the waiting list.



## Tuition & Fees

### Tuition

A bill will not be sent. An invoice will be sent through the communication app for tuition. Payment may be made either by check made payable to DUMC Preschool; through the communication app using a credit card (processing fees apply), or through ACH authorization for automatic withdrawal on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month from a checking account. If you wish to be billed via automatic withdrawal, return the Authorization Agreement for Pre-Arranged Payments Form (can be located on preschool website) and a voided check to the Preschool office.

Enrichment Fee:	\$ TBD (Based on activities each year)
Blue Bags (new students):	\$10.00

#### Monthly Tuition

2-day	Toddlers (T/TH)	\$ 330
2-day	2-year-olds (T/TH)	\$ 283
3-day	2-year-olds (M/W/F)	\$ 393
3-day	3-year-olds (M/W/F)	\$ 331
3-day	3-year-olds (M/T/TH)	\$ 345
5-day	3-year-olds	\$ 569
4-day	4-year-olds (M/T/W/TH)	\$ 397
5-day	4-year-olds	\$ 489
5-day	Transitional Kindergarten	\$ 578

The activity fee is based upon age group, and activities brought into the Preschool. The price is determined during the summer once the schedule is confirmed. Notification will be sent through the communication app and is due in September. Optional events and activities may occur during the school year with an additional fee(s).

A late payment charge of \$10.00 per child will be added for all tuition fees received after the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month. There will be a \$25.00 fee for checks returned for insufficient funds. Teachers are not allowed to accept tuition checks. If payment cannot be made for some reason, please contact the Director. If an account is overdue for more than a month, contact the Preschool Office to make payment arrangements. An account over three months overdue could result in dismissal from the program.

## Tuition Schedule

Tuition may be paid monthly or yearly and is paid in advance. The monthly tuition amount is based on the total number of preschool days for each age group and divided by nine, the number of months preschool is in session.

Registration Fee	Due at time of registration
Payment #1	Due at time of registration (May 2027 tuition)
Payment #2	Due September 1, 2026
Payment #3	Due October 1, 2026
Payment #4	Due November 1, 2026
Payment #5	Due December 1, 2026
Payment #6	Due January 1, 2027
Payment #7	Due February 1, 2027
Payment #8	Due March 1, 2027
Payment #9	Due April 1, 2027

## Withdrawals/Refunds

If a child must be withdrawn from the program, contact the Preschool Director as soon as possible.

1. Registration fees will not be refunded under any circumstances. Registration fees include the flat registration fee and Payment #1 that covers May tuition.
2. If a family moves to another city from the Lake Norman area after registration, one month of the pre-paid tuition will be refunded by the school if a 30-day notice is given.
3. **If a family withdraws a child from the Preschool after registration without moving from the Lake Norman area, tuition and registration will not be refunded.**
4. Any attendance during the month constitutes an entire month's tuition.
5. All withdrawals must be in writing.

## Scholarships

Funds are available for student scholarships throughout the year. If assistance is needed to keep a child in the program, please complete an application available either from the Preschool Director or on the Preschool website. Applications are reviewed by the Scholarship Committee and are kept strictly confidential.

# Program Overview

## Teacher/Child Ratios

2:6	Toddler room
2:11	2-year-olds
2:12	3-year-olds
2:16	4-year-olds
2:12	Transitional Kindergarten

Some exceptions may be made where circumstances are deemed appropriate by the Preschool Director.

## Easing In

Easing in will take place in all classrooms. The goal of easing in is to give children and teachers the gift of small groups and regular but short periods to adjust to leaving and becoming accustomed to preschool, teachers, and friends. Easing in means that children will be at preschool for 1.5 hours rather than 3.5 hours for a few days. Half the class will attend from 9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. and the other half from 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Each age group will have a different number of days of easing in due to maturity levels. If a child requires additional time to ease in, please talk to the Preschool Director.



## 2026-2027 Preschool Calendar

The Preschool follows the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) calendar, including holidays and teacher workdays. This includes CMS Teacher Workdays scheduled after the school year has begun. CMS Early Release Days do not affect the Preschool calendar.

September 3	Meet the Teacher
September 8	First Day of classes for students
September 8	Parent Information Night
September 21	CMS Teacher Workday (Preschool Closed)
October 2	CMS Teacher Workday (Preschool Closed)
October TBD	School Photos
October TBD	Hearing and Speech Tests
November 2	CMS Teacher Workday (Preschool Closed)
November 3	CMS Teacher Workday (Preschool Closed)
November 11	Veteran's Day Holiday (Preschool Closed)
November 25-27	Thanksgiving Holiday (Preschool Closed)
December 21- January 1	Christmas Break (Preschool Closed)
January 4	Classes Resume
January 18	Martin Luther King Holiday (Preschool Closed)
January 4-January 31	Registration for returning students 2027/2028 school year
January 22	CMS Teacher Workdays (Preschool Closed)
February 15	Parent-Teacher Conferences (Preschool Closed)
March TBD	School Photos
March 25-April 2	Spring Break (Preschool Closed)
May 27	Last Day of classes

# Communication

## Communication App

An invitation to join the Communication App will be sent out in the summer prior to classes beginning.

A parent using our communication App has access to updates about the child's day, a messaging center for easy communication with the child's teacher, and information about the child's daily schedule. It is also used to view or pay invoices and manage attendance.

The Preschool utilizes the app for communication between Parents, Teachers, and the Preschool Director. In August, the Director will send the email invitation to parents, who then download the app. Multiple emails per child may use the app, allowing spouses and other caretakers to have the same information.

Teachers will utilize the app to send photos of the child and their classmates throughout the day. Only their child's class will be visible in the app.

Parents will utilize the app to mark their child as absent and the reason for their absence (illness, vacation, etc.).

**Any communication concerning the child should be sent through the app.** Teachers will respond to communications as soon as possible. Communication responses will vary depending on the time of day received and class schedules.

## Conferences

Conferences will be held for all children on February 15, 2027. The Preschool will be closed on this day. Teachers will individually schedule their conferences with parents. Families must make plans for their childcare needs while attending conferences.

# The Preschool Day

## Preschool Hours

After easing in, all children will **arrive at 9:00 a.m. and leave at 12:30 p.m.** Children will not be allowed in classrooms before 9:00 a.m., as this is the teachers' time to prepare for the day.

## Lunch

Lunch will be a part of our daily schedule. **All food must be nut-free.** Please pack nutritious food and no candy. Lunch boxes will be kept at room temperature with no access to a refrigerator or microwave. Allergies will be communicated on a class-by-class basis.

## Arrival & Departure

Parents will walk their children into the building at the start of the Preschool day. Teachers will open their classroom doors at 9 am to admit children into the classrooms.

Parents will escort children to their classroom and pick children up from classrooms at the end of the school day. Parents will be issued a key fob to access the Preschool building during operating hours. Once a child has been released by the teacher, it is the responsibility of the adult to monitor the child's behavior and safety anywhere on the DUMC campus.

## Late Pick-ups

For non-emergency situations, parents who are more than five minutes late picking up their child will be subject to our late pick-up policy. Under extreme circumstances, please notify the Preschool Director through the communication app so the child can be reassured, and the teacher will have the expected arrival time.

**First occurrence:** The parent will receive a verbal or written warning.

**Subsequent occurrences:** After the five-minute grace period, a late fee of \$5.00 will be assessed. An additional \$5.00 will be added for each five-minute interval after that. The fine will be assessed for each child in the family.

## Parking Safety

To ensure the safety of our children and staff, extreme caution must be used in the parking lot.

1. **At no time should children be left unattended on the church grounds.**
2. **Cell phones must not be used in the church parking lot.**
3. Parking under the covered driveway or at the curb nearest the building is prohibited at all times. Emergency vehicles must have clear access to the facilities.

# Preschool Cancellation

## Cancellation

**The Preschool will generally follow the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) course of action for closing schools in inclement weather. If CMS chooses to use a two-hour delay, the Preschool will make an effort to operate on an abbreviated schedule of 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.** There are a few times when conditions may allow the preschool to open. There are also times when Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools are open, and conditions here are not safe to open. Parents will be notified when the Preschool does not follow the CMS course of action through the communication app. Parents will receive a notification only if the Preschool decision differs from the CMS decision.

## Makeup Days

The first two days missed by any individual class due to inclement weather will not be made up. If additional days are missed, the Preschool Committee will consider each case-by-case basis to determine if those other days will be made up.

# Safety & Welfare

## Appropriate Dress and Change of Clothes

Children should wear comfortable, washable play clothing as clothes will get dirty. **All children must wear closed-toe, rubber sole shoes such as tennis shoes or sneakers to school each day.** Children wearing rain boots, cowboy boots, slippers, sandals, dress shoes, clogs, etc., will not be allowed to play on the playground or in the rainy-day room. This rule is for the safety of the child.

Due to safety, the following items are not allowed:

- umbrellas
- sunglasses
- trinkets
- long dresses
- jewelry
- costumes

**FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN:** A change of clothes, including socks and three diapers or training pants, will be sent with the child every preschool day in the issued tote bag. Pacifiers are not allowed.

**FOR OLDER CHILDREN:** Sometimes clothing becomes dirty or wet during snack time or using the restroom. Please plan to send extra clothes for older children as directed by your teachers. These clothes should include underwear, socks, a shirt, pants, and, if possible, a pair of old shoes.

**FOR ALL CHILDREN:** **Please label jackets, sweaters, a lunch box, and water thermos.** Pack a sweat-proof, sealable water bottle or thermos filled with water for drinking after coming in from outside.

## Toys from Home

Please do not bring toys from home to preschool as toys can be lost or cause friction among children. A younger child may bring a small “cuddly” for comfort purposes.

## Birthdays

Each child's birthday is special and should be acknowledged. The Preschool encourages parents to plan a simple party with their teacher. Please contact the child's teacher through the communication app to coordinate.

1. Discuss a special treat with teachers. Special treats, such as cupcakes, must be store-bought and in their original container. The Preschool cannot serve home-baked treats. **Any treat brought in for a birthday needs to be nut free.**
2. **If your child has a food allergy, please provide alternative shelf-stable treats that can be stored in the classroom.**
3. **Balloons or favors are not allowed.**
4. **No invitations for home parties are to be given out at Preschool.** At the beginning of the preschool year, a class roster will be provided to mail invitations and thank you notes for a private party.

## Child Safety

1. Bathrooms are located in every classroom.
2. When children are moved through the building, one teacher walks at the beginning of the line, and the other walks at the end, ensuring everyone stays together.
3. There are always two teachers or staff members with each class. If a child becomes ill, the Preschool Director or Administrative Coordinator will remove the child from the classroom, and two staff will stay with the child until they are picked up.
4. All staff must attend Safe Sanctuary training every year and First Aid/AED/CPR training every two years.
5. Background checks are done on all staff before hiring and periodically updated for returning staff members.

## Building Security

Parents are issued one fob that allows access to the Preschool building during operating hours. A second fob can be issued for a \$30 refundable security deposit. Lost fobs will be replaced for a \$30 fee.

## Incident Reports

Incident Reports are sent home with the child in a timely manner. If a child has an injury, such as a bite from another child, the parent is contacted via phone or communication app before pick-up time.

## Posting of Notices of Services

Notices or fundraising, events, and business flyers are not to be posted on the Preschool walls or in children's school bags other than those sponsored by the Preschool or Davidson United Methodist Church.

# General Information

## Toilet Training

All children enrolled in the 3-year-old, 4-year-old, and transitional kindergarten classes are expected to be fully potty trained and no longer wearing diapers or pull-ups.

A child is considered fully toilet trained when they can:

- Recognize the need to use the toilet
- Communicate the need to go to the restroom
- Independently manage clothing and basic hygiene (with minimal teacher assistance)
- Remain consistently dry throughout the day

If your child has developmental needs or challenges related to toilet training, please speak with the Preschool Director **prior to enrollment** so that we can determine how best to support your child and family.

For all children, we recognize that toilet training is a process. Our staff will make every effort to partner with families during this stage. Please work with your child's teacher and/or the Preschool Director to ensure that the classroom can appropriately meet your child's needs.

## Opportunities for Parent Involvement

Parents are encouraged to:

1. Participate in their children's birthday celebration at Preschool.
2. Share special talents or materials related to a career or profession.
3. Serve as Room Parent.
4. Serve on Preschool Committee.
5. Attend parent seminars and other Preschool sponsored events.
6. Attend scheduled parent/teacher informational meetings.
7. Help with minor repairs and other service opportunities.
8. Purchase classroom items needed for a classroom.

## Special Events & Trips

All classes participate in monthly enrichments such as music, library, and chapel.

Three-year-old, four-year-old and transitional kindergarten also participate in science, Stretch-N-Grow, walking field trips, and in-house presentations. The activity fee collected at the beginning of the school year covers these costs.

## Chapel

Chapel will be held each month beginning in October. Chapel will include a Bible story, songs, prayer, and movement.

## **Tote Bag**

Every child will use a Preschool issued tote bag as backpacks do not fit in the cubbies. A tote bag is \$10 and may be used for additional years.

## **Class Roster**

A Class Roster will be distributed to the parents of each class. If you do not want your information to be shared with the class, please notify your teacher.

## **Fundraising**

Money raised through Harris Teeter's "Together In Education" program and professional preschool photos provide additional funds directly to the Preschool.

Even if registered with another school, Davidson United Methodist Church Preschool can be added to a VIC card (school #4783). The Preschool earns a portion on the purchase of Harris Teeter branded products. All parents, staff, and Preschool Board members are encouraged to participate in these endeavors.

Donations are welcome. Please note that the Preschool is a non-profit entity, and your donation may be tax-deductible.

## **Child & Class Photos**

Preschool pictures will be taken each year, subject to negotiation with photographers. Individual portraits will be taken in the fall. In the spring, the photographer will return for individual and class photos. Preschool pictures are a fundraiser for the Preschool.

Davidson United Methodist Church (DUMC), its representatives, and employees may take photographs during DUMC-related activities. DUMC reserves the right to use those images, without compensation, in print and/or electronic communications for any lawful purpose, including publicity, illustration, advertising, and Web content (DUMC website, Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram).

To ensure Internet safety for our children, youth, and vulnerable persons, no names or personal information will be used on any DUMC sponsored platform.

Parents must notify the Preschool Office in writing if a child's photograph is not to be used via the Photographs Form.

## **Inclusion**

If a child with special needs should require additional resources for care during the preschool day, it will be the parent's responsibility to pay for and provide professional care. The Preschool Director will decide on the need for additional resources in consultation with the Preschool staff involved and the Preschool Committee. To help the child develop age-appropriately, anyone related to the child may not serve as the shadow, aid, therapist, etc.

## **Preschool Committee**

The Preschool Committee advises the Preschool. Its purpose is to support the Preschool operations and serve as a liaison between the school, parents and DUMC. It monitors school policy regarding student enrollment, staff compensation, health and legal requirements, school calendar, tuition, budget matters, special situations, and grievances.

Our committee is comprised of the following: Chairperson (Church Member), Parent Representatives (Church and Non-Church Members), DUMC Staff Liaison, Preschool Teacher(s), and the Preschool Director.

If interested in participating as a member of the Preschool Committee, please contact the committee chair at [dumcp.chairperson@gmail.com](mailto:dumcp.chairperson@gmail.com).

# Health & Medical

## Sick Kids: When to Stay Home from School:

FEVER A temperature of 100.4° or higher	COUGHING THAT WON'T STOP Or other problems with breathing	DIARRHEA OR VOMITING Within the past 24 hours	RASH Body rash with itching and/or fever	HEAD LICE Itchy head, active head lice	EYE INFECTION Eye is red and oozing a yellow or green discharge
<b>When to Return to School:</b>					
Fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen	Cough is mild and infrequent and evaluated by doctor if needed	Free from diarrhea and/or vomiting for at least 24 hours and evaluated by doctor if needed	Free from rash, itching or fever and evaluated by doctor if needed	After first head lice treatment	24 hours after starting antibiotic eye drops or ointment

### Health Guidelines

If a child has a cold, fever, or feels sick, they should not attend Preschool to protect the other children. Any illnesses should be reported to the teacher through the communication app. This will keep the preschool informed of any childhood diseases, viruses, etc., and allow teachers to monitor signs of potential illness in other children. If a child is not well enough to go outside, do not send them to preschool and request they are kept inside while the class goes outside. The Preschool does not have the staff to stay inside with one child. There will be no refund for preschool days missed due to illness.

1. Any child with a fever (over 100.4°F) should not attend preschool until they have been free of fever for at least 24 hours.
2. Any child with vomiting should be kept at home until the child has been free of vomiting for 24 hours.
3. Any child with diarrhea (loose, watery bowel movements of increased volume and frequency) should be kept home until the problem has been resolved and until the child has had no diarrhea for 24 hours.
4. Cold symptoms such as a runny nose and cough are highly contagious to preschoolers. Please keep a child at home if they display:

- a. Chronic Cough
- b. Nasal Discharge
- c. Fever over 100.4°F
- d. Sore Throat
- e. Unexplained rash

5. Any child with pink eye (red eyes with drainage) should be kept at home until their healthcare provider has cleared them for return to Preschool.
6. Any child with lice or nits may return after completing treatment.

Our best measure to control the spread of infection is frequent hand washing. Soap, water, and paper towels are readily available to all staff.

The symptoms of seasonal allergies or asthma are similar to viruses and other illnesses. A child may attend Preschool with a letter from their doctor.

### **Medication**

Staff are not allowed to give medication. If a child has a life-threatening health concern, please make arrangements with the Preschool Director. The Preschool must have written verification of the condition and a medical authorization form completed by a doctor and parent to administer the medication. The medicine must be in the original labeled container. All medicine will be kept in the child's classroom. Staff cannot apply sunscreen, bug spray, ointments, or lotions.

### **Medical Record Form**

A Medical Record Form will be provided to parents. The Preschool must receive a copy signed by the physician for a child to start school in September. Please note that a child will not be able to start school until the form is received. **Medical Record Forms are due to the Preschool Office by August 1<sup>st</sup> every year.**

### **Immunizations**

North Carolina law requires children in preschool programs to submit proof of current immunizations. Any religious exemptions must be presented in writing to the school. Medical exemptions must be completed by a physician and state the basis for the exemption. Please have a physician provide a copy of the child's immunization record by August 1<sup>st</sup> each year. **Children missing an immunization record will not be permitted to attend preschool.**

### **Emergency Cards**

Families must complete an Emergency Card for every child attending preschool each year. The Preschool must have this information before the start of preschool. If a child becomes ill, the information is needed to locate a parent or individual authorized to pick up the child.

There are two copies of this card. One will be kept in the child's classroom and the other in the Preschool Office. If this information should change at any time during the school year, please ensure the changes are made to both cards.

# Emergency Evacuation Procedures

## Fire

Emergency evacuation policies are posted near each classroom door. All teachers are trained in the evacuation plan, and routine fire drills are practiced.

## Tornado

The Preschool staff utilize emergency weather alert applications on their smartphones for advance warning of weather-related emergencies. If a tornado warning is issued during school hours, children will be moved to interior rooms and hallways within the building. All teachers are trained in these emergency procedures as adopted from the American Red Cross and the National Weather Service.

## Lockdown Policy

In conjunction with the Davidson Police Department, the Preschool has adopted an emergency procedure for the lockdown of our facility. This procedure will be used if an emergency necessitates a lockdown of the Preschool.

## Nuclear Power Plant Emergency Plan

The Preschool lies within a ten-mile radius of the McGuire Nuclear Station; therefore, emergency policies/evacuation procedures have been adopted. The Preschool is registered with county emergency management officials. In an alert, sirens are sounded, and local radio stations inform the public of what to do. The Preschool is in Zone H; the reception center is Troutman Middle School off I-77 at Exit 45 in Iredell County. If an evacuation is ordered, all attempts will be made to transport children to the reception center by individual cars and church vans. Local county emergency vehicles will be contacted if enough transportation cannot be secured. These policies have been adopted to ensure the safety of all the children. Families are encouraged to also have emergency plans at home and practice them often.

# Behavior & Grievance

## Behavior & Discipline

The Preschool staff is trained to set appropriate limits and boundaries to provide for the safety and well-being of every child. Positive discipline measures will be used to redirect and guide a child's behavior.

If a behavior concern persists, the Preschool will:

- First, communicate with families via the communication app
- Second, arrange a family/teacher conference
- Third, arrange a conference with the Preschool Director and teachers

## Director Discretion

The Preschool Director reserves the right to dismiss a child from the preschool program for behavior deemed detrimental to the safety of others, for conduct that is detrimental to the learning of others, or

for the inability of family members to comply with policies set forth by the Preschool.

If at any time, the Preschool Director feels that the health or safety of the child, their classmates, or the staff is in danger, immediate withdrawal of the child from the program will be required. There will be no refund of tuition monies paid.

### **Grievance Policy**

If a parent has concerns regarding various aspects of the program, staff, policies, or operating procedures, a system has been established to allow this communication to occur.

If a parent has an individual teacher/class-related concern, they should seek a resolution by contacting:

- First, the teacher
- Second, the Preschool Director
- Third, the Director of Children's Ministry

If a parent has a concern related to the Preschool policies, the administration of the program, and the operating procedures, they should seek a resolution by contacting:

- First, the Preschool Director
- Second, the Director of Children's Ministry