

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH PRESCHOOL & CHILD CARE CENTER

Family Handbook



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Mission

The First United Methodist Church Preschool and Child Care Center furthermore referred to as FUMCCB, is an outreach Ministry of First United Methodist Church, Cocoa Beach, FL. We are dedicated to surrounding children with a loving, safe environment where they will grow in their love of self, others and God. It is governed by a church appointed Preschool and Child Care Board.

The purpose of the Preschool and Child Care Center is to provide children, from infant through age five, developmental and educational experiences in a Christian atmosphere of love, security, friendliness and understanding. In doing so, we hope to help each child develop socially, emotionally, physically; intellectually and spiritually to become the special individual God intends him or her to be.

Philosophy

Children need to follow a pattern of growth natural for them in order to realize their fullest potential as a person. Young children are driven by their own curiosity to reach out and explore.

Our programs are designed to provide for and nurture each child's individual development by offering age appropriate creative learning activities through art, music and language, educational toys as well as positive social interaction with peers and adults.

Our curriculum is designed to provide developmentally appropriate activities for each individual child in our care. Our program is centered on monthly and weekly themes, based upon season, holidays, community, and national and world awareness. These themes will utilize learning and discovery of the alphabet, numbers, science, music, literature, in addition to social and spiritual experiences. Our purpose is to nurture individual growth and prepare for the educational challenges of kindergarten and the school years ahead. We emphasize good manners, respectful behavior, and responsibility. We encourage each child to explore, meet challenges, learn, and creatively build a good sense of self while developing a confident and secure feeling of his/her place in society.

First United Methodist Cocoa Beach Preschool and Child Care Center is a United Methodist Christian ministry. This ministry is not subject to change and will not conform to other religious affiliations or beliefs.

In order to accomplish these goals, FUMCCB hires staff that are committed to our mission and philosophy, who are qualified through the State and ***who feel that teaching young children is a calling and not just a job.***

Center Policies and Procedures:

Staffing

Each of the Preschool and Child Care staff members must meet the state credentials and on-going training requirements. We strive to hire teachers with degrees in Early Childhood Education, Child Development Associate Diplomas or Equivalency qualifications. All teachers and teacher assistants are professional in their commitment to early childhood development and education.

Class Ratios

FUMCCB Preschool and Child Care Center adheres to all the state laws governing child care, including staffing qualifications and staff-to-child ratios. This ensures that your child receives individual attention and a calm, productive learning environment.

Discipline

We follow a policy of positive explanation, redirection, and behavior guidance. If inappropriate behavior of a disruptive or impolite nature continues, a child will be placed in a quiet area of the classroom for 1 to 3 minutes, (depending upon the child's age), to think about his or her actions. Before returning to play, the child will be given positive reinforcement for correct behavior and redirected to the classroom's current activity.

Enrollment Requirements

Within thirty (30) days of enrollment FUMCCB Preschool and Child Care Center must have a Florida State Health Examination Form and Shot Record Certificate from your pediatrician. Your child's Shot Record must be updated every new school year. FUMCCB does not accept Religious Exemption from Immunization forms. The parent is also required to sign and date a Flu Pamphlet that is supplied by the Preschool and Child Care Center. These State required forms must be completed and notarized when necessary. A notarized medical release must be provided to warrant emergency treatment.

Pick-Up Policy

Children may only be picked up by people listed on the child's enrollment forms. You may update the enrollment forms at any time to add or delete individuals designated for pick up. The teacher releasing your child will ask for identification from designees and any person not familiar to the teacher. FUMCCB Preschool and Child Care does not allow parents to make changes to the enrollment paperwork over the phone, all changes must be made in person or via a notarized letter. This includes the individuals designated to pick up your child.

General information

**A NOTE TO ALL PARENTS!
PLEASE REMEMBER TO LABEL *EVERYTHING!***

Visitors: Parents with children enrolled in this program are welcome to visit the school at any time, and are encouraged to volunteer in the classroom. This can be done many ways...read a story, help with a project, have lunch with your child...or various other ways. Please remember you're important to your child's school experience. We love and appreciate our volunteers!

Snack and Lunch: You will need to provide snack and lunch everyday (applicable to full days) for your child. Please use an insulated lunch box with frozen ice packs to keep food fresh and cold. Food choice recommendations are sandwiches, fruit, yogurt or pudding. Children appear to prefer homemade lunches over "lunchables" or canned foods. **State regulations prohibit staff from using a microwave to heat your child's lunch.**

Clothing: Children should wear comfortable, practical clothing, and bring a jacket for chilly weather. Please label all clothing with your child's name. **For safety purposes, children are to only wear closed toed shoes.** Please do not dress your child in sandals or flip flops as they are not a safe choice on the playground. Child care is Messy! Your child will play in the sand and mulch, use glue, markers, paint, and water throughout the day. Therefore, please dress your child appropriately. Each child should have a complete change of clothing in his/her cubby that is labeled with his/ her name.

Nap-time: Your child needs to bring a crib sheet and a small blanket for nap time. **Please, no pillows or stuffed animals.**

Infant Nursery: For babies in the nursery: Please provide a crib sheet, bibs (at least 2/3 per day), diapers, wipes, formula, bottled water, milk, lunch and snacks. There is a refrigerator in the nursery. Please also provide two complete changes of clothes labeled with your child's name. Feel free to bring a favorite blanket or toy for comfort.

Photographs: Upon registration you will be asked to sign a consent form for FUMCCB to take pictures or videos of your child/children. These pictures and videos will be used by the teacher and school only and will not be published in any social media. These photographs and videos will not be used for any publicity.

Birthdays: Bring birthday invitations to school only if you are inviting everyone in the class. Kindly mail or email invitations if you invited only select children. If you are interested in having your child celebrate their birthday in the classroom please discuss with your child's teacher to help choose the best way to celebrate with all students. Some students may

have strict dietary needs do to allergies. All food items brought into classroom to be shared MUST be store purchased with clearly labeled ingredients list.

Allergies: Allergies are a serious concern. Please inform us upon enrollment of any allergies your child has, so we can list them in the class file and be sure they are correctly flagged in the emergency information log. We suggest that you teach your child about his/her allergy and encourage him/her to verbalize what they cannot eat or play with.

Fire Drills: Fire drills are practiced school-wide on a on a regular basis. All of the rooms are equipped with fire alarms and smoke detectors. Teachers will take the sign-in sheet with them and perform a headcount to ensure everyone is present.

Transporting Children: Our center does not transport children.

Biting: While we recognize that biting among young children does occur, steps must be taken to try and prevent such situations. If your child bites another child we will complete incident reports for all parties involved and notify you at pick up or with a phone call. When biting continues to be an issue, a parent/teacher conference will be scheduled, and we will try to resolve the problem. If a child bites hard enough to break the skin, the child will be sent home. A conference with the director, teacher and parents will be scheduled before the child may enter the program again.

Any child that bites another child (regardless of breaking the skin) 5 times within 30 school days OR 3 times within 5 consecutive school days, will be subject to the following actions: The next biting incident will require the parent to pick up the child immediately, and every time thereafter.

Registration

Academic School Year (August – May)

There is an annual \$100.00 NON-REFUNDABLE family registration fee and a NON-REFUNDABLE \$25.00 supply fee per child.

Summer Session (June – July)

There is an annual \$25.00 NON-REFUNDABLE family registration fee and a NON-REFUNDABLE \$25.00 supply fee per child.

***We cannot guarantee a spot for your children until we receive the registration fee.**

Tuition

Tuition must be paid in advance. There is a 10% discount for each additional child enrolled per family. Tuition is due on the **Friday** of each week and is applied to the upcoming week. If payment is not received on Friday, a \$5.00 late fee will be added to your account and **your child will not be allowed admittance to the Preschool and Child Care center on Monday.** Preschool and Childcare services will be suspended until all past and current financial obligations are met.

Tuition rates are established at the beginning of each academic school year any changes will be made each year prior to registration.

Refunds/Deductions

FUMCCB prohibits refunds and/or deductions of tuition and/or registration fees for absences due to illness, travel (outside the prescheduled allotted vacation days), inclement weather days such as hurricanes or the withdrawal of a child. Teachers are scheduled based on the expected number of children and must be paid accordingly. Exceptions to this policy due to family emergencies must be presented to the Director and approved by the board of director

Vacation

Children who attend FIVE FULL TIME or PART TIME (9:00 am-12:00 pm) days are allotted ten vacation days per academic school year.

Children who attend THREE FULL TIME or PART TIME (9:00 am-12:00 pm) days are allotted six vacation days per academic school year.

***The Director has a Vacation Day Request Form that MUST be complete 10 days prior to using vacation days. Submission of this form allows for accurate tracking of your child's vacation days and allows accurate scheduling of teachers.

Reminder: vacations days may not be used for sick days

Class Placement

For academic and educational purposes the advancement from the infant room, one year old room and two year old room will be at the discretion of the Director with input from the lead teachers and parents.

Children in the three year old room must be three years old by Sept. 1 of the enrolling school year and **must also be toilet trained.**

Children enrolling in the VPK program must be four years old by Sept. 1 of the enrolling school year. Parents must provide appropriate VPK enrollment forms from the Early Learning Coalition.

For our preschool program to have full benefit and influence upon your child, regular attendance is very important. To maintain proper ratios, children will **NOT** be able to make up missed days. They will be able to attend only on the days they are enrolled.

Hours of Operation

The Preschool and Child Care Center hours are from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. **A late fee of \$1 per minute per child will be charged after 6:00 p.m. This late fee will be billed to your account and you will be responsible for timely payment.**

VPK hours of attendance are 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Monday – Friday and follow the Brevard County Public School attendance policy. Regular and consistent attendance is required pursuant to FUMCCB Preschool and Child Care Center’s contract with the Early Learning Coalition.

School Calendar

August through May we follow the Brevard Count Public School Calendar as much as possible. There will be variations (i.e. Teacher Workdays, Good Friday, Parent/Teacher Conferences) as we strive to provide the most appropriate and consistent learning experience for the children. **Please see our school calendar for details.**

Summer session is provided from the end of the school year in May until the beginning of the new school year in August.

Signing Children In and Out

It is required by law that you sign your child in and out of the day care center each day he/she attends. This helps the teachers to know the whereabouts of your child especially when on the playground or during a fire drill. The sign-in sheets are located on the playground or outside your child’s classroom. **Kindly sign the sheet legibly using a first and last name.**

Please make sure that a staff member is made aware at the time when you are dropping off or picking up your child.

Religious Content

Studies have shown that the early years are when children form their concepts about God and the way God relates to them. They learn that God loves and cares for them just as the significant people in their lives do.

It is our goal to model Christ’s love to all of the children entrusted to our care. Through example, rather than indoctrination, we believe children will develop a healthy relationship with God. This is accomplished thru daily prayer, roll modeled by teacher interactions with the students and a weekly Children’s Church Program.

Medications

If your child is taking a prescription medication that needs to be administered during childcare hours, you must complete an Authorization for Prescription or Non-Prescription Medication form indicating the time medication should be administered and the dosage amount. When the medication expires, and a replacement medication is brought in by the parent, a new Authorization for Prescription or Non-Prescription Medication form must be completed by the parent indicating the time medication should be administered and the dosage amount. **NO OVER-THE-COUNTER (NON-PRESCRIPTION) MEDICATIONS WILL BE GIVEN BY OUR STAFF UNLESS ACCOMPANIED BY A SIGNED NOTE FROM THE PHYSICIAN. Prescription medication must have a label stating the name of the physician, child’s name, name of the medication, and medication directions.**

Illness

Young children need to strengthen their immune systems by allowing their bodies to resist infection naturally and recuperate in a quiet restful environment.

If your child is sick, please **DO NOT BRING HIM OR HER TO SCHOOL!** When you bring a sick child to school, everyone is exposed. We make every effort to control illness by hand washing and disinfecting the classrooms and toys regularly. Any child care center is a high-risk environment, and we request your cooperation in keeping ours a healthy one. You will be asked to pick up your child within **one hour** from the time you are contacted by the preschool office if he or she has any of the following symptoms, or any other signs or symptoms of illness. Failure to pick up your child within one hour will result in a **\$20.00 fee** every hour thereafter. **Your child must be free of symptoms for 24 hours before he/she will be allowed to return to school.** You must sign a form indicating that you understand your child may not return to school for 24 hours.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fever of 101 degrees or higher | <input type="checkbox"/> Rash |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool in a 24-hour period) | <input type="checkbox"/> Vomiting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pink eye | <input type="checkbox"/> Unusual dark urine and/or gray or white stool |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Severe coughing/whooping sound | <input type="checkbox"/> Head lice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficult of rapid breathing | <input type="checkbox"/> Yellowish skin or eyes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stiff neck | <input type="checkbox"/> Any other unusual sign or symptom of illness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exposed, open skin lesions | |

Accidents

If your child is hurt and requires medical attention, you will be telephoned and informed of the injury. Should the injury require immediate medical attention, your Medical Release Form allows us to call 911 and take the necessary action. The majority of accidents are minor bumps, bruises and scrapes. These accidents will be treated appropriately and are documented by the teacher on an Accident Report. You will be asked to sign two (2) copies of this form when you pick up your child. One copy is yours to keep and one copy remains at the Preschool and Child Care Center. **Please sign these forms before leaving the Preschool and Child Care center with your child.** Accident Reports stay on file at the Preschool and Child Care Center for one (1) year.

Emergencies

During an emergency, where evacuation is possible, you will be telephoned and expected to pick up your child as soon as possible. We shall follow the Brevard County Public School closure policy during a hurricane. In the event of severe weather, your child will be moved to the location specified in the Emergency Evacuation Procedure (available in the Preschool and Child Care Directors Office).

Child Abuse

We are required by law to report any sign of neglect or abuse of the children in our care to the appropriate authorities. As Preschool and Child Care professionals, we are liable by law to report abuse and can be fined and/or jailed for failure to do so.

Cessation of Care

If a child or parents behavior is inappropriate, abusive and/or detrimental to the objectives of the Preschool and Child Care Center and a mutually acceptable resolution is unattainable, preschool and child care will no longer be provided.

FUMCCB Child Care Center will provide two weeks' notice prior to cessation of care **except** in cases of gross misconduct on the part of the parent or child. Gross misconduct is to include, but is not limited to, being under the influence of alcohol or any controlled substance not prescribed by a doctor at the time of drop-off or pick-up. The Preschool and Child Care Center Board of Directors has the option to request that a child be withdrawn from the Preschool or Childcare Center for reasons deemed appropriate by the Board.

Fund Raisers and Volunteering

FUMCCB Preschool and Child Care Center organizes annual fundraisers. Monies from these fundraisers are used to purchase equipment and improve our facility. A considerable portion of our budget is committed to salaries and overhead expenses. By volunteering and participating in fundraising events, you provide FUMCCB Preschool and Child Care Center financial support. This financial support enables us to make available high caliber staffing, low staff/child ratios and a well-equipped environment. Donations of monies, toys and equipment are always welcome, with the approval of the Director.

Please sign the enclosed form on the following page indicating that you have read the Family Handbook and return it to your child's teacher or the director within 1 (one) week.

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH PRESCHOOL AND CHILD CARE CENTER



FAMILY HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I, _____, have received and read the Family Handbook and agree to all the policies of First United Methodist Preschool and Child Care Center.

Please sign _____

Date _____

Child's Name _____