



HUMC Preschool



Growing in Faith, Learning with Joy

≡ 2026-2027 ≡

≡ Parent Handbook ≡



"See what love the Father has given us, that
we should be called children of God."

1 John 3:1



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Welcome
- Mission Statement
- Requirements to Attend
- About Our Program
- Class Options
- Tuition and Fees
- Registration
- Hours, Arrival and Dismissal
- Drop-Off and Pick-Up Service
- School Attire
- Items From Home
- Snack
- Lunch Bunch
- Discipline
- Absences and Illness
- Policy for Severe Weather or Emergency Situations
- Privacy
- Special Occasions
- Communication
- Field Trips
- Visitation

WELCOME

Welcome to HUMC Preschool, a ministry of Hampstead United Methodist Church. We are delighted to have your family join our preschool family. We look forward to working together with you. We encourage you to become involved parents during your child's process of learning and growth.

We strive to provide a strong early educational foundation for your child, filled with enriching experiences. Thank you for allowing us to share in this special time in your child's life.

MISSION STATEMENT

HUMC Preschool is designed to minister to the needs of children and their families by providing a safe, loving and nurturing environment for young children and an enticing place for creative learning experiences through play, music, stories and art in a positive Christian surrounding.

REQUIREMENTS TO ATTEND

All children must:

- Be current on immunizations and provide a copy of their immunization record prior to the start of school. (No exemptions permitted.)
- Submit an annual medical form completed by a physician.
- Be potty trained to enter the Three Year and Pre-K classes.
 - **Being fully potty trained means that your child consistently uses the restroom, recognizes and communicates when they need to use the restroom, wears regular underwear throughout the day (no diapers or pull-ups), can handle basic toileting tasks with minimal assistance, and has very few accidents. (We understand that occasional accidents may happen, but frequent accidents indicate the child is not fully potty trained.)**

ABOUT OUR PROGRAM

We are a morning program that meets Mondays through Thursdays. Holidays and other days off closely follow the Pender County Schools calendar.

Children are placed in classes based on their age as of August 31 of the current school year. This is consistent with the public school placement law.

Classrooms are set up as learning environments unique to each age group. All classes participate in circle time, center time, outside play, snack time and weekly chapel. Every month brings a new curriculum focus, devotion and character education topics.

HUMC Preschool believes:

- Each child is unique, has special interests, and needs at this valuable stage of their life.
- Children learn and grow at their own rate and in their own way.
- Children are naturally active and curious, learning by exploring, investigating and interacting with a rich and supportive environment.
- Given opportunities to plan, initiate and persist in their own activities children will gain the self-worth and confidence needed to become life-long learners.
- Children benefit from the security of predictable daily routines.
- The curriculum is a balance between child initiated and teacher directed activities.

- Teachers present concepts and academics through play and the use of projects and integrated activities.
- Teachers and families must work together for a child to reach their full potential.

CLASS OPTIONS

Class options vary from year to year. For the 2026-2027 school year, all classes will operate on a four-day per week basis.

We reserve the right to change or cancel class offerings if there are not enough children to fill the class. If a class is cancelled, your registration fee will be refunded.

TUITION and FEES

Registration fee: \$175.00 per child

Tuition: \$300.00 per month

Family Discount: \$20.00 monthly discount for each additional child enrolled.

Payments are accepted via cash, check (made payable to HUMC Preschool), Zelle (humcpreschool@hampsteadumc.org), or Preschool credit card reader. Please note, there is a \$35 charge for returned checks.

All tuition is due the first school day of the month. A \$10.00 late fee is charged if tuition is not received by the 6th school day of the month. We do not guarantee to hold your child's space if tuition is delinquent beyond the tenth day.

A re-enrollment fee will be charged if the space is still available.

Tuition is based on the number of days of preschool per year and not the number of days per month. Full payment is expected regardless of any absences of the child. In case of an extended absence for any reason, tuition must be paid to hold the child's space. There is no provision for make-up or refund due to absence, severe weather, facility problems or any other circumstances.

Notice of withdrawal from the program should be given to the director as soon as possible. Tuition paid for the month of withdrawal is not refunded.

REGISTRATION

To register your child, complete and return the application, and submit a copy of your child's current immunization record and the annual, non-refundable \$175.00 registration fee.

A family with a delinquent tuition balance may not register for the following year until their current balance is paid in full. If registration has been paid for the following school year and a child's tuition balance becomes delinquent beyond 45 days, that registration payment will be applied to the tuition balance and the child's space for the following year will be forfeited.

When a class becomes full, an applicant's name will be placed on a waiting list to be called as soon as a space is available.

ALL MEDICAL FORMS AND IMMUNIZATION RECORDS MUST BE SUBMITTED **BEFORE** THE START OF SCHOOL. We do not accept any immunization exemptions.

HOURS, ARRIVAL and DISMISSAL

School hours: 9:00 am to 12:00 noon

Arrival time is from 9:00am until 9:10am during which time the entry door will be unlocked. Late arrivals cause disruptions to the class and missed activities for your child. Help your child have a great start to their day by being on time. Parents will say goodbye to their child at the entrance of the preschool, and the student will be escorted to their classroom by a preschool staff member.

The door will be unlocked at dismissal time, which is promptly at 12:00pm. Teachers will dismiss the children individually to the parents waiting outside the classroom. Families with more than one child should pick up their youngest child first.

If someone different will be picking up your child, please let us know. We will ask to see their driver's license for verification.

We understand emergencies happen. If you will be late to pick-up your child, please notify the preschool office as soon as possible.

An adult must accompany all children before and after school. NEVER allow children to leave the building by themselves or wander on church grounds unattended. NEVER leave children alone in the car. ALWAYS hold your child's hand in the parking lot

DROP OFF AND PICK UP SERVICE

Drop off and pick up services (located behind the preschool by the playground) are offered as a convenience if you have younger children, or if you or your non-preschool child is sick, etc.) We do our best to take them from your car in the morning and bring them out in the afternoon in a safe and timely manner. **When a staff member has your child, it is their responsibility to hold onto them until they are safely in your hands.** At that point, please adhere to the following:

Drop off:

- Arrive on time.
- Please wait with your child for a staff member at the playground gate.
- Have your child(ren)'s labeled belongings in a bag or backpack that is easy for the staff member or your child to carry.

Pick up:

- Arrive on time.
- Please wait for your child at the playground gate.
- Place your child(ren) into their car seats immediately.
- Never allow them to roam freely in the parking lot.

Please let a staff member know if you will use this service at any time during the school year. Safety must **always** be a priority.

SCHOOL ATTIRE

What to wear:

- Play clothes children can manage themselves
- Jackets, coats, hats & mittens when cool or cold
- Sunscreen & insect repellent when needed
(Must be applied at home)
- Closed in non-slip shoes (sneakers are best)
- Children with pierced ears must only wear stud earrings.

What NOT to wear:

- Sandals, clogs, open toe or any slick bottom shoes or boots
- Jewelry (bracelets, necklaces, hoop or dangling earrings, etc.)
- Any items that may cause a choking or safety hazard

ITEMS FROM HOME

Everything brought to school must be clearly labeled with your child's name. The staff is authorized to label anything unlabeled.

What to keep at school:

- All children must have a **seasonal** change of clothes, including socks and underwear, in a zip top bag with every item clearly labeled with their name.
- The Two Year Class must keep a minimum of three disposable diapers per day at school.

What to bring each day:

Every child needs to bring water in a non-spill cup daily.

Comfort Items:

Children may need a comfort item to ease the transition from home to preschool at the beginning of the school year. Teachers will gladly work with parents to develop a plan with the child's best interest in mind.

Show and Tell:

If your child's class is participating in Show and Tell, the teacher will send information to you. Please only bring items from home on your child's designated Show and Tell day.

*Please do **not** bring any weapons or toy weapons of any kind (i.e. guns, bow and arrows, slingshots, knives, swords, etc.).

SNACK

A daily snack is provided by the preschool for your child. On occasion, teachers will ask for specific items on a signup sheet, or via online sign-up genius. Please only bring items requested by the teacher. Snack time is a valuable part of the learning experience. It enhances socialization, fine motor skills, promotes good nutrition and manners.

The health and safety of all our children is a priority. Peanuts and tree nuts are very allergenic and can cause a life-threatening anaphylactic reaction. Some children have not yet been exposed to nut products and an allergy may not be known. **Therefore, we are a peanut and tree nut free school.**

LUNCH BUNCH

Lunch Bunch will be available for HUMC Preschool students in our 3 Year Classes and Pre-K Class. Lunch Bunch meets weekly on Wednesdays beginning at the beginning of October. Dismissal is promptly at 1:00pm.

There are two options for signing your child up for the Lunch Bunch program. **Option 1:** Students will register for the month and attend every Wednesday. **Option 2:** Students will register weekly on a first-come, first-serve basis (drop-in spots will be limited).

The charge is \$40.00/month, or \$12/weekly drop-in session. Monthly sign-up payments can be added to your tuition check. Weekly sign-up payments must be given to the office staff no later than the morning of the selected Lunch Bunch day.

Please note: months with fewer than four Lunch Bunch sessions available will be weekly sign-up only.

The sign-up sheet for both Lunch Bunch options will be located on the bulletin board inside the preschool. Sign-ups for the following month will be posted the last Wednesday of the current month.

Each Wednesday your child will need to bring his or her own lunch, prepared and ready to eat, along with a napkin and any necessary utensils. Send food in non-glass containers easy for your child to manage. All lunch bags/boxes and containers should be labeled with your child's name.

Items not allowed at school:

- Nuts or any foods containing nut products or processed in a facility that also processes nut products **PLEASE READ LABELS.**
- Any drink other than water
- High sugar snacks
- Glass containers or cans

DISCIPLINE

The staff is expected to maintain a loving, patient attitude toward children and to speak to them in a calm manner using positive language.

Our belief is that promoting positive behavior, lessens the chance for a child to misbehave. Children are expected to behave appropriately for their age. If a child is experiencing difficulty in working or playing with others and they are being too disruptive, the child may be given a “break” from the activity, for one minute per year of the child’s age. The teacher will explain to the child the reason why he or she has been given the time out. The child may then return to the activity and the incident is considered over. The child will be shown the same degree of affection and respect that is shown to the rest of the class. Severe behavioral matters will be addressed by the director in cooperation with the teachers and parents. Any child whose behavior is found to be a danger to themselves or to others will be removed from the program.

Aggressive Behavior (Kicking, Biting, Hitting)

Feelings can be overwhelming for small children, especially when they possess limited oral language to express emotions. While kicking, biting, hitting can be considered normal, age-appropriate behaviors, we take every incident seriously. HUMC Preschool strives to provide an environment that is safe, loving, and always nurturing for all children. We reserve the right to decide if a child who has repeatedly displayed aggressive behavior will be asked to leave the program immediately, or if there will be a trial period in which we work to implement a Behavioral Intervention Plan.

Please note that changes at home can affect a child's behavior at school. If such changes occur, please feel secure in sharing information that will make us more sensitive to your child's needs. Strict confidentiality will be maintained.

ABSENCES AND ILLNESS

If your child is going to be absent, please let us know.

Keep your child home if they are sick. Children must remain home if they have a fever, cold, runny nose, sore throat, cough, earache, headache, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting or an unidentified rash or any contagious, infectious or communicable illness or condition such as chicken pox, conjunctivitis, hepatitis, meningitis, bed bugs, head lice, pin worms, ring worms, etc. Open wounds, sores or burns must be covered with a bandage. **Notify the school if your child has a contagious, infectious or communicable illness or condition.**

Parents, children or anyone who is sick should not enter the building. If you need assistance getting your child in or out of the building, please give us a call.

Your child will be sent home if they are not well enough to be in school. Outside playtime is a vital part of the daily schedule. Children must be well enough to go outside.

Teachers do **NOT** administer any medications to children. The only exception is physician prescribed emergency medication.

Children who have been sick may not return to school until a 24-hour period of a normal temperature and no symptoms has occurred.

POLICY FOR SEVERE WEATHER OR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

When Pender County Schools are closed due to severe weather, we will also close. When Pender County Schools operate under a 1-hour delay, we will open at our regular time of 9:00 am. When Pender County Schools operate under a 2-hour delay, we will open at 10:00am with regular dismissal at 12:00pm. Please check social media accounts and your email for closing announcements.

If Pender County Schools close early due to weather or emergency situations, we will also close at that time if it is before noon. There may be circumstances in which it is not necessary for us to close early. We will do our best to keep parents informed in such cases.

If Pender County Schools are closed for an extended number of days due to busing, facility or other reasons, the director will inform you of the preschool's opening/closing plan.

Please note: all delays, early release and closing decisions will be made with the discretion of the director.

PRIVACY

Your child's safety and concern is always our highest priority. Preschool activities may involve visitors at school. Your child's artwork and comments may be shared and displayed at school or off premises. Your child's picture and/or name may appear in various media (church website, preschool Facebook page, preschool distribution, etc.). Cameras are allowed in classrooms for use by preschool staff and/or parents and visitors. Staff policy prohibits using student information and/or pictures on social

networks, personal web pages or chat rooms. Parents and visitors should also honor that policy.

If you do not want your child's picture taken and used in classroom communication groups, please complete the opt-out form in your child's Open House folder.

SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Birthdays may be celebrated at preschool. See your child's teacher **in advance** if you would like to provide snack for your child's class to celebrate their birthday.

Teachers may occasionally ask parents to provide snack for holiday parties.

All party snacks must be peanut and tree nut free.

All invitations, thank you notes, etc. should be given to your child's teacher(s) to distribute.

COMMUNICATION

Communication between the child's primary caregiver and the school is essential. Let us know if you have issues, concerns or would like to schedule a conference. While the director's door is always open, the teacher's first responsibility is to the children during school hours. A mutually agreed time can be arranged to speak to your child's teacher.

Confidentiality is of the utmost importance and is always respected and maintained.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are scheduled occasionally as part of the curriculum and learning process. If you do not wish for your child to attend a field trip, other arrangements must be made for them that day.

VISITATION

We have an open-door policy, and you are always welcome to visit. However, all exterior doors are kept locked during preschool hours for the safety of our children. Please ring the bell at the main entrance to gain entry.