



First United Methodist Preschool

**Parent Handbook  
2024-2025**

# **First United Methodist Preschool Mission & Philosophy**

## **MISSION**

First United Methodist Preschool is a ministry of First United Methodist Church. The mission of First United Methodist Church is "Changing Lives through Jesus Christ."

## **PHILOSOPHY**

We believe in providing a supportive and nurturing learning environment for children, encouraging their development through Christian-based education and the HighScope Preschool Curriculum.

We believe that the love and example of Christ is experienced through others and strive to show this love and acceptance to children and their parents.

We believe preschool children learn about themselves and their environment best through active participatory learning.

We believe an excitement for learning is best generated in a setting that presents opportunities and avoids achievement pressures.

We believe in Christian outreach. To serve both community and church, First United Methodist Church members and those outside the congregation will work in partnership to serve the preschool program.

## **History of FUMP**

First United Methodist Preschool opened in 1984, with Marilyn Comfort as its first Director. Under Marilyn's direction, the Preschool developed into one of the leading preschools in the city. In 1985, five at-risk children from the community were given scholarships to attend the preschool. The scholarship program remains a vital component of the program and is part of the church's Outreach ministry. Successive Directors have maintained the high standards first established by Marilyn.

## **Directors of FUMP**

1984-1994 Marilyn Comfort  
1994-2001 Pam VanDerbeek  
2001-2007 Dolores Wack  
2007-2014 Paige Lindblom  
2014-2019 Ida Caramanis  
2019-2020 Kelli Henning  
2021-Present Kristen Breslin

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>WELCOME TO FIRST UNITED METHODIST PRESCHOOL.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>SCHOOL CALENDAR.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>EVERYDAY INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>6</b>
Class Schedule and Class Size	
Drop-off and Pick-up	
What to Wear and Bring to Preschool	
Snacks	
Outdoor Play	
Field Trips	
Sickness	
Head Lice	
Inclement Weather Closings	
Substitute Teachers	
Parent-Teacher Communication	
<b>PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE PRESCHOOL.....</b>	<b>10</b>
Parents in the Classroom	
Opportunities for Parent Involvement	
Parent Advisory Committee	
Family/Community Events	
Scholarship Program	
Tuition and Fees for 2024-2025	
<b>PRESCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.....</b>	<b>12</b>
Enrollment and Withdrawal Policy	
Emergency Procedures Policy	
Health and Immunization Policy	
Allergy Management	
Parent Concerns and Suggestions	
<b>PRESCHOOL PHILOSOPHY AND CURRICULUM.....</b>	<b>15</b>
HighScope Curriculum	
Daily Routine	
Discipline	
Behavior Policy	
Child Assessment	
<b>PUBLIC DISCLOSURE STATEMENT.....</b>	<b>17</b>
Religious Exemption	
Qualifications of Personnel	
Description of Facilities	
Enrollment/Capacity	
Health Requirements for Staff	

## **Welcome to First United Methodist Preschool!**

We are excited not only to welcome your child to the Preschool, but your family as well! You are your child's first and best teacher. No one knows your child better than you do. The partnership between you and the teachers will help to make your child's preschool experience a rewarding one.

This parent handbook will answer many of the questions you may have as we start the school year. Please take time to read it thoroughly. In the handbook you will find contact information, a yearly calendar, information about policies and procedures, schedules and events, the FUMP philosophy, and HighScope curriculum. We expect this to be a useful resource for you throughout the school year.

Kristen Breslin  
Preschool Director

Marilyn Comfort  
Board President

## **First United Methodist Preschool Staff**

**First United Methodist Preschool (FUMP) Office 434-296-6682**

**Contact information for lead teachers are provided below:**

Kristen Breslin, Preschool Director

[fump@cvillefirstumc.org](mailto:fump@cvillefirstumc.org)

Chrissy Porco, Lead Teacher for Pre-K

[Chrissy@cvillefirstumc.org](mailto:Chrissy@cvillefirstumc.org)

Nickie Davis, Lead Teacher for 3s class

[nickiedavis@cvillefirstumc.org](mailto:nickiedavis@cvillefirstumc.org)

Anika Winterhoff, Lead Teacher for the 2s class

[anikawinterhoff@cvillefirstumc.org](mailto:anikawinterhoff@cvillefirstumc.org)

## 2023-2024 School Calendar

August 29 .....	Open House (2s) Parent Orientation 6-7pm (no children)
August 30.....	Open House (3s, Pre-K)
September 3-6.....	First Week of Preschool (staggered start)
September 13.....	Back to School Picnic-Pen Park 5-7
September 20.....	FUMP Volunteer Meeting
September 27.....	Teacher Work Day/Professional Development
October 11.....	Donuts with Dad
October 20.....	Preschool Sunday at CFUMC 10:00
October 25.....	Teacher Work Day/Professional Development
October 28-29 .....	Parent Teacher Conferences
November 25-29.....	Thanksgiving Break
December 19.....	Christmas Party (2s)
December 20.....	Christmas Party (3s, Pre-K)
December 23- January 6.....	Winter Break
January 7.....	Preschool Resumes
January 7.....	Registration Begins (Current Families)
January 20.....	No Preschool - Martin Luther King Day
January 20.....	Open Registration Begins
January 24.....	Muffins with Moms
February 17.....	No Preschool- President's Day
February 23.....	Preschool Sunday at CFUMC 10:00
March 20-21.....	Teacher Work Days
March 31-April 4 .....	Spring Break
April 15-16.....	Picture Days
April 18 .....	Good Friday (No Preschool)
April 21.....	Easter Monday (No Preschool)
April 28.....	Teacher Work day
May 1-2.....	Parent Teacher Conferences
May 5-9.....	Teacher Appreciation Week
May 16 .....	End of Year Celebration at Meade Park 5-7
May 21.....	Last Day of Preschool (3s)
May 22.....	Last Day of Preschool (2s)
May 23.....	Last Day of Preschool (Pre-K)

## EVERYDAY INFORMATION

### Class Schedule and Class Size

2-year-old Class

Tuesday and Thursday, 9:00 am–12:00 pm

3-year-old Class

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 9:00 am–12:00 pm

4-year-old (Pre-K) Class

Monday through Friday, 9:00 am–12:00 pm

Class sizes are limited to 12 in the 2-year-old class, 14 in the 3-year-old class, 14 in the Pre-K class. Classes may include one additional student to accommodate a teacher's child.

### Drop-off and Pick-up

Children should be dropped off between 8:50 am and 9:00 am. Please pull into the parking circle and wait in your vehicle with your child. A teacher will come to your vehicle in the parking lot and take your child to the classroom. As always, parents have the option of escorting their child into the Preschool, but must park in a parking space and not stop in the drop-off line to do so. **Please do not leave your vehicle unattended in the parking circle.** Failure to exercise patience and follow these procedures can create safety issues. If you arrive after drop-off time, you will need to park in a parking space and escort your child into the classroom, as class will already have started.

Pick-up will be from 11:50 am to 12:10 pm. There will be a staggered dismissal to avoid congestion in the parking lot. Children in the 2-year-old and 3-year-old classes will be dismissed at 11:50 am. Children in the Pre-K class will be dismissed at 12:00 pm. Please drive all the way around the parking circle and remain in your vehicle. Teachers will escort your child to your car from inside the Preschool. If the parking lot is full, please circle around the block until the lot is accessible. It is very important that traffic on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street NE and E. High Street are not blocked. If you must get out of your vehicle for any reason, please pull into a parking space. **Please do not leave your vehicle unattended in the parking circle.** If you have not arrived to pick up your child by 12:15 pm you will be assessed a \$5.00 late fee (unless prior arrangements have been made with the Director).

**What to Wear and Bring to Preschool** There is no particular dress code at FUMP. We do suggest that parents encourage their children to dress appropriately for the weather as we do go outside during the entire school year. We also request that children dress in clothing that is suitable for active play and creative art projects. We can get messy! All children need a FULL change of seasonally appropriate clothing (all items labeled), which will be stored at the Preschool. In addition, children who are not potty trained must provide diapers. A personalized tote bag will be provided by FUMP and used daily to transport a communication folder to and from Preschool. Your child should bring his or her tote bag to Preschool every day and return home with it.

## Snacks

**Snacks.** FUMP allots time each day for a mid-morning snack. A light, NUT FREE snack should be provided from home each day, sent in an appropriate baggy, or small container marked with their name. Please send a water bottle with only water labeled with your child's name on it daily. This is the same for Lunch Bunch as well.

**No Nut Policy.** FUMP adheres to a "No Nut" snack policy for the entire Preschool. "No Nut" means that any foods containing peanuts and/or tree nuts, or foods that have been processed with trace amounts of these substances will not be served. All snacks must be in their original, sealed packaging, with the exception of fresh fruits and vegetables. If your child participates in an after-school activity or "lunch bunch", do not send any food containing nuts in his/her lunchbox.

**School-Provided (Special Occasions) and Allergies.** All food allergies require documentation by your providing physician/allergist. If your child is unable to have a specific food due to a medical allergy (i.e. not dislike), a suitable alternate food will be given in its place. Additionally, if your child's food allergies are too numerous or significant (e.g., life-threatening) a letter from your child's physician/allergist indicating food allergies, type and severity of the reaction, and whether consumption or the mere exposure to such foods will cause a reaction must be submitted.

**Birthday Celebrations.** Birthdays are an exciting time, and FUMP believes in each child celebrating his/her special day. You are welcome to bring a special treat for your child's birthday. However, in adherence with our No Nut Policy, **FUMP cannot accept homemade baked goods.** Other store bought baked goods, cookies, sweets, or candies will not be accepted unless they are in their original, sealed packaging, with the exception of fresh fruits and vegetables. Other treat ideas include fruit popsicles, yogurt popsicles, or all-natural pudding cups.

Please note that birthdays can be made special by sending in special plates, hats and/or napkins (this is usually enough to make your child feel very special), or visiting the classroom to read a favorite book or participate in any of the daily activities.

## Outdoor Play

The Pre-K class walks one block to McGuffey Park. All children are required to hold a handle on a rope for safe travel to and from the playground. During the first days of Preschool, the children practice walking with the rope until they have mastered the skill. If a teacher is concerned a child will not cooperate with this procedure, the child will be left at Preschool with the other class in session. Parents are always welcome to join the class at the park. Teachers limit the equipment the children may play on based on their physical abilities as a class. We encourage your continual communication with the City Parks and Recreation Department to ensure maintenance of this park. We also use the Church courtyard playground, adjacent to the Preschool for outdoor play. This is a secure environment that provides an appropriate space for the 2 and 3-year-olds to play outside. Playground time is a wonderful opportunity for parental involvement.

## Field Trips

Field trips are scheduled for the 3-year-old and Pre-K classes throughout the year, and occasionally for the 2-year-old class in the spring. Field trips will be arranged at the teachers' discretion. Parents are invited to discuss their field trip ideas with the teachers and to help coordinate such a trip. Parent volunteers for field trips are necessary. Children are transported to field trips by teachers and parent volunteers and must be in a car seat or booster seat appropriate for their age and size. A transportation waiver must be signed by a parent/guardian of any child who will be transported by a non-parent to a field trip. Parents are given advance notice of field trips. FUMP students must wear their FUMP shirts on field trips.

In addition to field trips, all classes may schedule in-class presentations and visitors. Again, ideas for in-class presentations may be discussed with the teachers, but will be scheduled at their discretion. Some of the field trips and in-class presentations enjoyed in the past include apple picking, fire truck visit, doctor/dentist visit, visiting a pumpkin patch, local singers, and creative dance classes.

## Sickness

Children with signs of a communicable disease or fever must be kept home. Please do not send your child to Preschool if:

- Your child has had a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher or has had a fever in the past 24 hours.  
**Children should be free of fever without the use of medications for a continuous 24 hours before returning to Preschool.**
- Your child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness and has not yet received medication for a minimum of 24 hours, or until your doctor tells you that your child is no longer contagious. ● Your child has had any episodes of vomiting or diarrhea in the past 24 hours. ● Your child has a rash of unknown origin.
- Your child has stomach pain or cramping, frequent coughing throughout the day and night, nasal drainage that requires constant wiping or blowing, or any combination of these symptoms.

If you suspect that your child has a fever or is ill, please delay sending him/her to Preschool until you have had enough time to observe his/her behavior and feel certain that your child is well enough to be in Preschool.

If a child becomes ill at preschool, the parents or caregiver will be contacted to take the child home. The Director will be the final authority in judging the health and fitness of any child.

In cases of communicable diseases, such as chickenpox, mumps, whooping cough, fifth disease or strep throat, parents are asked to notify the Preschool so that others may be informed of the potential exposure of their child to the illness, as appropriate.



## **Head Lice**

When a child is found to have live lice, the child's parents will be notified by the Director of the Preschool. Based on the time of day, the parents may be asked to pick up the child early for dismissal. The child should undergo appropriate treatment for head lice, which could include over-the-counter creams or prescription medications provided by their pediatrician. Prior to returning to school after the above treatment, the child will be checked by the Director or an appropriate designee for live lice. If any lice are found, the child should have the above treatments repeated prior to returning to Preschool. If live lice remain, the child should see their pediatrician for an alternative, more effective treatment.

The other parents in the class will be notified by the Director to monitor routinely for the presence of live lice or nits if a case is found. No identifiers will be provided, and the student will be kept entirely confidential.

## **Inclement Weather Closings**

FUMP will follow the schedule of Charlottesville City Schools for inclement weather closings. Announcements are available on television (WVIR Channel 29 and WVAW/WCAV/WAHU Charlottesville Newsplex), online, and via email. If City schools open 1 hour late, FUMP will open at 10:00 am. If City Schools open 2 hours late, FUMP will be closed. If City schools are closed, FUMP will be closed. FUMP reserves the right to cancel school if deemed necessary.

## **Substitute Teachers**

There are times (such as teacher illness/personal day) when you might see a substitute lead teacher or assistant teacher in your child's classroom. Substitute teachers are often parents who have graciously offered to share their time and talents in the classroom. Each year, a substitute teacher list is compiled that includes FUMP parents and other community members. Teachers use this list to make arrangements for a substitute for their days absent from the classroom.

Offering to act as a substitute teacher in your child's class or another FUMP class is a wonderful opportunity to be involved in the Preschool. Any parent (Grandparents, Aunts/Uncles, etc.) can volunteer to be a substitute. All volunteer substitutes will be given information so that they are comfortable in the classroom. As a substitute you will always be assisting a permanent staff member and will not be responsible for handling emergencies or planning activities. Substitute teachers are offered a small stipend. Parents who are willing to substitute can indicate their preferences (days/classes) by filling out the Parent Volunteer Form distributed at the beginning of school or by talking to the Director.

## **Parent-Teacher Communication**

Good communication between you and the teachers is essential. We will do our best to keep you informed about your child's adjustment to Preschool and his/her progress. We will also share information about the activities at the Preschool. This Parent Handbook contains information about the philosophy of the program as well as general information. Lead teachers will provide a monthly newsletter of the children's activities. Upcoming activities and topics of interest to the whole Preschool will be communicated, as needed, through the Communication Folders in your child's tote bag, as well as via email.

Parent-Teacher conferences are held twice a year. The teachers are always happy to arrange a conference at any time to discuss your child's progress. Please feel free to request a time to talk with the teachers about your child, but also feel confident that the teachers will notify you should they feel additional communication would be helpful. Parents are expected to be responsive to teacher requests for discussions, especially related to topics such as adjustment to the Preschool, development, behavior, or health.

In addition, a Communication Folder will come home daily via your child's FUMP tote bag and should be checked daily for any messages. Space is provided for messages from home.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE PRESCHOOL**

### **Parents in the Classroom**

Parents are always welcome in the classroom. If you have a hobby or talent you would like to share, please let your child's teacher know. Volunteers are also welcome to help with activities such as doing art projects, going to the playground, or simply reading a favorite book. Depending on the activity, it may be best to leave younger siblings at home. This not only allows your full attention to be focused on the class, but also allows for some special time between you and your preschooler. Please talk with your child's lead teacher to make arrangements. Prior to participating in your child's class, parents must fill out a Volunteer Registration form and sign a Volunteer Code of Ethics.

### **Opportunities for Parent Involvement**

Parents are encouraged to become involved in Preschool activities. This involvement may take many forms. Some examples are attending family events throughout the year, organizing Scholastic Reading Club orders, and participating in fundraisers. Information on ways to become involved will be offered throughout the year and can also be found on the Parent Volunteer Form.

### **Parent Advisory Committee**

First United Methodist Preschool is governed by the FUMP Board, a workgroup of the First United Methodist Church Nurture Committee. This board is comprised of the FUMC Pastor, the Nurture Committee Chair, the FUMP director and voluntary members of the FUMC congregation. If you have any questions about the FUMP board or the FUMC Nurture Committee, please contact Marilyn Comfort at [mhcomfort52@gmail.com](mailto:mhcomfort52@gmail.com).

We value parent input! All FUMP parents are welcome to join the FUMP Advisory Committee, which will meet periodically throughout the year to discuss preschool social events, fundraising and all sorts of other fun things! If you are interested in being a part of this committee, contact your child's teacher or Kristen Breslin at [fump@cvillefirstumc.org](mailto:fump@cvillefirstumc.org).

## Family/Community Events

There are several family socials for the year, which may include the Back-To-School Picnic in the fall and the End of the Year Celebration in the spring. Parents are also encouraged to attend some of our informal get-togethers, such as parent coffees. Information about these events will be sent home with the children in the communications folders and communicated via email.

## Scholarship Program

First United Methodist Preschool is very fortunate to offer scholarships to children in our community. The Preschool and these children both benefit greatly from the program. The financial support for these scholarships currently comes from individuals and from different groups within First United Methodist Church.

## Tuition and Fees

**Enrollment Fee.** There is a \$50.00 non-refundable enrollment fee payable upon acceptance of enrollment.

**Tuition.** Tuition is due on the first of the month with a \$15.00 late fee for checks received after the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month. If tuition is not received by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month, an additional fee will be assessed. Further, a fee based on the percentage of outstanding balance will be assessed on any outstanding tuition balances at the end of each month.

If payment of tuition is more than two months in arrears, and, if suitable payment arrangements are not made with the FUMP Board Treasurer, the Board has the right to cause the individual in arrears to forfeit their child's place in the preschool. Such forfeiture does not necessarily constitute a release from the financial obligations for tuition, accrued late fees, and expenses incurred while filling the vacant slot.

**First month's tuition is due August 1st.**

***For your convenience, there will be three different ways to pay tuition:***

1. Venmo your payment to FUMP-Payments 2. Set up your bank account to automatically send a tuition check to the Preschool's address. 3. Send tuition checks in your child's communication folder.

### **Tuition for 2024-2025:**

2-year-old class: \$260.00/month

3-year-old class: \$320.00/month

Pre-K class: \$430.00/month

**Activity Fee.** There is also an annual activity fee for each student. This fee covers the cost of the student tote bag, t-shirt and the cost of field trips and special student activities. It also helps pay for supplies, such as art supplies and paper products, used in the Preschool every day. **The annual activity fee is due September 1st.**

### **Activity Fee for 2024-2025:**

2-year-old class: \$110.00 per child

3-year-old class: \$165.00 per child

Pre-K class: \$220.00 per child

# PRESCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## Enrollment and Withdrawal Policy

A) Enrollment in FUMP (“the Preschool”) is open to all interested persons, with priority given in the following order:

1. Children currently enrolled in the Preschool who apply by February 1 for the following academic year.
2. Siblings of currently enrolled children, who apply by February 1, when both will be attending in the same academic year.
3. Children of current members of First United Methodist Church or the Preschool Board of Directors, who apply by February 1.
4. Children with siblings who were previously enrolled in the Preschool, who apply by February 1, but whose siblings will not attend during the same academic year, or Grandchildren of members of First United Methodist Church.
5. All other applicants in the order that their applications were received.

**NOTE: Notwithstanding the foregoing priority list, to best serve the educational and social needs of the children, the First United Methodist Preschool Board reserves the right to consider gender ratios and ethnic diversity when making enrollment decisions.**

B) Children shall enroll for no less than one school year (September through May) or for the remainder of the year (if enrolled later than September), unless a special exception has been approved in writing by the Preschool Board of Directors.

Under circumstances set forth in the Bylaws, the Preschool Board of Directors may direct that a child be withdrawn from their class or the Preschool. In cases of withdrawal from their class or the preschool NOT directed by the Preschool Board of Directors, the parents’ obligation to pay tuition continues until such time as another child is enrolled to fill the class vacancy created by the withdrawal and begins attending the class. In the event that a replacement is not enrolled in the class, payment of the full year’s tuition is required, unless waived by the Preschool Board of Directors. It is not the Preschool’s responsibility to fill spots created by early withdrawals.

## Emergency Procedures Policy

All Preschool staff are trained in First Aid and CPR/AED. The following procedures are followed:

**Supervision.** No child or group of children will be left unsupervised. Once picked up by a parent or designated caretaker, the child is no longer under the supervision of the staff.

**Fire.** Fire drills are held monthly. Emergency exit procedures are posted in each room. Teachers assist children to calmly and quietly exit the building during drills and in the event of fire. Teachers should attempt to close all windows and doors. Children will be directed to stand along the sidewalk at the far end of the Church parking lot.

**Minor Injuries.** Minor injuries are those such as scraped knees, splinters, bumped heads, etc. which are judged not to need the service of a doctor. The staff is expected to attend to minor injuries at the time of injury and to notify the parents verbally when the child is picked up (or within 6 hours by telephone if the child is not picked up by a parent). If the injury is minor, but has the potential to develop more serious consequences (e.g., head hit hard on floor), the parents will be notified verbally and an accident report completed and placed in the child's file.

**Major Injuries.** If an injury is suspected to be serious (e.g., injury to back, head, neck or internal organs) but the extent of the injury is unknown the child will not be moved or left alone. Emergency services will be notified immediately, followed by the parents or anyone the parents may designate. In all cases, a Preschool staff member will accompany the child to the hospital. As soon as possible, an accident report will be completed in duplicate with one copy given to the parents and one placed in the child's file.

## **Health and Immunization Policy**

Following health requirements set forth by the State Department of Social Services, no child may attend the Preschool until the parent has provided the Preschool with completed health forms and immunization records, signed by the child's physician each school year.

**Immunization.** Every child must be immunized for rubella, diphtheria, mumps, whooping cough, tetanus, polio, measles and varicella (chicken pox) unless a doctor's signed statement explains any exceptions or a religious waiver is signed. These waivers will be presented to the FUMP Board and acceptance will be decided by the Board.

Before assisting in the Preschool for an extended period, a parent and all staff must present documentation of a negative Tuberculin (TB) skin test or chest x-ray that is dated within one year of the starting date.

**Medications.** Prescription and non-prescription medications will only be administered in the setting of an allergy (anaphylactic) reaction. Medications will be administered only with written permission and instructions from the parents and child's physician. Employees who have received Emergency Medication Administration Training (EMAT) are trained to administer medication to children. All medications at the Preschool must be current and have the original label attached. They will be stored away from the children's reach in a locked container. Written records of medications given will be kept at the Preschool.

## **Allergy Management**

Families are expected to notify the Preschool regarding their child's food or environmental allergies. Parents/guardians of children with diagnosed allergies or asthma are required to provide the Preschool with a detailed Emergency Care Plan, signed by the child's physician detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments, and care, and all necessary medication. (*See Medications policy above.*) A list of children's allergies will be posted throughout the Preschool. Employees are trained to familiarize themselves with the list and to consult as appropriate to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

Contact with peanuts, or products containing traces of nuts or oil, can be critical or even fatal to a child with a severe peanut allergy. We ask that due to the severity of most nut allergies, that you please take extra care in washing any peanut residue off of your child's hands, face, or clothing before you arrive at Preschool each morning. FUMP has taken a proactive approach to create a "peanut sensitive" environment by asking all staff to carefully monitor all food ingredients to avoid peanuts and peanut products.

Please note that the aim of FUMP's "No Nut" Allergy Preparedness Plan is to minimize the risk of a student's exposure to foods containing peanuts and/or tree nuts. However, since the Preschool shares classroom space with the First United Methodist Church and its congregation, it is impossible to prevent an allergen from being brought into the Preschool despite our efforts to educate families and raise awareness. FUMP is not able to guarantee a completely nut-free environment and cannot be held liable for allergic reactions that occur despite the policies and procedures outlined in this plan. Despite our diligent efforts, it is impossible to eliminate all risk for children with food allergies. Some allergies are so severe that the presence of an allergen in proximity of the child causes a reaction. Ultimately, parents will need to decide whether group care is appropriate for their child with allergies in light of the risks that cannot be eliminated.

## **Parent Concerns and Suggestions**

Any parent that has a concern/suggestion is encouraged to discuss it with the Director or your child's teacher. If the concern/suggestion pertains to your child or anything about your child's classroom situation, please speak to your child's lead teacher first. Your child's communication folder is a great way to indicate you want to schedule a phone call or meeting with the teacher to discuss the concern/suggestion. If the lead teacher is unable to address the concern/suggestion, please talk to the Director of the Preschool. If still not satisfied, please bring the concern/suggestion to the Preschool Board.

Concerns or questions about Preschool policies and procedures (e.g. parking, fund-raisers) can be addressed to the Director or a Board member. In order to give your concern the attention it deserves, please telephone, email or send a letter to the Director or Board President, or request a meeting time to discuss the concern. When necessary, policy concerns/suggestions are discussed at the monthly Board meetings.

Suggestions or ideas for improving our classrooms and Preschool are always welcome and help our Preschool meet the needs of the families enrolled. Please feel free to discuss any that you may have with the Director.

# PRESCHOOL PHILOSOPHY AND CURRICULUM

## HighScope Curriculum

First United Methodist Preschool uses the HighScope curriculum. Based upon the teachings of Jean Piaget, children are encouraged to be active learners: creating, exploring and experimenting. There are three elements of HighScope that are distinct: planning, key experiences and child initiation. The lead teachers in our classrooms have received training from the HighScope Institute.

- Planning. Children are given an opportunity for planning their activities for a part of each day. The Plan-Do-Review sequence is unique to HighScope and allows children to choose, plan, do and then reflect upon their activities.
- Key Experiences. Teachers construct learning centers and plan activities that focus on eight key experiences: language and literacy, creative representation, seriation, classification, music and movement, initiative and social relations, numbers, and time and space. The key experiences nurture the whole child and pay attention to children's social, emotional, cognitive and physical development needs.
- Child Initiation. Themes are child initiated with teachers supporting and extending the children's interests. Teachers plan developmentally appropriate activities to bring to life the classroom themes. Some of the many themes enjoyed by the children in the past were doctor/veterinarian, grocery store, bears, friendship and firefighters.

The Preschool Director can provide more information on the HighScope curriculum. Another informative resource is the HighScope Website: [www.highscope.org](http://www.highscope.org).

## Creative Curriculum by Teaching Strategies

Creative Curriculum for Kindergarten is a research-based approach to project-based learning that builds upon a kindergartener's natural curiosity about the world around them. It uses hands-on investigations and play to create meaningful learning experiences in science, social studies, mathematics, language and literacy, technology, and the arts. It also focuses on a whole child approach, including social-emotional, physical, and general cognitive development.

## Daily Routine

What will your child do at First United Methodist Preschool? Each day has a balance of structured and unstructured activities that are both child initiated and teacher directed. Your child can play and learn cooperatively with friends, explore materials and learn at his or her own pace. Although each class routine varies, all children have a greeting time, structured small and large group activities, planning and review time, snack time, and active or outside play. Every day, children have access to dramatic play equipment, art activities, sand/water table, music and movement, building and manipulative toys, reading books, and nature/science materials. Classroom materials are constantly changing as new themes arise or activities are introduced.

## Discipline

FUMP Staff adhere to the guidelines for discipline and conflict resolution set by the HighScope Preschool Curriculum. These include:

- Helping children solve conflicts, asking for ideas about solutions, helping make a decision about the solution, and encouraging children to act on the decision.
- Maintaining a supportive environment to keep conflicts at a minimum.
- Maintaining limits and expectations for behavior that are developmentally appropriate.

## Behavior Policy

We recognize the acquisition of social skills as a major task for preschoolers and they are an important part of the curriculum and learning process. Social skills are emerging in preschoolers and they need guidance and practice in using these skills. Just as each child is an individual in terms of their physical and cognitive development, each child comes to the Preschool with a unique personality and set of social skills. In order to provide a safe, constructive environment for children so that each has the opportunity to learn, play and form friendships, we have established guidelines for behavior. Foremost, staff will adhere to the guidelines for discipline set by the HighScope Preschool Curriculum, as described above. However, some behaviors can be disruptive to the classroom and make it difficult for other children to function and learn. These include:

- Dangerous Behaviors. These are defined as hurting behaviors such as hitting with malice, biting, and pushing. These are behaviors that could threaten the safety of other children.
- Destructive Behaviors. These are behaviors such as throwing toys or purposefully destroying materials.
- Disruptive Behaviors. These behaviors include violent and/or lengthy temper tantrums that occur regularly or excessive demands for the teachers' attention which consistently disrupt the class.

Teachers will follow these procedural guidelines when dealing with the aforementioned behaviors. Keep in mind, however, that each child is unique and teachers treat children with respect to their individual skills and developmental level. Steps that teachers will generally follow include:

**Redirection.** Helping the child to refocus and deal with frustrations in a more acceptable manner such as using words. These would also include redirecting the child from a potentially explosive situation before problems arise. Sometimes direct eye contact, a reminder or hug will suffice.

**Time-Out in the Classroom.** We reserve the use of a time-out for dangerous or very disruptive behaviors. This gives the child an opportunity to reflect upon her behavior. A time-out will occur immediately after the behavior so that the child can make the connection between the behavior and consequence. It also removes the child from activities and from reinforcement of the undesirable behavior. A time-out would last for a few minutes and then the child would be given the opportunity to try again and join the class.



**Removal from the Classroom.** This would be an option for the child who has had trouble with dangerous or disruptive behavior but was unable to stay in time out. In this case, the teacher would take the child to another room or to one of the other teachers. The child would be given the chance to get him/herself under control as well as reflect upon his/her behavior. The child would then be given the opportunity to rejoin the class.

**Parent-Teacher Conference.** We will keep you informed about your child's progress as well as any problems. Parents and teachers will meet to formulate a plan to help any child showing inappropriate behaviors. The best results come from parents and teachers working together with some consistency for the child in addressing these behaviors.

## **Child Assessment**

The method of assessment best fitting our curriculum is through observation. Teachers may take notes on their observations of individual children throughout the day. These observations are in the form of descriptive statements which are dated. At a later date, the teacher will enter the observations on an assessment form under the appropriate heading that corresponds to HighScope's key experiences: Language and Communication, Representation, Classification, Socio-emotional Development, Seriation and Numbers, Temporal (time) Relations, Spatial Relations or Large/Fine Motor Development. The assessment form is used by teachers for multiple purposes: noting patterns in development, assessing needs in particular areas, making planning decisions for the child, conferences with parents and assessing the degree to which the curriculum is meeting the child's needs.

## **PUBLIC DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**

The Code of Virginia, Section 63.2-1716, allows child day centers operated by religious institutions the opportunity to file for an exemption from licensure by meeting documentation and other requirements specified within the religious exemption law. The statements below have been prepared and distributed to meet the requirements of the religious exemption law.

### **Religious Exemption**

In compliance with the Code of Virginia, Section 63.2-1716, First United Methodist Preschool is religiously exempt from licensure and is classified as a "religiously exempt child day center."

## **Qualifications of Personnel**

The following are minimum qualifications for staff at First United Methodist Preschool.

- Must be a Christian
- Have a minimum of a high school diploma or G.E.D.
- Experience working with preschool age children
- Have a clear understanding of the developmental needs of preschool children
- Ability to respond appropriately to children's needs
- Have a nurturing, caring attitude towards children and parents
- Free of any disability that would prevent him/her caring for children
- Not ever been the subject of a founded complaint of child abuse or neglect
- Not ever been convicted of a barrier crime or any other felony within the last five years

## **Description of Facilities**

First United Methodist Preschool is located in First United Methodist Church at 101 East Jefferson Street, in close proximity to downtown Charlottesville. The church was built in 1924, and the Preschool opened in 1983. It underwent a major renovation in 2001. The Preschool area is 2,430 square feet of the first floor. There are four rooms available for use by the Preschool: two classrooms, one large area for art/gross motor activity, and an office, as well as a student bathroom and a teacher bathroom. There is also a play structure located in an enclosed courtyard at the church. The Church Fellowship Hall and Chapel are also available for Preschool-wide activities. All rooms are equipped with preschool appropriate furnishings and resources. There is a convenient drop-off and pick-up area for the children in the parking lot. The church kitchen facilities are available for use by the Preschool for snack preparation.

## **Enrollment/Capacity**

The maximum number of children that First United Methodist Preschool will enroll is 40. The maximum number of children to be in care at any one time (as dictated by the local building inspector) is 40.

## **Health Requirements for Staff**

Staff employed at First United Methodist Preschool MUST be certified by a practicing physician to be free from any disability which would prevent them from caring for children. Documentation is on file in the Preschool office.

## **Public Liability Insurance**

First United Methodist Preschool is covered by public liability insurance which provides coverage in the event that someone brings suit for personal or bodily harm suffered during the operation of First United Methodist Preschool as a result of negligence.

