

# **First United Methodist Preschool Parent Handbook**

## *Welcome*

The following information is provided for parents interested in our preschool program. This document includes the policies and procedures of First United Methodist Preschool (FUMPers). We offer a half-day, faith based, educational program for children from two to five years of age. The preschool is housed on the first floor of Bell Hall at First United Methodist Church. The director hopes this information will help you in making the best decision about your child's preschool arrangements. Please feel free to call or come by the preschool office if you have any questions about our program. First United Methodist Church (FUMC) cares about children and their families and since 1980 has provided a preschool opportunity in which children can develop their fullest potential. We feel the early years are most important in the development of young children. We welcome you to FUMPers as one of many ministry opportunities of our church. If you do not have a church home at the present time, we invite you to consider our church. Call the FUMC church office, 372-8523 for further information. Our Sunday morning services are at 8:25am & 10:55am with Sunday School classes for all ages at 9:45am.

First United Methodist Preschool  
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Revised February 2011

### **Mission Statement of First United Methodist Preschool**

The purpose of FUMPers is to promote the social, emotional, intellectual, moral and physical development of young children. We provide positive learning experiences in a loving Christian environment. We hope to enhance family life through parental involvement in their children's education.

### **Academic Philosophy of First United Methodist Preschool**

FUMPers is a developmental school based on the philosophy of Jean Piaget. In his studies, he discovered that young children learn by doing things for themselves, called “active learning”. Therefore, it is important to give our students many opportunities to experience learning for themselves. We create an environment that is skillfully structured to expose them to a variety of concepts. Our classroom activities are designed to let children pursue their own learning all by themselves as much as possible.

### **Religious Philosophy of First United Methodist Preschool**

FUMPers is a Christian school that is open to children and families of all faiths. Our message is God loves us and looks after us. We should follow His example by loving each other and looking out for one another.

*We do not discriminate on the basis of race, gender or national origin.*

## First United Methodist Preschool School Calendar 2010-2011

Mon-Thurs, Aug 30-Sept 2 .....	Preplanning for Staff
Thurs, Sept 2-7pm .....	Orient the New Families -Music Rm (Parents only)
Friday, Sept 3 - 9:30 to 10:30am.....	Meet Your Teachers for Parents and Children
Monday, Sept 6 .....	Holiday – Labor Day
<b>Tuesday, Sept 7 .....</b>	<b>First Day of School for 5 day children</b>
<b>Wednesday, Sept 8 .....</b>	<b>First Day for M/W 2 yr olds &amp; M/W/F children</b>
Thursday, Sept 30 - 6pm .....	Open House for Parents and Children
Friday, Oct 15.....	Holiday – UF Homecoming
Friday, Oct 29 .....	Holiday
Thursday, Nov 11 .....	Holiday – Veterans Day
Monday, Nov 22 - 11am .....	Thanksgiving Feast Day for Parents - Playground
Wed-Fri, Nov 24-26 .....	Thanksgiving Holidays
Wednesday, Dec 15- 11am.....	Christmas Program for Parents - Fellowship Hall
Thurs-Mon, Dec 16 – Dec 31 .....	Christmas/New Years Holidays
Monday, Jan 3.....	Classes resume
Monday Jan 17 .....	Holiday - MLK Jr. Birthday
Friday, Jan 21.....	Holiday
Monday Feb 21.....	Holiday - President’s Day
Friday- Fri, Mar 25-Apr 1 .....	*Flex Day / Spring Holidays
Sat-Sun, Apr 9-10.....	Spring Arts Festival (OUR Spring Fund-Raiser)
Friday, Apr 22.....	Holiday - Good Friday
<b>Wednesday, May 25 - 11 am.....</b>	<b>Last Day of School</b> - Parent Program, Fellowship Hall
Thurs-Fri, May 26-27 .....	Post planning for Staff

\* A Flex Day has been incorporated into this calendar in case a hurricane or other natural emergency forces the shutdown of school. This day will be used as a makeup day, if school days are lost; otherwise it will be a holiday.

### Please bring following items *by 1st day of school*:

(See pg 14 for more information about the following forms)

- \_\_\_\_\_ FUMPers General Information Form
- \_\_\_\_\_ FDC&F Enrollment Form
- \_\_\_\_\_ Health Exam Form & Immunization Form (available from pediatrician)
- \_\_\_\_\_ May's tuition (applied toward the last month's tuition)
- \_\_\_\_\_ For Big Dogs (two-yr-old ) students – diapering supplies, if needed
- \_\_\_\_\_ A change of clothes placed in a Ziploc bag, labeled with child's name
- \_\_\_\_\_ An expendable snapshot of your child

## First United Methodist Preschool Staff Information

Michelle Driver (Mrs Michelle)	Lead Teacher - 4 year old class
Jenifer Harrod (Mrs Jenifer)	Assistant Teacher - 4 year old class
Angela Dzubin (Ms Angie)	Lead Teacher - 3 year old class
Amy Mott (Mrs Amy)	Assistant Teacher - 3 year old class
Nancy Tompkins (Ms Nancy)	Lead Teacher - 2 year old class
Cindy Wright (Mrs Cindy)	Assistant Teacher - 2 year old class
Marie Broling (Mrs Marie)	Teacher - Music & Movement class
Amy C. Watson (Mrs Amy)	Director

Along with the many, many years of experience in the field of early childcare, plus the minimal childcare training, these ladies also hold *additional* impressive credentials. In order to share the strengths of our FUMPers staff, the following information is provided for you. Collectively, as a group, we hold the following higher education degrees and/or credentials:

3 - Bachelors Degrees	1- Directors Credential
3 - AA Degrees	2 - National Child Development Credential (CDA)
1 – Juris Doctor Degree	1 - FL Child Care Professional Credential (FCCPC)
	1 – Dept of FL Educators Certificate

## **Program Emphasis**

Our program is exemplified by the following characteristics, which we believe are vital to positive growth in a young child:

Developmental: Our theme based curriculum is based upon the individual needs and interests of the children. A weekly Bible Story Time is presented in age appropriate language. We use a handwriting curriculum titled Handwriting Without Tears.

Positive: Interactions and activities are utilized to develop feelings of worth and dignity.

Safe: Staffing, equipment, and space are arranged to facilitate the safety of children.

Carefully Staffed: The program is staffed with Christian preschool teachers, who are appropriately trained, competent, and loving. A weekly Music & Movement class is held in addition to daily music in the classrooms.

Well Equipped: Indoor and outdoor equipment is challenging and developmentally appropriate.

## **License**

The preschool meets all current licensing requirements of the State of Florida Department of Children and Families (FDC&F). We have several unannounced visits per school year to be sure we are maintaining high standards for our students and FUMPer families.

## **Enrollment**

To enroll in the appropriate preschool classes, children must be 2, 3 or 4 by September 1st. Classes are filled on a first come, first served basis. Once the class limit is reached, names are placed on a waiting list. The following exception to the age criteria in the Big Dogs Class (2-year-olds) applies. We will enroll children once they have turned two, but limited to Fall birthdays only; thus allowing children who turn two between Sept. 1 and Dec. 31 to enter as Fall Bloomers. This exception to the age criteria will occur only if openings are available in the Big Dogs class. These Fall Bloomers are expected to attend FUMC Parent's Morning Out (PMO) once they have registered to help with the transition into the classroom. PMO meets from 9-noon in our church nursery area in the adjacent building. PMO is a complimentary multi-aged group setting offering free play time in loving and safe environment. PMO should be attended for at least 4 weeks prior to the child's first school day for Fall Bloomers. A child who is already two years old will have priority on the waiting list. A child can register one month prior to two year birthday to hold an available position in the class.

## **Classes**

Class size is limited to allow for greater individual attention. The director is authorized by the Preschool Board to make up class lists. Students may be changed to another class or withdrawn if, after a month's trial and observation, the parents, teacher and director reach a consensus that the child is placed inappropriately. The month of trial and observation also applies to Fall Bloomers in the Big Dogs class. If, during this time, the Fall Bloomer does not adjust, they will be asked to return the following school year. This particular child should continue at PMO until time to reenter the class so to facilitate the adjustment.

Parents will be notified if children are to be placed in a combined class. *The Fall Bloomer will be reenrolled in the two year old class the following year to keep the children with their appropriate age group and on track for entering Kindergarten.*

## **Registration**

To register a child at FUMPers, parents must remit a completed Application for Admission form including the registration fee. Registration for the fall term begins in February for families of preschool students and FUMC members. Registration for the rest of the community begins the first of March. *The registration fee is nonrefundable.*

## **Tuition**

When you register your child in the spring, we ask that you pay a registration fee. We ask for a deposit of one month's tuition to be paid during the month of May or over the summer. This deposit helps to defer the summer and start up expenses. The deposit is refundable if notification of withdrawal is received by August 1<sup>st</sup>. The deposit is applied in full as the first month's tuition (September).

Once school starts in September, we ask for another deposit of one month's tuition. This deposit will be refunded if notification of withdrawal is received prior to April 1<sup>st</sup>. This deposit assures us of your serious commitment to our program. This second deposit will be applied in full as the last month's tuition (May).

Tuition is due on the first of each month. Parents are responsible for paying full tuition each month even if the center is closed for holidays, staff development, hurricanes, etc. No refunds can be made in the case of vacations or absenteeism, except in emergency cases where a doctor recommends a long convalescence. If a child registers at any time once the school year has started, the registration fee and one month's tuition are due at the time of

registration; the last month tuition deposit is desired as soon as the family is able to pay.

### **Withdrawal**

Withdrawing a child from school requires a two-week notice. Tuition will be due if parents fail to give notice.

### **Scholarship Fund**

FUMPers has a scholarship fund for families with financial needs. The Preschool Board sets the policies for the scholarship fund. Selection for a scholarship is based on need and availability of funds. The director and the chairperson of the Preschool Board administer the fund. For more information, please contact the Director.

### **Discipline**

The children in our school are disciplined in a constructive manner that is never severe or frightening. Discipline is handled by: (1) teacher redirecting the child's attention to an acceptable activity; (2) the teacher talking with the child about the problem and what can be done to improve behavior; (3) supervised "time-in" in the classroom including discussion with the child; (4) "time-in" in the office with a discussion between the director, teacher and child; (5) parents are called if all of the above fails. Maximum length of "time-in" is 10 minutes.

### **Additional Programming**

FUMC offers two complimentary childcare services for our church family members and our FUMPers family members. As mentioned earlier in the handbook, we have a Parent's Morning Out program on Friday mornings. We also have a Saturday evening Parent's Night Out (PNO) on the third Saturday of every month. PNO meets from 5:00-9:00pm in the church nursery area. PNO is a multi-aged setting offering free play time. This evening outreach program allows both parents to have time together while the children are cared for in a loving and safe environment.

***Occasionally, there are unavoidable circumstances that arise and we have to cancel or limit the number of children for these services.*** This is because we have the safety of the children upmost in mind and must maintain adequate staffing ratios. Please keep these things in mind and realize that this complimentary service is not 100% guaranteed. *It is necessary to sign up for Saturday evenings- the clipboard is located on the Preschool Parent table. Changes regarding either of these services will be posted on the parent table.*

## **Insurance**

The insurance policy of the preschool does not cover children who are not enrolled in our school; therefore, we must deny any request to have friends or relatives attend the preschool with your child.

## **Health Requirements**

Each student must have on file an up to date School Entry Health Exam Form that is available from your child's physician. For returning students, Health Exam forms are valid for one year from the date of examination. Each student must also have on file a FL Certification of Immunization Form also available from the child's physician.

Immunization forms expire according to the date supplied by pediatrician on the form. I will notify you at least a month ahead of expiration date for physicals and immunizations.

If the expiration date arrives without the updated forms, I am required to exclude the child until the proper forms are submitted. These are firm rules with which I must comply.

These forms are required for each child within 15 days of enrollment. If helpful, the forms can be faxed to the church office at (352) 372-2524.

## **Illness**

Please do not send your child to school with any sign of an active infection. A child should be kept home if he/she has any of the following signs or symptoms of a suspected communicable disease:

- fever over 100°F
- sore throat
- earache
- nausea, diarrhea, or vomiting
- stiff neck
- difficult breathing
- yellowish skin or eyes
- unexplained rash
- impetigo
- severe or uncontrollable coughing
- head lice
- Pink Eye
- scabies
- ringworm
- unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool
- untreated conjunctivitis
- any discharge or drainage from eyes, nose, ears, or open sores
- unusual or unexplained loss of appetite, fatigue, irritability or headache

A child must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school. A child must be completely egg free before returning to school after treatment for head lice. If a child exhibits any of the above symptoms at their teacher's morning health check, parents will be asked to take the child back home. A child may not return without medical authorization or

until the signs and symptoms of the disease are not longer present.

<b>Communicable Diseases</b>	<u>No. of days after onset child should be kept from school</u>	<u>Incubation Period</u>
Chicken Pox	10 days	10-21 days
Measles	9 days	10 days
Mumps	till swelling is gone	12-26 days
German measles	7 days	14-21 days
Pink Eye	until eye is clear	2-7 days
Impetigo	until scabs are gone	1-10 days
Head Lice	clear of lice/eggs	7-10 days eggs hatch

If a child becomes ill during school, they will be isolated. The director will call the person listed for emergencies on your child’s FDC&F Enrollment form to come to pick up your child. Please be sure to keep us informed of your most current contact information. Medication is given only if parents fill out and sign a permission form we can provide to you. Prescription medication must have a prescription label with the child's name and date on it. Over the counter medicines must have a note from the doctor in addition to the form signed by the parent.

**Accidents**

If your child has a minor accident at school, the teacher will attend to your child and then write up an accident report. At pick up time, the teacher will go over the report with you and ask you to sign it. This act simply notifies you of the accident. In case of illness or injury, the school will call parents to obtain specific instructions. Please be sure to have the most up-to-date contact information in the preschool office. The FDC&F Enrollment form lists the name of the child's physician designated by the parents for emergency care in case the parents cannot immediately be contacted. If parents or designated persons cannot be reached, an emergency vehicle will be summoned from the hospital designated on the FDC&F Enrollment form.

**Severe Weather**

In case of severe weather - we will follow the recommendations of the Alachua County School Board (ACSB) in regards to school closings. Any closings will be announced on local television and radio stations, any deviations from ACSB plans will be available on the school answering machine or via notices posted on our exterior door.

## **Arrival / Dismissal**

- School hours are 9 - 12. Doors open at 8:55 am.
- We have an Early Drop Off option for your convenience. Early Drop Off is available at 8:30am; please ring the doorbell for entrance. There is a fee for this option.
- Parking is available behind the church by the preschool entrance.
- All doors are locked in between pickup and drop off times for security. Unauthorized persons will not be allowed in the preschool area. There is a doorbell located at the preschool entrance for admittance to the building during mid-morning hours. Doors are easily opened from the inside in case of emergency.
- Children do best with a consistent schedule, find the best goodbye routine for you and your child and *stick to it*. It is usually best to say goodbye and then *leave* your child in the care of their teacher. If children cry at drop off, they usually calm down soon after a parent departs.
- Each child must have a completed FDC&F Enrollment Form on file that lists names of all persons designated by parents to pick up the child. Any person that you may call on in an emergency to pick up your child should be included on the form. The school must be notified in writing if someone other than the designated person or persons is to pick up the child - licensing forbids a phone call for permission. Your child's teacher has a form parents can fill out in the morning if someone different will be picking up your child.
- When bringing children to school, please deliver them to their classrooms. Children must be signed in and out on the attendance form found on the parent table by the preschool entrance. Please initial and write the time of arrival as indicated on the sign in sheets. This is extremely important since these lists are used to check attendance during emergency drills or events.
- Pickup is at 12:00 – please be prompt. Procedure is as follows: the children are seated at the table in their classroom. When the teacher opens the classroom door at noon she will call each child individually to meet the parent next in line at the door. This procedure is followed to allow the teacher to identify who picks up the child, so necessary messages can be conveyed, and any assistance given to the child to gather their belongings. Your child is waiting at the table until your arrival.
- We have a Lunch Bunch option on Mondays & Thursdays for families that need that

convenience. Lunch Bunch is for an extra hour with parents providing a lunch for their child. Please pack lunches with an ice pack as needed – we do not have refrigeration space for lunches. We eat lunch and then play on the playground from noon till 1pm. Pickup is at 1pm - please be prompt. Pickup is from the playground; the preschool is open to allow parents to collect their child's belongings. There is a fee for using this option.

### **Items from Home**

We ask you not to send items to school (with the exception of specific sharing days). This includes stuffed animals, blankets (“lovies”), sippy cups, breakfast items, etc. Other children will want to play with these treasures then something may be broken or lost. Children usually do not want everyone playing with their special items. If it is necessary to bring something from home, your child will be asked to put the item in their cubby.

### **Parent Involvement**

- Please check bulletin boards outside your child's classroom daily. This is our primary source of communication with you the parent. Also check the parent table and bulletin board by the entrance daily for new information.
- We have an Open-door policy to allow parents to visit the preschool anytime. Observation of classes is always welcomed. Please notify the teacher of your visit beforehand so we will be listening for the doorbell!
- If you have a special talent you would like to share with the children please notify your child's teacher, as this is always a welcome treat.
- Conferences may be arranged with your child's teacher on an as needed basis. Teachers are not available for conferences during class. These will need to be scheduled at another time convenient to everyone's schedule.
- If you are willing to serve as *volunteer* substitute teacher please see the Director. This task would require the individual to go through a basic screening process. A substitute often will be notified early in the morning (7:15 or after) on the day a staff member needs a sub. If this interests you (there will always be one regular staff member with you to lead the class) please let the director know as soon as possible. You get to take home a morning full of smiles and laughter! This is one way to assist our teachers and is most appreciated. By using volunteers in this area FUMPers tuition costs are kept at a minimum.
- Serving as a chaperon and driver for field trips is occasionally needed. These will be

announced in your monthly calendars and a signup sheet will be on the class bulletin board in the hallway. Every child will need a signed permission slip before every field trip.

- All parents are welcome at any preschool board meeting. These meetings are generally held in October, February and June. At these meetings, we discuss the status of the school and make plans for the school year.
- During May (Teacher Appreciation Month) we encourage parents to organize a special event for the teachers. Some suggestions: a breakfast for the staff; organizing a school-wide collection and then purchasing gift cards for the teachers; or, organizing thank you cards that get signed by all the children and families.

### **Clothing and Diapers**

Children in diapers are accepted only in the Big Dogs (two-year-old) class. **We ask that children in the other classes be potty trained or well on the way.** We will support toilet training at school when a child is training at home. Parents are expected to provide all diapering supplies. All children should bring extra clothing in case of accidents. Please keep a change of clothing appropriate *for the season* in your child's cubby. Please mark the child's name on all articles of clothing and place them in a labeled bag. Please dress children in hardy play clothes, as they will be working on various art projects and playing outside as the weather permits. Smocks are available for painting however the occasional accident does occur. Please don't send your child in an outfit that cannot have a spill. Shoes must be worn at all times. Flip-flops and boots are problematic when running and climbing on the playground; someone may get hurt with this type of footwear. We recommend tennis shoes and socks.

### **Snacks**

Parents are asked to supply nutritious snacks on a rotating basis with the other parents in your child's class. Each family will provide snacks for a week at a time. A snack list will be given to parents at the beginning of the school year indicating which week will be their turn. At the beginning of each month, the snack schedule is listed on the monthly calendar that is sent home with the newsletter. A snack schedule and calendar will also be posted on the classroom bulletin board. It is so helpful if you send snacks in a ready to serve state. If your assigned week is not convenient, feel free to trade weeks with another parent. The school provides fruit juice and all paper products in addition to your snack. Please be sure

to notify your child's teacher of any dietary restrictions or severe allergies your child may have due to health, religion, culture, etc.

### **Birthdays**

Parents may supply special snacks to be shared with the class on their child's birthday if they wish, please make arrangements with your child's teacher. If your child is having a birthday party after school hours, we ask if invitations are placed in the cubbies *all the children should be* invited. This will avoid any hurt or left out feelings.

### **Fundraisers/Volunteer Opportunities**

We have two major fundraisers at FUMPers, a Book Fair in the fall and Spring Arts Festival in the spring. *Each fundraiser requires parental volunteers.* Please consider in what way or ways you and your family will help in these endeavors that benefit FUMPers.

### **Book Fair**

Most school years, we have a book fair that is typically scheduled in the fall (see calendar for the date for this school year). Your support of the book fair benefits our school by generating funds to exchange for books for our preschool library. Areas to volunteer are as follows:

- Serve as chairperson for the book fair. This involves recruiting volunteers to man the fair during time of operation.
- Help director set up the fair on Friday prior to the fair any time between 9:15am-noon
- Volunteer to man the fair on any or all days: Monday-Friday during the following times: 8:50-9:30am and 11:50-12:30pm and Sunday after church services 12:15-12:30ish. This task includes acting as a cashier and salesperson.
- Help director take down the fair on Monday after the fair any time between 9:15-noon.

### **Spring Arts Festival Fundraiser**

Each year, we have a bake sale booth and collect parking fees during the Spring Arts Festival (see calendar for the date for this school year). **This is our major fundraising event.** By supporting this fundraiser, you are adding to our operating budget or a designated area of need.

**All families are asked to participate by baking goods for this fundraiser.** In addition to baking, we need families to participate in one of many ways on the actual sale weekend. If we each do a little no one will have to do a lot! Areas to volunteer are as follows:

- Serve as Chairperson and/or co-chairperson for the bake sale. This involves promotion of the event. Plus recruiting volunteers to sign up for shifts to man the booth during the sale. And

confirming volunteer activity via phone calls or email.

- Creating a brag board to promote our preschool
- Serve during a shift on Sat or Sun during the fundraiser. Shifts are available: Fri setup or Sat 9am-5:30pm and Sun 1-5:30pm.
- There are some shifts where manual labor is needed - so, we need help from our Dads too!

### **Important...**

Please notify the school immediately when you have a change of address or phone number.

This is the only way we are able to contact you in case of an emergency. If a crisis situation ever arose where we were required to evacuate the children to a nearby location for their safety, we would evacuate to the FUMC sanctuary. If we needed to evacuate off site, we would take the children to the Sun Trust Bank lobby which is located across from FUMC on Main Street. We would take the emergency information you provided to us in order to contact each family of the situation. The Director's cell phone number is 352-278-1438 this number is only to be used during an emergency situation.

Smoking is prohibited on the premises of FUMC and FUMPers.

We take pictures and/or video throughout the year of the children. We occasionally use these for public and promotional purposes for FUMPers. Please let the Director know if you do not want your child's information used in this manner.

### **Needed Forms**

Listed below and on the following pages are the forms needed in your child's file in order to attend school at FUMPers. All forms are necessary for us to be compliant with the FL Department of Children and Families and to give us helpful information while caring for your child. Also included are informational brochures we are required to give you. Your child's pediatric records can be faxed to the preschool at 352-372-2524. We are required to have the forms from your child's pediatrician within 15 days of enrollment. So please be prompt in getting the required forms to us.

- Application for Admission Form (FUMPers form to hold child's position)
- Child Care Application for Enrollment Form (FDC&F form)
- General Information Form (FUMPers form to assist teachers)
- Know Your Childcare Facility Brochure (FDC&F brochure for your information)
- Influenza Virus (FDC&F brochure for your information)
- FL Certification of Immunization Form #680 (Available from your Pediatrician)
- School Entry Health Exam Form #3040 (Available from your Pediatrician)