

**First United Methodist Preschool**  
**Parent Handbook**  
**License #191200786**  
**Tax ID #95-3277058**

The Preschool was established in 1971 as an outreach service to the community. The school is an expression of the Church's commitment to children and families and operates within the context of Christian faith and values.

Under the guidance of qualified, nurturing teachers, our school provides a developmentally appropriate program for children 2 years 5 months through 5 years old. Emphasis is placed on the child's growth in all areas—physical, emotional, social, spiritual and cognitive. Play is a key curricular component of our program because of its potential for promoting cognitive, linguistic, social, and physical development in your children.

**SCHOOL POLICIES**

School policies are set under the guidance of the Preschool Board, the State Commission on Education and the State Department of Social Services. NAEYC policies regarding developmentally appropriate practices are implemented. Church members, parents and staff work to ensure that decisions meet standards in three major areas: the beliefs and practices of our United Methodist denomination, the California State Title 22 regulations, and the philosophies and ethics of NAEYC. We are licensed by the State Department of Social Services, License #191201786.

An ancient Chinese proverb says:

I hear  
    and I forget.  
I see  
    and I remember.  
I do  
    and I understand.

**ADMISSION PROCEDURES**

First United Methodist Preschool has a long history of active service in our community. We welcome all families' participation in our church preschool program without regard to race, color, religious affiliation or national origin of ancestry.

Our program is licensed and planned for children ages two years five months through five years of age. They must be toilet trained in order to attend class. Total enrollment shall not exceed that which is allowed by our license. It is a policy of our Preschool that

a prospective parent must arrange an interview with the Director to visit classrooms and play yards to discuss curriculum, discipline, and techniques used to promote each child's developmental growth in our program.

Priority for enrollment is given to continuing children, church families, and youngsters from our parent/toddler classes. Application for sibling enrollment is a parent's responsibility and should be done well in advance. If enrollment is full, families who have been interviewed will be placed on a priority waiting list. They will be enrolled by earliest application date and age. We make every effort to keep all classroom enrollments balanced so there is a variety for selection of playmates.

Children with special needs are accepted when we feel they can benefit from our program. If a child is accepted and the Director and teacher determine that the child is not ready for our program due to emotional or behavioral issues, we reserve the right to dismiss him/her from school.

### **REGISTRATION**

The return of the enrollment application form to the Preschool office with the annual (non-refundable) registration fee is required to ensure enrollment. For continuing children, registration is due in May.

Registration Forms: All forms must be completed and returned to the office on or before the first day of school. It is very important that emergency forms have updated and complete information including an alternate person to call in the event that a parent cannot be reached.

### **CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENT**

Classroom assignments are determined by the age and experience of each child. The child's temperament and developmental needs are other deciding factors. After recommendations from the teachers regarding placement, the final decision is made by the Director. Parents will be notified in advance regarding assignments.

### **TUITION AND FEES**

Tuition fees are due at the first of each month. There will be a \$35 charge if tuition is not paid by the 7<sup>th</sup> of the month. Yearly tuition is divided into ten equal payments that are an average amount of the annual tuition. Our budget allows for only a marginal surplus, so prompt payment monthly is required. Fees for Extended Hours are tabulated for the prior month and added to the current month's tuition bill (unless on the monthly program).

Checks should be paid to the Preschool office and made payable to:  
First United Methodist Preschool (FUMP)

The Preschool will notify all families 30 days in advance of any changes in tuition, registration fees, and/or Extended Hours charges in writing.

### **WITHDRAWAL AND TERMINATION**

A 30 day notice, in writing, is required if a child is withdrawn from school so that necessary arrangements can be made to fill the opening. Refunds, if any, will not be made without this notice. Please refer to your Tuition Agreement for specific details regarding withdrawals and termination conditions.

### **CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

Parent questions and concerns are always a priority for the Director and school. Concerns regarding children should first be discussed with your child's teacher. If a solution cannot be reached, a meeting with you, the teacher and the Director will be arranged.

### **CALENDAR AND HOLIDAYS**

Our school year starts in September. We observe Veteran's Day and Thanksgiving holidays in November, and Christmas holiday in December. In January we observe Martin Luther King Day, in February we observe Presidents' Day, and a Spring Break in March or April. We finish school in June. The Preschool annually determines the hours, dates and holidays. These specific dates are provided in the School Calendar.

### **HOME VISITS**

Before school begins in September, your child's teacher will arrange for a home visit. This is an opportunity for you and your child to meet the teacher. She will answer questions about classroom routines and bring with her the parent handbook, information about nutrition, the snack calendar, disaster emergency form and earthquake kit information. Home visits will not be scheduled for children who enroll after Sept. 1.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Your child is an important member of the class group. Please telephone the office if your child will be absent so that we may inform their teachers. We appreciate any advance notice of an absence of one week or more. Monthly tuition is due as scheduled.

## ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL TIME

Children must be accompanied from the parking lot by a parent or responsible adult at least 18 years of age. That adult is required by state regulations to sign the child in, indicating arrival time, if the child will be staying for the extended day program, and who will be picking them up. We ask you to please sign your **full name** on the sign in sheets. When entering or leaving the classroom, please stay until your child has been welcomed or dismissed by the teacher.

If your child will be picked up by someone other than you, please notify the office in writing. At the end of the school day, sign your child out from their classroom or the extended day classroom. You may be charged a fee for each day a signature and/or time out is missing from the sign in/out sheet.

Our class program begins at 9:00 a.m.— **please be on time in the morning**. Your child will benefit from beginning the day with friends and knowing about the activities being offered that day. Please make your time in the classroom brief. If you arrive past 9:15 a.m., please enter through the office (Room 2) and quietly enter your child's classroom from the rear door. Exit through the Office. The classroom front doors will not be opened between 9:15 and 12:30.

Departure time is important: No child should feel forgotten when all the other children are leaving. If you are unavoidably delayed, please notify the office. Your child will then be taken to the extended day classroom. A late fee will be assessed for pick up later than 10 minutes past pick up time in the amount of \$1.00 per minute.

## LUNCH

Children bring their lunch to school and eat with their classmates, in their individual rooms. Please put their name on their lunch boxes. Lunches should be simple and nutritional. Please include a drink and any utensils your child will need. Do not include candy in your child's lunch, they will not be allowed to eat it. We send home uneaten food, so you can judge the amount of food your child is eating.

## VISITORS

For security reasons, we ask visitors or parents bringing snack to enter through the office (Room 2). The classroom doors in front are closed and locked at 9:15 am. Please do not knock on your child's classroom door or windows. Enter through Room 2, sign in, and pick up a visitor's badge, and exit through the office. Do not use the classroom front door between 9:15-12:30.

## CAR POOLS

Class lists of the entire enrollment for the session your child attends will be made avail-

able to you if you wish to facilitate car pools. The Preschool does not assume responsibility for car pools. Each car pool participant is responsible for the children they transport and should have car seats for the children they drive. Updated and current release forms for car pools need to be on file in the Preschool office with all telephone numbers kept current. PLEASE communicate accurately between car pool participants if there is to be a change in the usual pick-up routine. It helps your child feel more secure if she/he knows who will be picking him/her up from school. For your child's protection, no child will be released to anyone not on the Emergency Release form or by written consent.

### **EXTENDED HOURS**

An early morning drop off program is offered Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. At 9:00 a.m. the teacher in charge will escort the children to their classroom.

The after school enrichment program (Clubhouse) is a favorite with the children. Clubhouse hours extend from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. This is an optional service to families. Parents may decide if their child will be staying when signing in at arrival time. The enrichment program is staffed by teachers who use the same attitudes and approaches as used in the morning program. Music, rest period, story time and/or a special activity are scheduled every day. Every child staying **MUST** have a crib sheet and a lightweight small size blanket that will fit in a plastic shoebox. No pillows or stuffed animals, please.

### **TODDLERS**

We offer classes for Parent & Child led by a qualified and skilled Parent Education Instructor. Being in a small group with children their own age and having mom or dad close by makes for a comfortable introduction to school. Parents, too, form enjoyable friendships and learn a great deal about parenting in a supportive environment.

### **SUMMER SESSION**

Summer Session meets Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday in the month of June and July. A schedule of days, hours, and fees is available each spring. In warm weather, the play yard becomes a classroom where the focus is on water play. This is a time for learning about our environment in a fun way.

### **CLOTHING**

Preschool curriculum and activities inside and outside are planned and provided to foster the highest level of experimentation for children. It is important that a child's clothing not impede this time of learning. Painting, mud and water play, climbing and running are all activities enhanced by appropriate clothing. Properly fitted tennis shoes

(no flip flops, crocs, jellies, sandals, party shoes, or cowboy boots) ensure safety. Comfortable self-help sweatshirts, blouses, jackets, sweaters and pants encourage independent dressing skills. Toileting self-help is best accomplished when a child can manage simple, pull-down underpants and boxer-type shorts or jeans. APull ups@ are not allowed at school, as they can confuse children learning toileting skills. A complete change of clothes, with names on all items is to be sent in a plastic bag to be kept in their cubby. Please remember to check your child's cubby regularly throughout the school year for appropriate clothing items. If there are no clothes in their cubby to change into, children may sometimes be given Aschool@ clothes to wear. We ask that you please launder and return these clothes that have been worn home.

In order to establish good play patterns we ask that children not come to school dressed in clothes depicting action-heroes or in combat-type clothing. This causes aggressive and frightening play.

The Preschool does not allow any violent items at school, such as guns, swords, knives, action heroes, etc. We ask your cooperation in keeping them at home.

### **MORNING NUTRITION**

Teachers actively work with children to establish healthy eating habits. Snack time is a valuable time for all of us. Parents assist by taking turns providing the morning snack for their child's classroom. Snack calendars will be posted in each classroom for parents to sign up. This is an opportunity for parents to observe their child and playmates at school. We ask that siblings do not accompany the parent when they are helping with snack, so that your preschooler has your undivided attention.

The food served to the children during nutrition is a snack, not a meal. Please stick to the snack calendar. We suggest 2 gallon of 100% fruit juice or water. ALL snack items must be brought in unopened packages. Fruit or vegetables must be uncut. This is a Health Department policy. Please notify the school if your child is absent on your assigned snack day so we can provide snack. We would appreciate if you will bring non-perishable snack items to replenish our stock of snack items when you are unable to serve snack. Snack responsibility will be approximately once a month. Please provide napkins, cups and plates with your snack. A simple prayer will be sung or said prior to the children eating their snack. It is important to notify the school and your child's classroom teacher immediately about any food allergies. The school also provides cooking activities for the children using similar criteria.

### **CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS**

The day of your child's birth is certainly a time to be recognized. However, please understand that a large cake or party favors are not appropriate during school. A parent or other family member may wish to bring special snack and party paper plates or napkins on that day. The children will sing AHappy Birthday@ and help blow out candles. To avoid feelings of exclusion, we ask that party invitations to any party not

held at school be mailed to the children's homes. Teachers cannot be responsible for handing out invitations.

## **CHAPEL**

A simple Chapel service will be a part of the monthly activity for the school. Children attend with their class and their teachers. Singing and simple prayer is a part of the age-appropriate Chapel program. Programs may be led by the Director, Church Pastor or Teachers. Dates will be announced in advance.

## **HOLIDAYS**

Holidays are celebrated throughout the year with art projects, bulletin board displays, books, music, table arrangements, and special activities. Autumn is treated as the season of harvest and nature readying itself for winter. Halloween, we have found, is best celebrated in a low-key manner. Please—no candy! Thanksgiving is viewed as a time to give thanks for what we have and to share with others as we collect food for needy families. At Christmas time we go to the chapel to hear the Christmas story and practice for our holiday program. We have a gathering in the chapel where we sing seasonal songs. We also learn about Hanukkah and the special meaning it has for some of our families. Easter is seen as the season of new growth and life.

We prefer that holidays be kept low-key for children while at school, particularly as activity escalates at home. It is exciting to pass along our society's traditions as long as it is done in a manner that has meaning for young children.

We are a Church related preschool, where Christian holidays are discussed and celebrated. We also acknowledge other religious and ethnic traditions that are celebrated by others.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Discipline is the art of teaching acceptable behavior. The discipline used at this school is that of guidance and re-direction. We believe in natural and logical consequences for behavior. We set clear limits that children can understand. There is no physical punishment used with children, nor do we ostracize, belittle, or embarrass children before their peers. Our goal is to foster self-esteem, not diminish it.

Teachers will discuss appropriate behavior and expectations with the group or quietly with an individual child. Our approach is to explain the consequences, ask the child (or children) for a solution, and expect that the child will make a good and workable choice. Our goal is to instill good judgment and self-control that the child will use without adult intervention.

If your child bites another individual or becomes, through their behavior, a danger to

themselves or to others, they will be taken to the Director's office and you will be called to come and pick them up. If this type of behavior becomes chronic, you may be asked to get professional help for your child or may be asked to leave the program.

## **SHOW AND TELL**

Show and tell has so many positive aspects, but takes a long time to learn and understand. It is difficult sometimes for young children to organize and sequence their thoughts, to recall the recently learned information, to make use of unfamiliar words, and to speak before their friends.

Listening and waiting for a turn, are also challenging aspects of this activity. Teachers help children focus on what other children are discussing. A child can share an experience, a record, a favorite page in a story book, or a treasure from nature. Your teacher will help you and your child know what each classroom encourages for this activity. Toys are not appropriate items for show and tell, unless specifically requested by the teacher. Items which are valuable, fragile, or have tiny pieces should be left at home.

The Preschool does not allow any violent items for play or for sharing time, such as guns, swords, knives, action heroes, etc. Also, please do not allow your child to bring trading cards to school. We ask your cooperation in keeping them at home.

## **HEALTH**

To be certain that the Preschool can provide a program to meet your child's health needs and physical abilities, the Health history and Physician's report forms must be in your child's folder at time of entrance with immunizations up-to-date. This form must be in your child's folder at time of entrance with shots up to date.

This may be your child's first experience in a large group of children. We ask that you be considerate of all the other children's health. If your child shows signs of illness with symptoms such as: runny nose, watery eyes, sneezing, feverish, head ache, with a rash, or any other unusual symptoms, keep them at home. If a child arrives at school exhibiting any of these symptoms, the teacher will use her discretion and may ask you to take your child home. A child's temperature must be normal (without medication) for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school after an illness. Parents are asked to immediately notify the school office when their child becomes ill with a contagious disease (measles, chicken pox, diphtheria, coxsackie, conjunctivitis or impetigo) so that other families can be notified of possible exposure. If symptoms occur while a child is at school, the child will be sent home immediately and may not return until the condition is under a doctor's care, and has been treated for at least 24 hours.

If your child experiences a minor illness while at school, he/she will be taken to the Director's office and kept isolated from the other children, and made comfortable. You will be notified and asked to pick up your child within one hour. If we are unable to

reach you, we will contact the person(s) on your emergency form and request that they come and pick up your child.

Should your child need a prescription medication for any allergy or chronic illness, please have your doctor issue a WRITTEN PRESCRIPTION. It should state your child's name, the name of the prescription, dosage, time(s) to be given, and the doctor's signature. Medications can only be given by the Director after prior written consent from the parent. By no means is your child allowed to bring any medications to school. All clearly labeled prescriptions (no over-the-counter medications) must be kept in the locked medicine cabinet in the office.

For a minor injury, there will be comfort and minimal first aid given by a teacher or the Director. An injury report will be sent home. For an emergency, the procedure will be to call the parent, child's pediatrician or the paramedics. If emergency treatment is urgent, we will take the child to West Hills Regional Medical Center, with your child's Authorization to Treat a Minor card.

### **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

We require that each child have an Aearthquake kit@ consisting of 2 cans of juice, 2 cans each of a fruit and protein with pop top, a family picture and an emergency form.

In case of a natural disaster or other emergency, such as an earthquake, these procedures will be followed: When safe, the buildings will be evacuated to the lawn in front of the education building. Teachers will provide comfort and first aid as needed. Teachers are trained in first aid and CPR. Children will be released by the Director or Administrative Assistant to their parent or an authorized representative designated on the AEmergency Disaster Form@ which is kept with our earthquake supplies. These forms are filled out at the beginning of the school year. Photo I.D.'s will be required to release your child. Information as to the time and destination of the person picking up the child will be asked and recorded.

We hope that we will never have an emergency, but we are prepared to provide safety and comfort to your child until you arrive.

### **PARENT AND STAFF INTERACTIONS**

Parents, too, are Aenrolled@ at the Preschool. We all are involved in your child's development and moving out into the larger world. We want you to feel that school is an extension of family; safe and secure for everyone. You may observe your child at any time. Please keep in mind that the teacher's first obligation is to be with the children and they are not able to carry on lengthy conversations with parents while children are present. Teachers will schedule individual conferences at least once a year. The only conference we are comfortable with in front of your child is the Apositive only@ ones. Parent, teacher and/or Director may request additional conferences if more communication seems needed.

## **SCHOOL LIBRARY**

Our children's library is available to families throughout the year. Children's books may be checked out before or after school with parent supervision, to take home and borrow for one week. Our parent library contains a variety of books on parenting, child development, and discipline, as well as Aspecial@ books on Atender topics@ such as fears, divorce, sex education, death, and other areas of growth and development. The office staff will assist you in checking out books.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEOS**

Any photographs or videos taken of any individual child and/or groups of children at the Preschool may not be used for any outside adult project such as college course, publication, commercial, or brochures without the written consent of parents. Slides and snap shots taken by the Preschool for use for parent programs and children's enjoyment are permitted.

## **CONSULTANTS**

Occasionally the needs of a child require the expertise of a specialist in a particular field that is not a part of the teacher's or Director's background. We would ask complete parental support for the child's benefit.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Parents are involved in a wide variety of activities at our school. We see our program enriched by the versatility of interest and backgrounds of our families. We depend upon parents to share their talents with our children, to provide snacks, transportation and supervision for field trips, holiday classroom activities, and perhaps to represent the parents by serving on the Parent committee. There are several activities that require every family's efforts and time in order to keep our tuition at reasonable amount and our classrooms well equipped. Special repair and maintenance work parties and fund raising activities provide parents an important opportunity to show support for the preschool.

To this end, we will be asking for each Parent to sign up for a 3 hour time slot to work on our annual major fund raiser (such as the Boutique), AND an additional 7 hours throughout the school year. This is MANDATORY, and if not fulfilled we require a monetary donation of \$100. We thank you in advance.

There are also a variety of ways that the school serves the parents' needs. There are planned evening and morning education programs, parent discussion groups, and conferences. Our school works to be supportive of parents in the joyful task of rearing children.

## **UNUSUAL SITUATIONS**

State law is very precise regarding several unusual situations that could be harmful to a child.

1. If there is a separation or divorce, we cannot legally keep one parent from taking the child from the Preschool unless there is a copy of a court restraining order in our files or a copy of the divorce papers stating custody. This must be a legal document. Parents are responsible to provide the school with appropriate documents for their child's file.
2. It is required that our school emphasize to each family that we are legally responsible to comply with the state law regarding child sexual or physical abuse. The entire school staff, as mandated reporters, are required by the California Penal Code to report Any reasonable suspicion@ of child abuse to a child protective agency immediately.
3. The Preschool will discourage any transportation of a child if a parent's or authorized person's physical condition appears such that they should not be responsible for the safety of a child. The school will at all times act in a manner protective of your child.

**First United Methodist Preschool  
Welcomes your family to our school.**

**We hope your experiences with us will be joyful and  
productive.**

Revised 2/20/09

**Parents: Please return this page with your signature**

**I have received a copy of the Parent Handbook for  
First United Methodist Preschool.**

**I have read and understand the policies stated in the Handbook.**

**Dated**\_\_\_\_\_

**Child's name**\_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Signature**\_\_\_\_\_