



# PARENT HANDBOOK

## **A Word from the Director**

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the First United Methodist Preschool of Lake Wales. I am proud to serve as Director and feel fortunate to have such a dedicated and talented staff working with me to make this Preschool one of the best in Polk County.

We are so glad that you have chosen us to be a part of your child's educational and spiritual life. By working together, at home and at school, we will strive to meet the needs of your child as he or she encounters new learning experiences and adjusts to the preschool environment throughout the year.

I want to stress the importance of reading this handbook from cover to cover so that you will be aware of the policies and procedures that we use as guidelines of our preschool. If you fulfill this obligation, it will make for a better school year for you and your child.

My door is always open to you so please do not hesitate to come to me with concerns or questions. Let's work together in Christian harmony and make this one of the best school years of your child's life!

Your partner in Education,  
Wendy R. Conner  
Director

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### **What is First United Methodist Preschool?**

Our preschool is a half-day, informal learning experience for boys and girls two thru four years of age. It provides children of all race and cultures with an opportunity to learn skills, to socialize with children their own age, learn new games and songs, do crafts and to experience being away from home for short periods of time. It is operated by a committee of church members that are selected for their interest in quality education. It is a non-profit program operating as a service to the community.

### **Our Philosophy**

First United Methodist Preschool focuses on the whole child socially, cognitively, emotionally, physically and spiritually. Our program is based on the guidelines established by the National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Each child is born with potential. We know that the preschool years are the most critical time in a child's development. They will learn trust, self-expression and self worth, depending on their environment and experiences. We, therefore, as an extension of the family, provide them with a warm, caring, safe and secure environment in which to explore and discover those things around them and within themselves. In this environment, we offer the opportunities for children to make choices that will enhance their naturally emerging skills. We encourage independent thinking, curiosity, exploration and discovery through development appropriate

curriculum, materials and methods. It is through movement and discovery, rather than a mobile state that children grasp and learn about the world around them.

First United Methodist Preschool provides a developmentally academic program. As stated above we believe that children learn developmentally, therefore the emphasis of our program is on the individual child and his/her own level of development; thus most of a child's time is spent moving from activity to activity with the teacher stimulating, not demanding, him/her to experience new learning situations. The rooms are filled with learning centers for the children to work in and the teachers keep detailed records of their student's progress. Group learning situations are also planned in which the children participate in field trips, in activities encouraging self expression and creativity, or in projects touching the fields of science, music, art or physical development. Our belief is that children don't need to be forced to learn. They want to learn and they will. We provide those opportunities for them and then they enhance them with their imagination, innocence and eagerness to discover and explore.

### **Mission Statement**

Love, educate and minister to the children and families of the church and community.

Gears, twigs leaves...little children love the world. That is why they are so good at learning about it. For is love not tricks and techniques of thought, that lies at the heart of all true learning. Can we bring ourselves to let children learn and grow though that love? Dr. Haim Ginott

### **First United Methodist Preschool Policies**

The Preschool program will be conducted in an accredited manner in accordance with Department of Children and Families and First United Methodist Association of Preschools guidelines.

Tuition is for the year. This will be made payable in 9.5 monthly installments which will be due the first of each month, in advance. All checks will be made payable to the First United Methodist Preschool. After the tenth of each month, tuition will be considered late if it had not been paid. In this instance, **a late fee of \$20 will be charged**. All fees are due by the end of the month.

Registration is for the whole school year. A registration fee is required and is nonrefundable. The Supple Fee for the year is due in August at orientation.

The budget is formulated on a filled classroom. If a child's withdrawal becomes necessary, the person in charge of the child will be financially responsible until that opening is filled. Extenuating circumstances can be discussed with the Director.

In accordance with State Legislature, a child must have reached the appropriate age on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> to enroll in each age group. For example: a child must be 4 years old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> in order to enter VPK (pre-kindergarten).

Preference for enrollment will be as follows:

1. Methodist Church Members...girls & boys
2. Children presently enrolled
3. Siblings of children presently enrolled
4. Children on the waiting list
5. Open to the public

All information on the registration form must be completed. A discipline consent, child placement form and contract should be signed and placed on file with the child's records. Physical and immunization forms, signed by the physician, meeting the requirements of the Department of Children & Families should also be placed on file.

In order to maintain a healthy classroom environment, no child will be admitted to school with a **fever, runny nose, bad cough, diarrhea, vomiting, or other signs of illness**. During school hours if a child becomes ill, the child will be removed from the classroom and placed in the office. The parent will be called immediately to come and pick up the child. Medicine that has been prescribed by a doctor may be given only if a medical permission form has been put on file in the office. **NO TEACHER CAN ADMINISTER MEDICINE WITHOUT THIS FORM.**

**Children entering into the three year old and four year old programs must be toilet trained and able to take care of their bathroom needs. Pull ups are not permitted.**

Children will not be permitted into school after **8:45 a.m.**, it is very important for them to arrive on time. The security doors will be closed at **8:30 a.m.** After that a child will be considered tardy. We are providing a quality program and arriving late continually interrupts the classroom schedule.

Extended care children will have play time, lunch, rest, and snack time. If at any time a child is not able to adjust to the afternoon routine, other arrangements will have to be made.

Extended care lunches must include a healthy lunch that does not require heating up. An ice pack must be included in the lunch box to keep the lunch cold.

When providing snacks or party items for the classroom, these items must be store bought packaged items. **NO HOMEMADE ITEMS CAN BE SERVED IN THE CLASSROOM.**

**No balloons or lit candles** are allowed in the classrooms, due to safety requirements.

Students are not permitted to wear GPS Kids Tracker wristwatches.

Use of media; such as video or I Pad, during classroom time will be limited. A video, to be used to enhance the subject matter, will be permitted on occasion.

Goals of religious education of Preschool age children should always be kept in mind. No apologies are necessary for religious education in a church-related Preschool. Bible stories and bible verses will be taught weekly. Particularly those stories about Jesus, will be used often. Once a week, the chapel will be attended by all classrooms in the church sanctuary.

**School Hours will be as follows:**

VKP 8:15am – 11:45am

Three Year Olds 8:15am – 11:30am

Two year olds 8:15am – 11:15am

(Security doors will be opened t 8:15am and closed at 8:30am. Children will be considered tardy after 8:30am)

Children will be placed in extended care if they are not picked up within 15 minutes after dismissal time for their particular age group. When this situation occurs, there will be an extended care fee charged to the child's account.

No children visitors will be allowed in the classroom or kitchen area; and under no circumstances will the preschool be asked to serve as a nursery due to DCF rules and regulations.

Parent visitation or other observers in the classroom will not be allowed unless arrangements have been made ahead of time with the Director.

An individual conference with each parent is recommended the latter part of the year for every child.

A traffic pattern will be strictly adhered to each year. To avoid traffic congestion, each child that will walk to the door of their classroom by themselves will be dropped off in the half circle in front of the education wing or on the side of the

education wing. AT NO TIME SHOULD THE HALF-CIRCLE OR THE SIDE OF THE EDUCATION WING BE USED FOR PARKING YOUR CAR. THESE TWO PLACES WILL BE USED FOR CONTINUAL TRAFFIC FLOW. If a parent walks their child to their classroom, then they will park in the parking lot provided. The parents will be expected to follow the arrows that are painted on the pavement.

Children in the two-year-old program will be picked up in their classroom at 11:15 a.m. by an adult. Their teacher will not place them in a car. The three year olds will be brought to their car and picked up at 11:30 a.m. in the semi-circle in front of the school. **VPK parents are to sign in their child in the morning and pick up in the car line on the side of the school at 11:45 a.m.**

**Extended Care hours will be observed by the parents. If a parent is late, they will be charged \$5 for the first minute and \$1 per minute for every minute after that. After 3 times of being late the child will not be permitted to stay in extended care.**

Teacher requests will not be honored.

Tuition is due on the first of each month and will be **considered late after the tenth** of the month. If tuition or extended care fees have not been paid by the thirtieth of the month, then your child will not be able to attend school until your balance has been paid in full.

\*In regard to policies, special circumstances may be dealt with on an individual basis.

### **Discharge Policy**

The First United Methodist Preschool reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child for the following reasons:

- non-payment or excessive late payment of fees
- excessive tardiness
- not observing the rules of the center as outlined in the parent handbook
- child has special needs which we cannot adequately meet with our current staffing patterns
- physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or children by parent or child

### **Chronic Disruptive Behavior**

We will make every effort to work with the parents of child having difficulties in child care. We are here to serve and protect all of our children, though. Children displaying chronic disruptive behavior which has been determined to be upsetting to the physical or emotional wellbeing of another child may require the following actions.

- **Initial Consultation**

The director may require the parent(s) of any child who attends the First United Methodist Preschool to meet for a conference. The problem will be defined on paper. Goals will be established and the parent(s) will be involved in creating approaches towards solving the problem.

- **Second Consultation**

If the initial plan for helping the child fails, the parent(s) will again be required to meet with the Director. Another attempt will be made to identify the problem, outline new approaches to the problem, and discuss the consequences if progress is not apparent.

- **Suspension**

When the previous attempts have been followed and no progress has been made towards solving the problem, the child may be suspended from the preschool indefinitely. The Director may immediately suspend a child at any time he/she exhibits a behavior, which is harmful to him/herself or others. A parent may be called from work at any time the child exhibits uncontrollable behavior that cannot be modified by the childcare staff. The parent may be asked to take the child home immediately. Suspensions from the childcare program may vary from a few hours to an indefinite period.

## **General Information**

### **SCHOOL HOURS**

School begins at:

8:15 a.m. and ends at 11:15 a.m. for 2 year olds

8:15 a.m. and ends at 11:30 a.m. for 3 year olds

8:15 a.m. and ends at 11:45 a.m. for VPK students

Security doors will be opened at 8:15 a.m. and closed at 8:30 a.m. Children will be considered tardy after 8:30 a.m.

### **REGISTRATION FEE**

A non-refundable registration fee of \$150 is due when the child registers.

### **SUPPLY FEE**

There is one supply fee for the year and will be collected at orientation in August. Fees are as follows:

2-day 2 year olds	\$80
3-day 2 year olds	\$90
5-day 3 year olds	\$100
VPK	No Charge

**TUITION**

2 year olds	2-days/\$190 a month
	3-days/\$205 a month
	5-days/\$225 a month
VPK	FREE

•Tuition is due on the first of each month. A late fee of \$20 will be added to the account if the tuition is received after the tenth of the month. If tuition and extended charges have not been paid in full by the end of the month, then your child will not be able to attend school until your balance has been paid in full.

**RETURNED CHECKS**

There will be a charge of \$20 on all returned checks. If more than two checks are returned, you will be asked to pay on a cash or money order basis only.

**ABSENCES AND WITHDRAWALS**

We must operate the Preschool on the funds provided by tuition fees. We cannot, therefore, make deductions for sickness or absences of any kind. Tuition is based on a nine and a half month basis. Months with holidays have the same rates. **\*Unless a verbal or written notice is given to the director thirty days before withdrawal, you will be expected to pay for the month.**

•VPK-after 3 days of absences a doctor’s note signed/dated is required.  
Excessive absences could result in your child being terminated from our program.

VPK ATTENDANCE POLICY...

First United Methodist Preschool provides 540 instructional hours to prepare the VPK students for Kindergarten. **To accomplish this goal your child needs to attend school each day and be on time, unless they are sick.** If your child is absent more than three days consecutive, the preschool requires a doctor’s note signed and dated to be kept on file. **Excessive tardiness or excessive absences will result in your child being terminated from our program.**

**VPK school hours are from 8:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. Parents are required to sign their child in and out each day.**





### **Insurance / Safety**

In case of an accident here at school, any expense that is not covered under the parent's personal insurance the schools policy will cover. Utmost precautions are taken to prevent accidents. First Aid is administered to all minor injuries. An accident report is written and placed in the child's file. Parents will be notified of accidents. Every child in our preschool program will need to wear play clothes so he or she can have fun. We suggest no overalls; they are much too difficult for the children to remove for toileting. We are especially safety-conscious about our children on the playground. An open-toed sandal, flip-flops, crocs, clogs, baseball cleats and boots with hard heels are not permitted. These particular shoes can easily get caught on the climbing equipment and allow sand and wood chips to get in between their toes which causes discomfort. We suggest no expensive jewelry to be worn; the school will not be responsible for lost jewelry during school hours. Let's keep our children's needs in mind when we dress them each day.

### **Health**

Please keep your child at home if he or she shows any of the following symptoms: runny nose (with yellow or green mucus), fever, rash, nausea or diarrhea. If your child has a runny nose due to being diagnosed with allergies, a sign note from the doctor is required.

If you are called during the school day to pick up a sick child, please make arrangements to do so promptly, as the school office is used as an isolation ward. If a child shows any of the above symptoms, either a doctor's note or a minimum of 24 hours free from the problem is necessary for a child to return to school. If a child has major surgery he/she cannot return to school until a release form, signed by the physician is given to the director and placed in the child's file.

### **Refreshments**

Children are served nutritional snacks, along with beverage. If you would like to provide a snack for your classroom or grade level, please contact the child's teacher or the lead teacher of your child's grade level. This will prevent perishable snacks such as fruit, vegetables, etc... from spoiling if they have planned ahead of time.

### **Birthdays**

Birthdays can be celebrated in the classrooms if the parent wants it celebrated at the school. Parents should contact the teacher to discuss the time of the party, what to bring, etc. **We ask that NO balloons be brought to parties.** Remember, no homemade items are permitted for snacks; this is a policy of the Department of Children and Families.

## **Transportation**

The preschool does not furnish transportation. We must be notified with a dated written note if someone will pick up your child other than the persons that you have indicated on the registration form. We are willing to work with you on this, but refuse to give your child to someone we do not know without specific permission from you. This is for your child's protection.

## **Show and Tell**

Show and tell will be different in each grade level. The teachers will let you know, through the newsletter or other written communication, if they will be having show and tell and when it will take place. Small toys, books, etc. can be brought to share on show and tell days. Nature items are welcome any day of the week. Please no guns, knives toys of that nature.

## **Newsletters**

Class newsletters and the Director's newsletter will be coming home once a month. If you would like an extra one, please let us know. You can view the Director's newsletter each month on our web site at [fumplakewales.org](http://fumplakewales.org). All newsletters can be viewed on our Facebook page also.

## **Field Trips**

Each age level goes on a field trip during the school year. The preschool does not transport children at any time. Your teacher will let you know the destination of the field trip and you will meet them there with your child. The teachers will let you know if siblings are permitted; depending on the field trip. **DEFINITION OF SIBLING: ANY CHILD (BROTHER/SISTER) OF AN ENROLLED STUDENT.**

## **Chapel Time**

We will have chapel in the church sanctuary on Thursdays from 8:45 a.m.-9:15 a.m. Parents are always welcomed to join us for this special time. Bible stories, songs and prayer time are held every day in the classroom.

## **Preschool Staff**

### **2 Year Old Toddlers**

Amy Hayes – Lead Teacher

Melanie Milton

### **3 Year Olds**

Kim Ashcraft – Lead Teacher

Debbie Chambrot

Callie Moore

VPK

Amy Gammons - Lead Teacher

Missy Boyte

Libby Matteson

Janet Thullbery

Director

Wendy Conner

Assistant Director

Tracy Kinney

Staff Assistant

Barbara Ramos

PE Coach

Laney Reynolds

Music Teacher

Asia Smith

All personnel must comply with the background screening. The initial 45 hour DCF training courses, CDA certification and all in-service training (which includes 10 hours of training per year). VPK teachers must have their credentials and have taken the VPK courses required by DCF. Also, other requirements so stated in the Florida Administrative Code for Childcare Standards shall be observed.

**WHAT YOUR CHILD WILL NEED 2 YEAR OLDS**

One family picture/four individual pictures

2 box of Kleenex 4

boxes of wipes

1 Plastic folder with 2 pockets (Poly folder)

Playdough – 4 pack

A large backpack with their name on it (no wheels)

A change of clothes in a zip lock bag with their name clearly marked on it.

**3 YEAR OLDS**

One family picture/four individual pictures

1 pack of glue sticks

3 boxes of wipes

1 plastic normal size school box

1 (8) count Crayola Water Color Paints  
1 pack of glue sticks  
1 Plastic folder with 2 pockets (Poly folder)  
Playdough – 4 pack  
Modeling Clay  
A large backpack with their name on it (no wheels)  
A change of clothes in a zip-lock bag with their name clearly marked on it

## **VPK**

Four individual pictures  
A large backpack with their name on it (no wheels)  
A change of clothes in a zip-lock bag with their name clearly marked on it

**Here are a few of the supplies each VPK student will need for the year; if you would like to donate any of these items it would be greatly appreciated.**

1 plastic normal size school box  
1 (10) count Crayola Fine Line Markers  
One (8) count Crayola Water Color Paints  
One pack of glue sticks  
Playdough – 4 pack  
2-4 boxes of baby wipes

\*ITEMS NEEDED IF USING EXTENDED CARE...

Mandatory: Standard size backpack that must be able to zip up after items are placed inside. \$11.(one time fee) will be charged to your account for a preschool mat. No mats from outside will be accepted; due to limited storage space. Small pillow, blanket, snuggly, pull ups/diapers if needed and a change of clothes. NO OTHER BAG WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR EXTENDED CARE. CHILD'S NAME ONLY ON BACKPACK AND ITEMS INSIDE.

## **CURRICULM**

We design our curriculum to meet the needs and interest of your child in five areas of development: Spiritual, Cognitive, Emotional, Physical and Social. Your child will be participating in activities that will encourage growth in those areas.

### **Spiritual Development**

To appreciate God's love and care  
To know that God hears and answers prayers  
To know that Jesus is God's Son  
To know ways that Jesus is his or her best friend  
To think of the Bible as a special book, which tells about God and tells us ways God wants us to live  
To hear Bible stories and Bible thoughts  
To think of the church as a happy place where he or she learns about God and Jesus

To develop attitudes of kindness, compassion, courtesy and helpfulness to others  
To learn to be cooperative  
To feel good about himself and herself

### **Creative Arts**

To draw and paint with different kinds of materials  
To model with playdough and other items used for modeling  
To cut and glue  
To build with blocks  
To grow in his or her creative ability as he or she experiments with various art media

### **Math Concepts**

To count  
To use number symbols at work and play  
To learn to identify different shapes and sizes  
To learn to recognize one-to-one correspondence  
To learn to sort objects by shape, size, color and number  
To gain independence in solving many problems for himself or herself

### **Language Arts**

To listen to stories, relate story in sequence, share in show and tell speak in complete sentences  
To participate in dramatic play  
To talk with others about books, pictures and objects  
To find likenesses and differences in objects and pictures  
To listen to rhymes and poems  
To listen to initial consonant sounds  
To understand relationships in works such as top and bottom, etc.  
To listen to and follow simple directions

### **Health and Safety**

To learn good health habits  
To know and follow simple rules of safety  
To assume responsibility for his or her own health practices  
To increase his or her own appetite for a variety of new foods

### **Music**

To sing songs informally  
To play singing games  
To respond to music rhythmically  
To use rhythm instruments

To enjoy music through listening to cd's, moving, singing and playing instruments

### **Special Concepts**

To care for plants

To learn to observe closely and listen carefully

To arouse his or her interest in the world around them

To learn to collect and sort various items from his or her environment

To have first hand experiences through field trips

To create curiosity and appreciation for the wonder and beauty of the world around them

### **Movement**

To use play equipment correctly

To play activity games, develop large and small muscles, eye-hand coordination

To learn to relax and rest

To accept group rules and limitations

To respect personal and property rights of others

To grow in ability to work and play with children of his or her own age

### **Social Studies**

To learn about his or her own home, family, neighborhood and community

To develop social skills

To develop an understanding of the basic needs of man

### **VPK**

In addition to the previous curriculum, our VPK staff will implement the Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Standards. These are skills our 4 year old children should know and be able to do by the end of the school year.

Standards are as follows:

#### **I. Physical Health**

- a. Physical Health
- b. Knowledge of Wellness

#### **II. Approaches to Learning**

- a. Eagerness and Curiosity
- b. Persistence
- c. Creativity and Inventiveness

- d. Planning and Reflection
- III. Social and Emotional Development**
  - a. Self-Concept
  - b. Self-Control
  - c. Relationships with Adults
  - d. Relationships with Peers
  - e. Social Problem Solving
- IV. Language and Communication**
  - a. Listening
  - b. Speaking
  - c. Vocabulary
  - d. Sentences and Structure
  - e. Conversation
- V. Emergent Literacy**
  - a. Emergent Reading
  - b. Emergent Writing
- VI. Mathematical and Scientific Thinking**
  - a. Number Sense
  - b. Number and Operations
  - c. Patterns and Seriation
  - d. Geometry
  - e. Spatial Relations
  - f. Measurement
  - g. Scientific Thinking
- VII. Social Studies and the Arts**
  - a. People, Past and Present
  - b. Human Independence
  - c. Citizenship and Government
  - d. People and Where They Live
  - e. Expression and Representation
  - f. Understanding and Appreciation
- VIII. Motor Development**
  - a. Gross Motor Development
  - b. Fine Motor Development

\*A guide explaining the Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Standards in more detail; is available for you to look at in the preschool office.



## WAYS PARENTS CAN HELP

Make yourself aware of all school policies.

Read the parent handbook, visit the web at [fumplakewales.org](http://fumplakewales.org), and click on calendar for monthly reminders of upcoming events. Read the newsletters and any other form of communication that comes home with your child from the director or teacher.

Help your child attend preschool regularly; only missing when they are sick.

Read to and talk with your child on a daily basis.

Take time to listen to what your child has to say.

Attend all parent meetings.

Communicate assurance of love to your child regardless of his or her pace of learning.

Teach your child self-reliance by encouraging him or her to do some things for themselves. Allow them plenty of time to accomplish the task. Teach them to put on, take off and hang up their things. Teach them to put away their toys, eat regularly and properly and to establish regular routines for bedtime.

When you bring your child to school the first several weeks, here are some tips to help with that transition. First tell your child what you will be doing while he or she is at school and that you will be back soon to pick them up. Leave the campus and call the preschool office within an hour, if you are concerned, and we will check on your child and let you know how they are doing. **It is very important not to prolong drop off time if your child is upset. It will make it much harder on your child.**

Appreciate your child's art and class work he or she brings home. Parent comments such as "Tell me about it," is a great way to show you are interested in his or her work. Praise your child's efforts. It helps build self-confidence.

Take an interest in your child's experiences. Help your child develop a wholesome, friendly attitude toward his or her teacher.

Refrain from being on your cell phone while dropping off and picking up your child. Greet your CHILD with a SMILE NOT A MOBILE.

Do not judge the value of your child's preschool experience by the number of pieces of paper they bring home each day.

Confer with the teacher about your child, but refrain from discussing the child in his or her presence. Work with the teacher concerning any problems that may arise. Report any upsetting experiences that you think will help the teacher understand your child better. Notify the school of any situation at home, which could affect your child's behavior.

Enjoy and love your child each day; as they truly are a gift from God.