First United Methodist Preschool

Family Handbook

2026–2027

Explore. Create. Connect.

1201 Lavaca Street, Austin, TX 78701 | 512-478-5709
preschool@fumcaustin.org | www.fumpaustin.org

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Welcome

Celebrating our 47th year of excellence in early childhood education.

Established in 1979, First United Methodist Preschool (FUMP) enrolls children from two months through five years of age. We welcome children and families of any family structure, sexual orientation or gender identity, race, religious belief, or national heritage. Children with special needs are accepted based on the preschool's ability to meet their specific individual requirements.

Welcome to our program! We are delighted to have you and your family join us on this exciting journey of early education and growth. We embrace a play-based philosophy that forms the foundation of our curriculum. We believe that play is the key to unlocking a child's imagination, curiosity, and overall development. Through carefully designed play experiences, we aim to create a nurturing and stimulating environment where children can explore, discover, and learn at their own pace.

This handbook serves as a guide to help you understand our approach, our values, and the various aspects of our program, so that you and your child feel supported and empowered every step of the way. Together, we can create a joyful and enriching early learning experience for your little one.

Contact Information and Hours

Address	1201 Lavaca Street, Austin, TX 78701
Phone	512-478-5709
Email	preschool@fumcaustin.org
Website	www.fumpaustin.org
Hours of operation	9:00 am – 2:00 pm, Monday through Friday
Before School Care	8:15 am – 9:00 am, Monday through Friday
After School Care	2:00 pm – 2:45 pm, Monday through Thursday

A list of holidays and closures can be found on the last pages of this document.

Explore. Create. Connect.

There's a great big world out there, and we help children make sense of it.

Discovery. As experienced teachers, we embrace children's natural curiosity and enhance it with experiences to learn about the world around them, whether in the classroom, in the great outdoors, in our downtown neighborhood, or beyond.

Creativity. Children are active, hands-on learners. We provide environments and experiences that develop creativity and imagination through experimentation, exploration, and expression. As a result, children are empowered to question, think, and problem-solve.

Connection. Our low teacher-to-child ratios allow for deeper connections from child to teacher, child to child, and child to the learning environment. We observe each child's natural development and build a curriculum around their specific interests and abilities.

Based on the best practices of child development research, we develop the whole child, who can take on that great big world with confidence, and prepare them for lifetime success.

Mission Statement and Philosophy

First United Methodist Preschool strives to create an atmosphere of love and acceptance in which each child can develop socially, emotionally, physically, spiritually, and intellectually.

Classroom Curriculum

First United Methodist Preschool follows a developmentally appropriate, play-based curriculum. Teachers observe children and note their individual levels of physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and language development. Based on those observations, teachers create and implement activities and experiences for children to play, create, move, experiment, and express themselves. The classroom curriculum is built on the premise that children are active learners and should have opportunities for choice, independence, and hands-on learning. The curriculum balances indoor and outdoor play, active and quiet play, and large and small groupings.

Goals for Children

- **Physical:** for children to develop fine and gross motor skills through organized and incidental learning experiences such as outdoor play, sensory play, manipulatives, and writing readiness.
- **Cognitive:** for children to develop cognitively and intellectually through organized and incidental learning experiences encompassing conceptual learning, reading readiness, math readiness, and imaginative play.
- **Social and Emotional:** for children to develop self-competence and self-regulation skills, become accustomed to being part of a group, develop peer relationships, and learn and practice conflict resolution skills.

Admissions

Registration for 2027-2028 begins in late January. Available placements will be filled according to children's birth dates and schedules. Five-day children are given registration priority. Registration seniority is as follows:

1. Children of FUMP and FUMC staff members
2. Currently enrolled FUMP families
3. Previously enrolled FUMP families
4. FUMC families not currently enrolled in the preschool
5. Members of the community not currently enrolled in the preschool

The Director determines final placement.

Teacher-to-Child Ratios

Infants	Ones	Twos	Threes	Fours
1:3	1:4	1:5	1:6	1:8

Tuition, Fees, and Deposits

Monthly Tuition

	Monday – Friday	Mon / Wed / Fri	Tue / Thu
Infants	$1,010	$650	$475
Toddlers	$975	$630	$455
Preschoolers	$885	$575	$410
Before School Care	$86	$55	$40
After School Care*	$70	$40 (Mon/Wed)	$40

**There is no After School Care on Fridays.*

Fees and Special Events by Month

The following fees and events are billed in addition to regular monthly tuition.

Month	Charges
August	Prorated tuition; vision and hearing screening (3- to 5-year-olds); school shirts and lunch kits (optional)
September	Regular tuition; Annual Fund
October	Regular tuition
November	Regular tuition
December	Regular tuition
January	Regular tuition
February	Regular tuition; registration fees for 2027-2028
March	Regular tuition; summer registration fees
April	Regular tuition
May	Security deposit; May 2027 BSC and ASC charges
June	Summer tuition (optional)
July	Summer tuition (optional)

Tuition

Tuition is due on the first day of each month your child is scheduled to attend. Full payment is due each month regardless of the number of days your child is expected to attend. No adjustments are made for illness, vacation, transfer, or school closures. Days cannot be made up or changed.

Families will receive an electronic invoice for their monthly balance through the Brightwheel app. August tuition is prorated based on the number of staff in-service days and the number of days children attend. Full monthly tuition is due September through April. **A $50 late fee will be applied to outstanding balances on the 7th of each month.**

Tuition payments can be made through the Brightwheel app via ACH. Cash is not accepted. If your family experiences financial hardship or needs tuition assistance, please contact the Preschool Director. Each situation is considered on a case-by-case basis.

Before School Care (BSC)

Children may attend Before School Care from 8:15 am to 9:00 am on a month-to-month or prearranged basis for an additional fee. Availability depends on the number of staff available, and placement is based on seniority. **No substitutions or alterations to schedules are permitted.**

After School Care (ASC)

Children may attend After School Care from 2:00 pm to 2:45 pm on a month-to-month or prearranged basis for an additional fee. As with BSC, availability depends on the number of staff available, and placement is based on seniority. **No substitutions or alterations to schedules are permitted. There is no ASC on Fridays.**

Registration Fee

A registration fee of $425 is due with your child's registration form. There is a $25 discount for younger siblings. **This fee is non-refundable and non-transferable.**

Security Deposits

The security deposit is due on May 1, 2027, and holds your child's place for the 2027-2028 school year. The deposit equals one month's tuition. It will be applied to your child's last month of preschool (similar to prepaying the last month's rent), so no regular tuition payment is due on May 1, 2027, although you will be invoiced for BSC and ASC in May. No deposit is due if your child is not returning for the 2027-2028 school year. If your child is registered for the 2027-2028 school year, you will be invoiced for the following year's deposit. **The security deposit is non-refundable.**

Withdrawal policy: Prior to December 2026, all student withdrawals must be made in writing and received by the First United Methodist Preschool administration 60 days before the last day of attendance in order for the security deposit to be applied to the last month attended. After December, the May tuition deposit will not be applied to any other month, and it remains non-refundable. If a student is withdrawn before their first day of school, all fees paid remain non-refundable.

Reservations for Additional Days and Programs

At times, FUMP has open spots available for children to attend with an advance reservation. Families can sign up online to use any available spot for their child to attend a full day ($50 per day) or our BSC/ASC programs ($10 per day). The reservation calendar can be accessed from a link on our homepage.

Reservations **must be made in advance** and are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Reservation requests are due by **10:00 pm SHARP the day before attendance.** After School Care is not a drop-in service for late pickups. If you are running late, please do NOT call or message the office asking for your child to stay for ASC that day. Advance reservations ARE REQUIRED so that we can notify teachers and

make arrangements. Availability is LIMITED, as some classes are full. You must complete a new online request for each child and each reservation date. **NO VERBAL OR EMAIL RESERVATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

Withdrawal from Preschool / Reducing Days of Attendance

Sometimes it becomes necessary for a child to withdraw from preschool before the end of the school year in May. Please contact the Director regarding early withdrawal for specific details. The security deposit is non-refundable, but it can be applied to your child's last month of attendance with 60 days' written notice (see Security Deposits above).

Preparing for the First Day of School

We offer several ways to help introduce your family to your child's teacher and to FUMP:

1. **Visit our website:** The FUMP website is the fast track to all the information you need about our program. There you will find the Family Handbook, frequently asked questions, and other family support and resources.
2. **Set up your family portal:** FUMP uses Brightwheel, a child care management app, as our primary communication tool with families. In the family portal you can view and pay invoices and review or update your child's information, such as authorized pickup adults.
3. **Classroom visits:** You and your child will visit the new classroom so your child can meet their teacher and see the classroom before school begins. During this visit, teachers will focus on connecting with your child and showing them their new classroom. Because there will be limited time to talk with teachers, please save family concerns for a private conversation at another time. Please see our "Saying Goodbye" brochure for more information.
4. **Developmental checklist/screening:** Please complete your child's developmental checklist in the Brightwheel portal before the school year begins. This shares information about your child's development, and any expectations you have for the year, with their teachers.
5. **Family orientation:** The best thing you can do to help ensure a successful preschool experience is to attend family orientation! We hold virtual family/teacher meetings to share information and policies specific to each classroom.
6. **Purchase a nap mat:** We prefer a bedroll with a pillow and blanket sewn into the mat for easy transport. (Not applicable for children still sleeping in a crib.)

If you require an interpreter, please let us know. We are happy to make arrangements so your family can get acquainted with our program.

Daily Routines

Arrival, Departure, and Parking

Families may park in the FUMC lot, using available spaces or double-parking behind staff. Families are encouraged to turn off their vehicles while in the building. NEVER allow a child to enter the building or classroom without connecting with your child's teachers by sight or verbal acknowledgment.

Teachers will release children only to known, authorized adults. Any person unknown to staff must report to the preschool office with identification for verification and will receive an Approved Pickups form.

When bringing your child to preschool, help your child feel secure in the knowledge that you have kissed them goodbye, that they are loved, and that someone will pick them up after preschool. Your child may show separation anxiety when you leave. Teachers will comfort and talk with your child if this happens. Children typically settle into the day quickly, but we will contact you if your child is still in distress after 30 minutes. Please see our "Saying Goodbye" brochure for more information.

Teachers use the time before 9:00 am for preparation, so please do not bring your child early. **Pickup is between 1:45 and 2:00 pm.** To ease the transition from school to home, your child's teacher may "close" some learning centers so departure goes more smoothly. Please call the preschool if you are unavoidably detained. Our staff have work-related and personal obligations after 2:00 pm. **There is a late pickup charge of $1 per minute,** which will appear on your next tuition invoice. We appreciate your consideration and assistance.

Preschool attendance and arrival times are NOT mandatory. However, a courtesy Brightwheel message to the teacher is appreciated when your child will be absent.

Items and Toys from Home

Please leave all toys at home or in the car when you bring your child to preschool. Speak with your child's teacher about security blankets, pacifiers, and special items. Teachers will help with this transition.

Family Participation and Communication

First United Methodist Preschool is an inclusive environment in which the diversity of each child and family is welcomed, respected, and incorporated. We strive to help families feel connected to their child's preschool experience. Families are included in the program through individual classroom activities and networks, school-wide gatherings and events, and invitations to FUMC-sponsored events. Communication is essential to a successful program, and our staff is prepared to work with you so your child has the best possible experience at preschool.

- To stay current on events at FUMP, please check your email and Brightwheel messages before each day your child attends. Email and messages are also the best way to reach the office, as we check both throughout the day.
- The preschool office sends E-News regularly to inform families about activities at FUMP. Please read these carefully.
- Special notices, changes, and general family information from your child's teacher or the preschool office are distributed by email or through the Brightwheel app, so please check daily. Any change in preschool policies will be announced through Brightwheel.
- Families can update their contact information at any time through the Brightwheel family portal or by emailing the preschool office.
- Families may visit our Community Resources list at https://www.fumpaustin.org/comm-resources/.

- Families are encouraged to share classroom or program concerns with the Director by appointment, email, or phone.
- To respect the privacy of enrolled families, please do not post photos of school events online. Some families have not given written consent for their children to be photographed.
- FUMP has an open-door policy for family visits at any time.
- The FUMC campus and buildings use video surveillance.
- Texas Child Care Licensing requires every staff member to complete annual child abuse and neglect prevention training. All FUMP staff members are state-mandated reporters and must immediately make a report when they suspect a child has been abused or neglected.
- Child Care Licensing requires schools to increase family awareness of child abuse and neglect. Examples of abuse and neglect include leaving a child alone or unattended in a vehicle, not securing a child in a seat belt or booster seat, unexplained marks or bruises, shaken baby syndrome, and frequent child hygiene issues. To report suspected abuse or neglect, call the statewide Abuse & Neglect Hotline at 1-800-252-5400. FUMP promotes prevention techniques such as developing family guidance techniques, understanding the benefits of nonviolent discipline, and understanding and meeting children's emotional, physical, and developmental needs. FUMP also helps families identify and locate additional support, and will seek the assistance of appropriate community organizations when child abuse and neglect matters arise. Families of a child who is the victim of abuse or neglect can find information from Child Protective Services at http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/child_protection or from the Texas Attorney General's Office at https://www.oag.state.tx.us/victims/childabuse.shtml.
- Drugs and smoking are prohibited on our campus.
- Firearms are not permitted in licensed child care centers except for law enforcement officers and certified security guards. Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1,000 feet of a child care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal activities are subject to harsher penalties.
- Pest control services visit our campus quarterly, on the third Thursday of the month.
- The Texas Child Care Minimum Standards are available online for families to review, and our most recent licensing inspection report is posted in the preschool office. Families may also contact the local Child Care Licensing office at 512-834-3195 or visit the Child Care Licensing website.

Changes to the Family Handbook and preschool policies will be sent to families and staff by email.

Family-Teacher Conferences

Family-teacher conferences are held in October and May. The fall conference is a time for teachers to learn more about your child and share how your child is transitioning to the new classroom. The spring conference is a time to share developmental achievements, preferences, and recommendations for any specific needs. Conferences may be in person or virtual, **and there is no regular preschool on conference days.** If you would like an additional conference during the school year, your child's teacher can arrange one at any time.

Technology-Free Zone

At FUMP, we do not have computers, tablets, or televisions for children's use in the classroom. Teachers use devices for family communication, observations and assessments, and capturing photos of children's activities and development.

Staff/Family Private Child Care Arrangements

If a family chooses to employ a FUMP staff member for private child care ("babysitting"), the family, staff member, and Director must complete, sign, and date a hold harmless document to be kept on file in the preschool office. The document must be completed for each staff member and renewed annually.

Safety and Emergencies

Inclement Weather

In most instances, FUMP follows Austin ISD's decisions on opening and closing during severe weather. If AISD has a delayed opening, please check your messages and email for updates.

Emergencies

If a child is sick or injured: Families should arrive within 30 minutes of being notified by staff. In most cases, your child will wait in the office until you arrive; in some instances, your child will remain in their classroom.

If a child is seriously injured or ill: EMS is called immediately, and a FUMP staff member performs any necessary first aid until EMS arrives. The family is notified after EMS is called. If the child is transported, the teacher will accompany the child, and the rest of the class will be supervised by the teaching assistant or other FUMP staff.

School-wide emergencies (evacuations, storm drills, etc.): The preschool has a comprehensive Emergency Preparedness Plan. We hold fire drills monthly, and severe weather and intruder drills quarterly. Please direct any specific questions to the Director.

Off-site evacuation locations: In the event of an evacuation, the preschool will relocate to one of these locations, depending on the nature of the threat:

Tarrytown United Methodist Church*	St. John's United Methodist Church
2601 Exposition Blvd., Austin, TX 78703	2140 Allandale Rd., Austin, TX 78756
512-472-3111	512-452-5737

**Tarrytown United Methodist Church is closed on Mondays.*

Health

The State of Texas and the City of Austin Health Department set health policies that regulate child care programs, and FUMP is required to follow these state mandates without exception. Children must have the proper medical forms on file to attend preschool, and families are expected to provide written updates to immunization records to the preschool office promptly. FUMP also provides vision and hearing screening for all 3- to 5-year-olds.

We ask for families' cooperation in maintaining our excellent health standards. If your child has a contagious disease, please notify the preschool so other families can be alerted that their child may have been exposed. A courtesy email or Brightwheel message to your child's teacher when your child will be absent due to illness is appreciated. Please do not send your child to preschool with symptoms

masked by medications such as Motrin or Tylenol. Sick children should not enter the school; if you have a sick child with you, call the office and a staff member will bring your child to you.

When to Keep Your Child Home

Because fevers typically rise during the day, we ask families to keep children home at a lower temperature than the one at which we send them home. Please keep your child home when your child:

- Has a temperature of 99° or higher
- Has had a fever within the last 24 hours
- Has red or discharging eyes
- Has had an upset stomach (vomiting or diarrhea) within the last 24 hours
- Has a rash (until cleared by a doctor)

When Your Child Will Be Sent Home

Families will be notified when a child develops symptoms of illness during the day. A child will be sent home with a temperature of 100.0° or higher, red or discharging eyes, vomiting, two instances of diarrhea, or a rash. The preschool office may require a doctor's note before your child returns. Children should not return to school until they have been symptom-free for 24 hours without medication.

Please make every effort to pick up your child within 30 minutes of the initial phone call, as your child will be waiting in the preschool office. If a medical emergency occurs and the family is unavailable, the child's physician and/or emergency contact will be called.

Medication and Other Health Practices

Preschool staff will not administer any medicine except for emergency first aid. Families should apply insect repellent and sunscreen before arriving at preschool. Diaper cream may be brought to school, labeled with the **child's first name and last initial,** and will be applied by teachers as needed.

All classroom items for children under three years of age are monitored for choking hazards, as required by Licensing. To protect the privacy of their health records, employees are not required to submit vaccination records.

For more information on communicable disease requirements for child care centers, please see the Texas Child Care Minimum Standards.

Allergies and Asthma

Food allergy symptoms are most common in babies and children but can appear at any age. While any food can cause an adverse reaction, nine foods account for most reactions: peanuts, tree nuts, eggs, milk, fish, shellfish, wheat, soy, and sesame. Symptoms can include vomiting and/or stomach cramps, hives, shortness of breath, wheezing, repetitive cough, shock, trouble swallowing, swelling of the tongue, weak pulse, pale or blue skin, dizziness or feeling faint, and anaphylaxis, a potentially life-threatening reaction that can impair breathing and send the body into shock. Reactions may affect different parts of the body at the same time (for example, a stomachache accompanied by a rash).

Families must submit a **Food Allergy Plan** or **Asthma Plan** signed by their child's physician or allergist. Families should also schedule a meeting with their child's teacher and the Preschool Director to determine the type and level of care needed. The meeting will cover:

- the nature of the allergy or asthma, its signs and symptoms, and medical management;
- recommendations for managing the presence of the allergen at FUMP (classroom ban or school-wide ban, with applicable signage);
- medications to be stored and/or administered at FUMP; and
- first aid training for staff on response procedures and administering medication.

After the meeting:

- the child's allergy or asthma information will be posted in the classroom and the preschool office;
- staff will take a copy of the written plan on field trips;
- all staff will be notified of the details of the plan;
- any necessary related training will be conducted; and
- all substitute teachers and parent volunteers will be informed of the child's allergy or asthma.

The Director may also obtain verbal and/or written confirmation of the requests from the child's physician. The preschool reserves the right to prohibit specific foods from a classroom, area, or the entire campus if a child's allergist or pediatrician deems it necessary.

Snacks and Lunch

FUMP is committed to good nutrition as an integral part of the preschool experience. Children benefit physically and also learn the principles of good nutrition. Families provide lunch and a morning snack for their children. All containers should be easy for your child to open, which fosters independence. Lunch kits are available for purchase in the preschool office. We recommend including a cold pack in your child's lunch to keep food at a safe temperature, and we encourage BPA-free plastic storage. Water is served at meal and snack times; please provide a water bottle. Child Care Licensing does not allow food brought from home to be shared at preschool (Minimum Standards §746.3309).

Whole foods are encouraged over processed foods. Good choices include sandwiches, cheese, fruits, vegetables, and pasta. Foods with excessive sugar, salt, additives, and preservatives, such as candy, cookies, cake, pudding, Go-Gurt, or salty chips, are discouraged. Children under two years old need fat for energy, growth, and proper brain development, so fat should not be limited in their diet. For additional guidance, please see our Cool School Fuel page.

According to the Minimum Standards for child care centers, 90% of fatal choking occurs in children under four. We therefore reserve the right to remove any food brought to school that could be a choking hazard, such as whole grapes, dried fruit, popcorn, hot dogs cut into rounds, or any chunk of food larger than can be swallowed whole.

Infant and Young Toddler Care

Our babies and young toddlers are a very special part of our program at FUMP. Our primary concern is loving, responsive care. There are many routines but few schedules. Each child's needs for comfort, stimulation, nourishment, and sleep are met as they arise. Rather than following prescribed schedules, we respect and follow children's natural cues of hunger and fullness, sleepiness and wakefulness, and respond accordingly to maximize trust and minimize stress, the core developmental need of a child under 18 months. Please see our Responsive Care brochure for more information about our approach.

Child Care Licensing specifies many safety practices for infants 2 to 12 months (Minimum Standards §746.2400–2431). Please note the following practices in the infant classroom:

- Infants will ALWAYS be placed to sleep on their backs until they can roll over on their own. NO EXCEPTIONS!
- Infants may not sleep in restrictive devices such as car seats or bouncy seats. If an infant falls asleep in such a device, they will immediately be moved to a crib.
- Cribs must be free of all items except a fitted sheet. Blankets, bumper pads, pillows, and stuffed toys (including WubbaNub pacifiers) are prohibited.
- Sleep sacks may be used in place of blankets as long as they have sleeves or armholes.
- Infants who are swaddled must be held at all times. A swaddled infant may not be placed in a crib or restrictive device.
- Blankets or cloths must never be placed over a child's head, crib, or restrictive device.
- Infants must be held while taking a bottle until they can hold the bottle without assistance. Bottles are never propped.
- Choking hazards must be removed from the classroom.
- Safety straps must be used on all equipment that has them: swings, bouncy chairs, high chairs, changing pads, etc.
- Written feeding instructions must be updated monthly for infants not yet eating table food.

Families of breastfed children are welcome to send breast milk with their infant. Breastfeeding mothers may use the adult rocking chairs in the infant classroom or Room 103 in the education building. More information about breastfeeding is available on our website.

Classroom Life

Birthdays

Each child receives simple recognition on their birthday. Families may bring a set of disposable party plates and cups for snack or lunch; we serve the food the children bring from home. We will also celebrate your child's special day with a birthday sticker to wear throughout the day. NO FOOD WILL BE SERVED to the class, as some children have allergies or special diets. Please do not send party invitations to preschool to be passed out unless everyone in the class is invited. No gifts are exchanged at preschool. **DUE TO CHILD CARE LICENSING REQUIREMENTS, PLEASE DO NOT BRING BALLOONS TO PRESCHOOL.**

Outdoor Play

Children play outdoors as long as the temperature and wind chill are above 32°F; outdoor time may be adjusted at the teacher's discretion. Children play on the Capitol grounds regularly, and infants and toddlers go on buggy rides around the Capitol grounds. Pre-K field trips and related transportation will be announced 48 hours in advance.

Clothing

Children should wear comfortable, washable play clothes that let them move easily and play and explore freely. Please send multiple changes of clothes, including shoes. Clothing should be simple enough for

your child to manage alone; we discourage heavy belts, complicated snaps, and straps that children cannot work themselves. If your child wears diapers, please choose clothes with leg snaps or that are otherwise easy to change. Any clothing worn to preschool may be exposed to paint, glue, and the outdoors. **Play clothes are best.** Please make sure your child's shoes fit correctly. Closed-toe, closed-heel shoes are best for climbing, playing, and field trips. **Crocs, flip-flops, rain boots, and western boots are not appropriate for preschool activities.**

Animals

Some teachers may have classroom pets. Our staff ensures that all pets are properly cared for and that any necessary vaccinations are up to date. When children come into direct contact with animals, teachers make sure the children wash their hands appropriately.

Summer Programming

FUMP offers a seven-week summer program running from early June through late July or early August. Summer term dates are published in March, and registration opens after Spring Break. Tuition is based on the number of weeks in each term. Before School Care and After School Care are offered as part of the summer program. During summer, children enjoy sprinkler play each day during playground time on our upper playground, which has a protective solid-surface material.

Church Sponsorship

First United Methodist Preschool is an integral part of First United Methodist Church of Austin and an important mission of the church's ministry to young children and their families. First Church is pleased to sponsor the preschool and welcomes you to visit and learn about its many programs and services. Please contact the church office to learn more.

Guidance

One of FUMP's main objectives is to help children develop self-regulation and self-discipline. Our guidance techniques give children clear expectations and options that create a positive environment. To encourage this, we practice guidance that:

- shows each child understanding and patience;
- redirects the child to another activity when necessary;
- sets reasonable limits;
- is consistent, loving, and firm;
- helps the child talk about misunderstandings rather than hurting another child;
- is individualized and consistent for each child;
- is appropriate to the child's level of understanding; and
- is directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

Caregivers may use only positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, including at least the following:

- Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only on unacceptable behavior.
- Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily using clear, positive statements.

- Redirecting behavior using positive messages.
- Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment.
- Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training.
- Grabbing or pulling a child.
- Putting anything in or on a child's mouth.
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child.
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language.
- Placing a child in a restrictive device for time out.
- Withholding active play or keeping a child inside as a consequence for behavior, unless the child is exhibiting behavior during active play that requires a brief supervised separation or time out consistent with Minimum Standards §746.2803(4)(D).
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods for the child's age.

Ongoing Behavior Concerns

Occasionally, a child's behavior becomes a chronic issue that does not respond to the teacher's positive guidance techniques. FUMP may take any of the following steps to address the situation, and families are expected to respond to these requests promptly:

- Hold a conference with the family, teacher, and Director to discuss the situation.
- Ask the family to keep the child home for a specific period of time.
- Ask the family to have the child examined by a pediatrician, at the family's expense.
- Ask the family to have the child evaluated by a child guidance professional, at the family's expense.
- Ask the child's established therapist to observe the child at FUMP, gain insight into classroom dynamics, and give teachers additional help with classroom behaviors, at the family's expense.
- Ask the family to provide a classroom aide for the child, at the family's expense.

When all else fails, the preschool reserves the right to request the immediate withdrawal of a family.

Biting

Although not all children bite, biting is considered a normal stage of development. Common reasons for biting include:

- **Teething.** Toddlers are often cutting teeth, which can be painful. Chewing on something relieves the itch and stops the pain momentarily.
- **Sensory exploration.** Toddlers use all of their senses to learn about the world. The "oral mode," a vital style of learning for infants, continues into toddlerhood, so toddlers bite everything, not just their peers.

- **Cause and effect.** Children are eager explorers who are constantly studying cause and effect. Biting produces a predictable, and often dramatic, response: lots of noise and attention from adults.
- **Self-assertion.** This is the most common reason children bite. It is a way to express frustration before they have the language skills to do so.

Our staff works to reduce biting by providing teething toys, many sensory exploration activities, opportunities to explore cause and effect, and options and alternatives that reduce toddlers' frustration. Families are not told the name of the child who bit their child. Families of the child who bit are informed and work with the teachers to prevent further incidents. We recognize how upsetting it is to learn your child has been bitten, and we also recognize that biting is a normal part of child development. Despite our best efforts, incidents will occur. No child is ever excluded from our program **solely** because of biting.

Toilet Learning

Toilet learning is an important task in child development. We take a developmental approach based on milestones, in keeping with our philosophy. There is no predetermined age by which children must be toilet trained and out of diapers. Your child's teacher will work with you through this transition, and communication is essential to your child's success. Our FUMP Toilet Learning handout is available for families to read and discuss with their child's teacher.

Grievances

Forming cooperative, supportive relationships is a key value of our program. At times, issues arise that need further communication to clarify and resolve. Differences and concerns left unaddressed can disrupt harmony among families and staff and affect the well-being of children. We encourage families to use conflict resolution steps when problems arise: talk directly with the appropriate people, identify the problem, work together on possible solutions, implement the agreed-upon solution, and follow up to see whether it worked.

Unfortunately, this process sometimes fails. The following procedure is established for expressing a concern about a staff member and/or classroom incident:

1. Talk with the teacher in charge when the problem arises. If this person is a teaching assistant, the lead teacher must also be informed.
2. If the problem is not resolved, talk with the Director. More than one meeting may be needed for the Director to understand your concern fully and address the problem.
3. If the issue is still unresolved, submit your concerns in writing to the Preschool Director, stating that you wish to file a formal grievance. (**Email is not acceptable at this level.**) Please include the specific date, time, people, and place of the incident. The Preschool Director will respond in writing within ten school days. Both documents will be forwarded to the FUMC Associate Pastor for information purposes only; there will be no FUMC action at this step.
4. If the matter is still unresolved, you may submit your concerns in writing to the FUMC Associate Pastor, stating that you wish to file a formal grievance. (**Email is not acceptable at this level.**) Again, please include the specific date, time, people, and place of the incident. Letters will be considered by the appropriate committee or designee, and a response will be given within two weeks. The decision of the Associate Pastor or designee is the final resolution of the matter.

Some issues or concerns may remain after all steps have been completed. In such cases, the best resolution may be to move on. Families may withdraw, and the preschool reserves the right to ask a family to withdraw at any time.

A Statement on Parents' Rights

A parent or guardian of a child at a child care facility has the right to:

- Enter and examine the program during the facility's hours of operation without advance notice;
- File a complaint against the program;
- Review the program's publicly accessible records;
- Review the program's written records concerning the parent's or guardian's child;
- Receive from the program the commission's inspection reports for the program and information about how to access the program's compliance history online;
- Have the program comply with a court order preventing another parent or guardian from visiting or removing the parent's or guardian's child;
- Be provided the contact information for the division responsible for regulating the program, including the division's name, address, and phone number;
- Inspect any video recordings of an alleged incident of abuse or neglect involving the parent's or guardian's child, provided that:
    - Video recordings of the alleged incident are available;
    - The parent or guardian is not allowed to retain any part of the video recording depicting a child who is not the parent's or guardian's child; and
    - Before allowing a parent or guardian to inspect a video recording, the program must provide written notice to the parent or guardian of any other child captured in the recording.
    - This does not affect the ability of a law enforcement agency or the department to access a video recording as part of an investigation of an incident depicted in the recording.
- Obtain a copy of the program's policies and procedures; and
- Review, on the request of the parent or guardian, the facility's:
    - staff training records, and
    - any in-house staff training curriculum used by the facility.

Our Philosophy and Beliefs

We believe... that children learn through play.

- Children naturally learn from what they see in the world. Teachers create a developmentally appropriate environment for each child to play, create, move, experiment, and express themselves.
- Children are active learners and have opportunities for choice, independence, and learning through play with authentic materials in direct, hands-on ways.

- Children's activities, materials, and classroom curriculum are selected based on each child's physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and language development.
- Children are provided a balance of indoor and outdoor time, active and quiet play, and individual, small-group, and large-group experiences.
- Children need routine and continuity in the classroom and with adults. We create consistency through predictable schedules and activities and by limiting transitions and enrichment activities.

We believe... in supporting children's physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and language development.

- Children express a range of emotions as a natural part of their development. We identify and acknowledge these emotions and create opportunities for children to express them in healthy, constructive ways.
- Children model what they see; teachers treat children and other staff with respect, kindness, and empathy.
- Children learn to participate in group activities, get along with peers, and develop trust in other adults. We support this by creating opportunities for meaningful interactions, nurturing friendships, and teaching conflict resolution skills at every age.
- Children develop a sense of accomplishment and self-esteem through competence and mastery of tasks. Children have opportunities to grow in independence and self-reliance through routines and activities.
- Children develop a sense of what it means to be a spiritual being and grow in their faith and community. Through Chapel, we teach that God loves each of us and has created a world for us to care for, and that we are to love and care for those around us.

We believe... in respecting individual differences in children's growth and development.

- Children learn best one-on-one and in small groups with peers and adults. Low child-to-teacher ratios are maintained.
- Children move through predictable developmental stages at their own pace. Children receive support and encouragement and are not hurried through these milestones. Arbitrary age requirements are not imposed for milestones such as toileting or specific academic skills; instead, these milestones are celebrated by the adults around them.
- Children express creativity and self-expression through open-ended projects and experiences. Creative, child-directed play is encouraged in many forms, such as drawing, painting, music, building, and role-playing.

We believe... in experienced, professional teachers.

- The teacher's roles in the classroom are facilitator, nurturer, caregiver, and supporter of children, consistent with the school philosophy.
- Teachers are early childhood professionals who support and implement the school's philosophy, curriculum, and policies consistently yet flexibly.
- Teachers maintain open communication with families in many ways: at arrival and departure, through lesson plans, through electronic communication, and through formal and informal family conferences.

- Teachers attend high-quality training in curriculum, age-appropriate guidance, working with special populations, health and safety practices, and other early childhood topics.
- Teachers conduct themselves professionally and courteously with families, children, co-workers, and the church community.

We believe… in family communication and involvement.

- The diversity of each family and child is welcomed, respected, and incorporated in an inclusive environment.
- Families receive frequent, ongoing communication from teachers about their child's developmental progress and classroom activities through a variety of channels.
- Families are included in the program through individual classroom activities and networks, preschool gatherings and events, invitations to First United Methodist Church fellowship and worship opportunities, and notices of local community events.
- Families support the preschool through volunteer opportunities, annual giving, committee and classroom projects, and Advisory Board service.

Thank you for choosing First United Methodist Preschool!

2026–2027 Calendar

Date	Day	Event
August 14	Friday	Virtual Parent Orientation
August 17 & 18	Mon & Tue	Classroom Visits
August 19	**Wednesday**	**First Day of Preschool**
August 24 & 25	Mon & Tue	Director's Coffees
August 28	Friday	All School Picnic
September 7	Monday	Labor Day Holiday *
September 28	Monday	Vision/Hearing Screening (3- to 5-year-olds)
October 1 & 2	Thu & Fri	Parent Conferences *
November 5 & 6	Thu & Fri	Staff Development *
November 23 – 27	Mon – Fri	Thanksgiving Holiday *
December 18	Friday	Last Day of Fall Classes
January 4	Monday	Staff Development *
January 5	**Tuesday**	**Preschool Resumes**
January 18	Monday	MLK Holiday *
February 5	Friday	FUMP Music Fest
February 15	Monday	Staff Development *
March 4 & 5	Thu & Fri	School Portraits
March 15 – 19	Mon – Fri	Spring Break *
March 26 & 29	Fri & Mon	Easter Break *
May 13 & 14	Thu & Fri	Parent Conferences *
May 21	Friday	All School Picnic
May 24 – 27	Mon – Thu	Teacher Appreciation Week
May 27	**Thursday**	**Last Day of Preschool**
May 28	Friday	Staff Development *
June 7 – July 23		Summer Program

** No school (shaded rows). Key dates are in bold.*