



First United Methodist Preschool

Parent Handbook

2009-2010

First United Methodist Church
1201 Lavaca Street, Austin, Texas 78701

Sandy Pennington, Executive Director

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FUM Church Office: 478-5684

Our Mission Statement:

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.

Established in 1979, First United Methodist Preschool is a preschool for children ages two months through five years. We welcome children of any race, religious belief or national heritage. Special needs children are accepted based on the Preschool's ability to meet their specific individual requirements.

First United Methodist Preschool is an integral part of First United Methodist Church of Austin and an important mission of the church's ministry with young children and their families.

First Church is pleased to sponsor the Preschool and welcomes a visit from any preschool family to acquaint you with our many programs & services. From time to time we provide information to you, through the preschool, about programs that might be of interest.

Please contact the church office, 478-5684, at any time if you have further questions.

Our Philosophy and Beliefs

We believe...that children learn through play.

- Children naturally learn through 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 real materials in hands-on direct ways.
- Children's activities, materials and classroom curriculum are selected based on individual children's development: socially, emotionally, physically, spiritually, and intellectually.
- Children are provided a balance of indoor and outdoor time, active and quiet play and individual, small and large groupings.
- Children need routine and continuity in the classroom and with adults. We create consistency in the classroom through predictable schedules, activities, and by limiting transitions and enrichment activities.

We believe...in supporting children's social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual 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 are learning how to participate in group activities, get along with peers and develop trust for other adults. We support this task by creating opportunities for meaningful interactions with others, nurturing friendships, and teaching conflict resolution skills at every age.
- Children develop a sense of accomplishment and enhanced sense of self-esteem through competence and mastery of tasks. Children are provided opportunities to grow in independence & self-reliance through routines & activities.
- Children are developing 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, that He has created a world that we 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 through small group play and one-on-one interactions with adults, therefore low child-to-teacher ratios are maintained.
- Children move through predictable developmental stages at their own rates. Children are provided support and encouragement and are not hurried through processes related to those milestones. Arbitrary age requirements are not imposed for milestones such as toileting, specific academic skills, etc., but rather 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, role play and more.

We believe...in experienced, professional teachers.

- The teacher's role in the classroom is to be one of facilitator, nurturer, caregiver, and supporter of children, in a manner that is consistent with school philosophy.
- Teachers are early childhood professionals in the classroom who support and implement school philosophy, curriculum, and policies on a consistent yet flexible basis.
- Teachers maintain open communication with parents through various means: at arrival and departure, through lesson plans, electronic communications, and formal and informal parent conferences.
- Teachers attend high quality training in curriculum, age-appropriate guidance, dealing with special populations, health and safety practices, and other early childhood issues and topics.
- Teachers conduct themselves in a professional, courteous manner with parents, 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 regarding their child's developmental progress and classroom activities through various modes of communication.
- Families are incorporated into the program through a system of individual classroom activities and networks, pre-school gatherings and events, invitations to First United Methodist Church fellowship and worship opportunities, and notifications of local community events.
- Families support the preschool through volunteer opportunities, annual giving, committee and classroom projects, and Preschool Board service.

Registration

Registration for the next school year is held from January-March. Available placements will be filled in the following order:

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

Choice of days is determined by seniority and seniority is based on family enrollment. Class placement is based on children's birth dates. **The Director determines final placement.** Summer term registration is in March and tuition is determined by the number of sessions attended. Our ratios are as follows: 1:3 - Infants, 1:4 - Toddlers, 1:5 - Twos, 1:6 - Threes, 1:8 - Fours

FUM Preschool strives to have a male/female balance in each class by maintaining a minimum ratio of 1/3 of either gender.

Registration Fee

A **non-refundable** registration fee of \$120 is due with your child's application. This fee covers activities and supplies, as well as Preschool insurance for all preschool children.

Tuition

Tuition is due on the first day of the month that your child is due to attend. Full payment is due each month regardless of the number of days your child is expected to attend. A \$10 late fee will be assessed if payment is received after the 10th of the month. No adjustments are made for illness, vacation or transfer. Days cannot be made up or changed. August tuition is pro-rated, taking into account the number of days staff are attending in-service and the number of days children are in attendance. Full monthly tuition is due all other months, September through April.

Monthly tuition is set forth below:

| | M-F | MWF | TTH |
|-------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Infants/Toddlers | \$455 | \$295 | \$220 |
| Preschoolers | \$415 | \$265 | \$200 |

There are additional charges for Before & After School Care programs.

Security Deposit

The security deposit is due on May 1, 2009, or at the time of registration, and holds your child's place for the 2009-2010 school year. The amount of the deposit is based on the tuition rate schedule below. Please reference the number of days that your child is attending to determine your payment amount. No regular tuition payment is due on May 1, 2010 (your previously paid tuition deposit applies to that month.) If your child is not returning for the 2010-2011 school year, no deposit or tuition is due May 1, 2010. If your child is accepted for the 2010-2011 school year, you will be notified regarding next years' deposit in late April. **The tuition deposit is non-refundable.**

Tuition payments are received in the file pocket on the outside of the Preschool office door. Checks should be made payable to FUM Preschool. *If you need a receipt for your payment, please write "receipt" in the memo portion of your check.* Please contact the Director if special arrangements need to be made regarding when your tuition will be paid. **CASH WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED FOR TUITION PAYMENTS.**

Withdrawal from Preschool

Sometimes it becomes necessary for a child to withdraw from the Preschool before the end of the normal school year in May. Please contact the director regarding early withdrawal for specific details. **The tuition deposit is non-refundable.**

Before School Care (BSC)

Children may come to Preschool at 8:15 am on a **pre-arranged** basis for an additional fee. Children may be enrolled in this group by the month or the year. At least 24 hour advanced notice and director approval are required. BSC fees are set below:

M-F: \$65 | M-W-F: \$55 | T-TH: \$45 / Drop In: \$5 per day per child

After School Care (ASC)

Children may attend After School Care from 1:00 pm to 1:45 pm, solely on a month-to-month basis. **Drop-ins are not accepted.** Also, availability is determined by the number of staff available and placement is based on families first date of enrollment. ASC fees are set forth below:

M-TH: \$60 | M-W or T-Th: \$45 (**There is no ASC on Fridays**)

Arrival and Departure

FUM Preschool hours are 9:00-9:15 am arrival until 12:45-1:00 pm pick up.

Teachers use the time before 9:00 am for preparation, **so please do not bring your child early.** Pick-up from Preschool is between 12:45-1:00 pm. There is a late pick-up charge after 1:00 pm of \$1 per minute. Please pay the teacher directly and in cash. The clock in the classroom will be the standard in such cases. When picking up from more than one classroom, please allow enough time by arriving at or before 12:45 pm. To assist in the transition from school to home, your child's teacher may "close" some learning centers to help departure go more smoothly. Please call the Preschool if you are unavoidably detained. **Our staff have many work-related and personal obligations after 1:00 pm. Your consideration and assistance in this matter is appreciated.**

It is extremely important to inform teachers and document the arrival and departure of each child. Parents must sign and note the time on the daily attendance sheet at drop-off and pick-up, as required for all accredited programs. **Parents must get a visual and verbal confirmation from the child's teacher as well.** Preschool staff should be notified when someone other than the parent is picking a child up from Preschool. **When someone new needs to pick up preschoolers, they should be prepared to produce identification.**

"Security" Items *(i.e. special toys, blankets, etc.)*

All toys should be left at home or in the car when you bring your child to school. Please speak to your child's teacher regarding security blankets, pacifiers, and special items. The Preschool staff will assist in this transition.

Preparing for the First Day of School

We have planned two activities to help introduce your family to the teacher and the FUM Preschool:

1. Home Visits or Classroom visits: Your child's teacher will visit your home or schedule a classroom visit in August to meet you and your child. **This is your child's time with the teacher.** During a classroom visit, she is interested in seeing the classroom materials and play equipment that interest your child. During the home visit, the teacher may ask the child to show her his room or backyard and will spend time there visiting with the child. Due to time restraints, visits should last approximately 20 minutes. (Parent concerns should be discussed in private on the telephone or in person at another time.)

2. Parent Orientation: The best thing you can do for your child to help ensure a successful preschool year is to attend parent orientation. Orientation has two parts and we ask for mandatory attendance for the entire duration. Part one is a general, school-wide meeting where parents hear important descriptions of the preschool operations, policies, parking issues, logistics, etc. Part two is with your child's individual teacher where you will learn information/policies specific to that classroom. This is for parents only (however, small babes in arms are okay). Even if you are a returning family we ask that everyone attend orientation since so many things evolve/change from year to year.



Email Communication

In order to stay on top of current events at FUMP, we recommend that you check your email prior to each day your child attends preschool. Also, email is the best way to communicate with the office as well, as we check the preschool email often throughout the day.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled twice during the Preschool year. Should you like an additional conference, the teacher will be glad to arrange it at any time during the year. The fall conference is designed to inform parents of the child's adjustment to Preschool. It is also an opportunity for the parents to share any specific developmental concerns they might have. The spring conference is to share developmental achievements, preferences, and recommendations for specific needs. There is **no regular preschool** on these days. Child care is provided during the conference for your preschool child by our preschool staff.

Parent Participation

Communication is important for a successful program. Our staff are prepared to work with you so your child may have the best possible experience at Preschool. Teachers are available for appointments and conferences with the Director as needed.

Monthly newsletters will be sent home informing parents of the many activities at FUMP. Please read these carefully. Special notices or changes in the Preschool schedule are occasionally distributed in your child's cubby or diaper bag, on white notice boards or via email; so please remember to check daily. Teachers send important information home; i.e. notices of events or requirements, and parenting ideas. Any change in preschool policies will be announced in the monthly newsletter and/or through email notification.

When bringing your child to Preschool, make sure your child is secure in the knowledge that you have kissed him/her good-bye, that he/she is loved, and that someone will pick him/her up after Preschool. Your child may display separation anxiety upon your departure. The teachers will be ready to comfort and talk with your child if this happens. Children normally settle into the day quickly, but if they do not, your child's teacher will contact you.

Be interested in your child's work. Take time to listen to what he/she wants to tell you. Your child's art work is an expression of him/herself. You may have a full "gallery" already, but treat each new creation with respect. Be creative yourself, even the best galleries have rotating showings.

Parents are encouraged to share any classroom or program concerns they might have with the Director via appointment, email or "Commendations and/or Concerns" forms, which are located on the preschool office door.

Parents are always welcome to visit their child's classroom to observe. Also, copies of minimum standards for child care centers are available for parents to review, as well as the most recent licensing inspection report. Further, parents may contact the local child care Licensing office at 834-3195 or reference their website at <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/>. You may contact the child abuse hotline at 1-800-252-5400. It is most important for children to see that their parents and teachers are friends and that their parents are interested in their Preschool experience. Periodically teachers will have a sign-up sheet for parents who are needed to assist with various activities.

Parents are encouraged to substitute in the classrooms (occasionally or on a one-time basis). This is an excellent way to get to know the Preschool. Parents are a valuable resource for the Preschool when staff members are ill or need to be out of the classroom. A "Tuition Buck" worth \$20 is earned for substituting and may be used toward the following month's tuition. For volunteering parents, please be aware that your child may behave differently while you are in his/her classroom. For the most part, the teacher will let you deal with any problems involving your child. However, there will be times when the teacher will need to be involved. Please do not be offended by this. Most children respond better to the teacher at Preschool in discipline situations than to their parents.

Each spring FUM Preschool asks parents to complete confidential teacher evaluation forms and an overall program evaluation. Your input is a valuable and an important part of our program.



Parking

Our downtown location does create a challenge. Please be mindful of others when parking in our parking lot. NEVER PARK IN SPACES MARKED WITH A NAME AT DROP-OFF, PICK-UP, OR DURING THE DAY. Each marked space is assigned to a church staff member. Spaces designated for “Preschool Teacher” are for FUMP teachers and assistants. An empty place in the Preschool section is frequently only a temporary situation due to field trips, etc. **Double parking behind the “Preschool Teacher” section is necessary and appropriate, however, DO NOT double park behind the Texas Trial Lawyers parking spaces. Also, please do not park in or block any handicapped parking spaces - you may be ticketed. Please notify the preschool office if you are double parked when driving for a field trip or subbing for the day.**

Metered parking is available on Lavaca Street. Diagonal parking spaces on the Capitol side of Colorado Street are often available as well. A parking diagram is located in your enrollment packet.

Please do not leave a child in a car unattended. The parking area is used by many people and it is not safe to leave a child alone. Parents are glad to watch a sleeping child for one another.

Inclement Weather

In most instances, FUM Preschool will follow AISD’s pattern for opening and closing school during severe weather. In the event that AISD has a delayed opening, please check the preschool voicemail system at 478-5709 for official closing information. Be aware of notices at school, via email, or through the media.

Emergencies

If a child is sick or injured:

In most cases the child will be in the office with the Director, teacher, or assistant until the parents can arrive to get the child following notification by the staff. There are some instances when remaining in the classroom is better for the child in question. The parent of the child will then be notified. We request that parents arrive within 30 minutes of being notified to pick up their child.

If a child is seriously injured or ill:

EMS would be called immediately and the First Aider would perform the necessary assistance procedure until EMS arrives. The parent would be notified at the same time EMS is called by sending someone to the preschool office to call the parent. The teacher would accompany the child and the rest of the class would be supervised by the class assistant and Director or other teachers.

Evacuation

In the event of a fire, each class will exit according to the evacuation plan posted beside the door of each room and proceed to the parking lot.



In the event of a tornado or severe storm warning, all classes will relocate to Wesley Hall in a sitting position with their arms covering their heads.

In the event of an explosion, toxic fumes, etc. that would necessitate the removal of the children from the area, the classes would exit to the parking lot to be transported by teacher cars and church vans to St. Martin’s Lutheran Day School located at 606 West 15th Street. Phone: 476-4037. Should we need to evacuate our building but not the area, we would move the children to the FUMC Family Life Center at 1300 Lavaca Street. Phone: 478-5684.

Health

The state of Texas Department of Family and Regulatory Services and the City of Austin Health Department have set forth health policies that regulate child care programs. FUM Preschool is required by law to follow these mandates. We will make no exceptions.

Each child is required to meet standard immunization requirements prior to beginning classes at the Preschool.



No students will be allowed to attend class without proper medical forms on file. We also expect parents to provide written updates of immunization records to the preschool office in a timely manner. Additionally, FUMP is required to provide vision/hearing screening for all 4 & 5 year olds. We ask for the cooperation of parents in maintaining our excellent health standards.

Should a child have any contagious disease, please notify the Preschool so that other parents can be alerted to the fact that their child may have been exposed. **A courtesy call or email to the Preschool office when a child will be absent is appreciated.** Children who develop symptoms of illness during the course of the day will be sent home. If there is a medical emergency and the parents are not available, the child's physician will be called.

Parents are asked to keep their child home when the child:

- Has evidence of a fresh cold
- Has a temperature of 99° or more
- Has sore or discharging eyes
- Has a rash (until diagnosed by a doctor)
- Has had a fever **within the last 24 hours** (Health Department Standard)
- Has had an upset stomach (**vomiting or diarrhea**) within the last **24 hours**

There is a chart posted in the Preschool office indicating the State Health Department's requirements concerning exclusion, incubation period and symptoms of the most common children's diseases. For more information regarding communicable disease mandates for child care centers, please reference their website for Appendix V: http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Documents/Child_Care/Child_Care_Standards_and_Regulations/final746.pdf

No medicine will be administered by the Preschool personnel, with the exception of emergency first aid.

If you have a sick child with you and you need to pick up your preschooler, call the office and request a staff person to bring your child to the car. Sick children should not enter the classrooms.

Snacks / Lunch

FUM Preschool is committed to good nutrition as an integral part of the Preschool experience. The children not only benefit physically, but also learn the principles of good nutrition. Whole foods rather than processed foods are encouraged. Send such foods as sandwiches, cheese, fruits, vegetables, and pasta in your child's lunch. **DO NOT** send candy, cookies, cakes, pudding, Gogurts or salty chips.

Parents will provide a snack for their child(ren). Foods and drinks that contain excessive amounts of sugar, salt, food additives and preservatives will not be served.

Child care licensing states that no food brought from home can be shared at preschool (regulation 746.3309). Please send only commercially prepared foods for birthday snacks, celebrations, cooking projects, etc.

Further, according to minimum standards for child care centers, 90% of fatal chokings occur in children under 4 years of age. Therefore, we reserve the right to remove any food brought to school that could be deemed a choking hazard. Examples of some choking hazards are whole grapes, dried fruit, popcorn, hotdogs cut into rounds, or any chunk of food larger than can be swallowed whole. Allow your child choices in what is packed for lunch. Children under two years old need fat for energy, growth and proper brain development. Fat should not be limited in their diet. Children should bring lunch in a labeled, divided lunch box. These dishes allow for ease of service and limited waiting. All containers sent to Preschool should be easy for your child to open fostering independence. Water is the lunch beverage. Cups are provided by the Preschool.

Birthdays

Simple recognition is given to the child on his/her birthday. A birthday snack may be provided by the birthday child for the class. Please send only nutritious, *commercially prepared foods* for birthday snacks - **NO ICING!** Please notify your teacher of your intentions to bring a special snack so she has the opportunity to inform other parents of a snack change.

Please do not send invitations for parties to Preschool to be passed out unless **everyone** in the class is invited. No gifts are to be exchanged at Preschool, but the birthday child may give a book to the Preschool in his/her honor.

FOR SAFETY REASONS PLEASE DO NOT BRING BALLOONS TO PRESCHOOL.



Celebrations

Each year the Preschool children and families will participate in several gatherings. We have a family music festival that's open to the public. In May we gather for an outdoor picnic on the capitol grounds. This event is planned for two different days to encourage parent participation and ease of parking. When special foods are planned you are encouraged to provide items of your family's cultural heritage.

Field Trips

Notification for field trips will be posted outside of your child's classroom at least 48 hours in advance. Parents will also receive notice via email or written communication. All field trip transportation will be walking trips or city buses/Dillos. Every child should wear a FUMP T-shirt and comfortable walking shoes. One adult for every 4 children will accompany the class for adequate supervision.

Special Visitors will be scheduled throughout the school year for children in the three and four year old classes. These events will be scheduled based on children's interests, developmental level and to enrich the regular program curriculum. Parents will be given advanced notice of the event and typically scheduled on MWFs. Children enrolled on TTH will be invited to attend.

Enrichment Activities

As a part day program, we focus on time spent in the classroom, playing, exploring and socializing. We also supplement our classroom experiences with activities that supplement your child's preschool experience. We currently have Chapel once per week for three and four year old children, Stretch-N-Grow, a movement class, twice per month on Mondays for three and four year old children, music twice per month for all ages, and story time once per week for toddlers and up. Activities and frequency are determined by age appropriate curriculum, attention span, and each classes' developmental readiness. If your child is attending FUMP on a Tuesday/Thursday basis, enrichment activities are purposefully limited. As they are attending only 8 hours per week, our intent is to focus on the core classroom experience - learning center activities and socialization among the children.

Clothing

Children should wear comfortable, **washable play clothes** in which they can move easily and are free to play and explore. Clothing should be simple enough for the child to manage alone. We discourage heavy belts, complicated snaps and straps, etc., which the child cannot work himself/herself. If your child wears diapers, make sure the clothes have leg snaps or that the clothes are easy to change (e. g. skirts). **Please keep in mind that any clothing worn to Preschool will be subjected to paint, glue, outside elements, etc.**

Please be sure your child's shoes fit correctly. Ill-fitting shoes may inhibit your child's physical development. We prefer closed toe, closed heel shoes as they are best for climbing, playing and going on field trips. Flip-flops, rain boots and western boots are inappropriate for Preschool activities.

Animals

Some teachers do have classroom pets. Our staff ensure 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 will ensure that children wash hands appropriately.

Summer Term

FUM Preschool has summer terms, typically lasting 2 to 3 weeks each, and spanning from mid June into late July. The dates for the summer terms are published in February of each school year. The tuition is determined by the number of weeks in each term. Before School Care and After School Care are offered as a part of the summer program.

Discipline

One of the main objectives of FUM Preschool is to help children develop self-discipline. Our guidance techniques offer children clear expectations and options to create a positive environment. To encourage this, we attempt to practice discipline which:

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

A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:

- Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
- Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
- Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
- Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is 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 punishments;
- Pinching, shaking, or biting a child;
- Putting anything in or on a child's mouth
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;
- Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed; and
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.
- Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;
- Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;

If a child's behavior becomes a chronic problem and is unresponsive to the teacher's attempts to alter the behavior, the Preschool may follow any of these steps appropriate to the situation:

- hold a conference with the parents, teacher and Director to discuss the situation and to develop methods of correcting the behavior problem.
- ask the parent to have the child examined by a pediatrician.
- ask the parent to have the child evaluated by a child guidance professional.
- when all else fails, the Preschool reserves the right to request the immediate withdrawal of a child.

Biting

Children sometimes bite other children. Although not all children bite, biting is considered a normal stage in a child's development. Here are some common reasons why children may bite:

Teething: Toddlers are often cutting teeth and it hurts. Chewing on something relieves the itch and stops the pain momentarily.

Sensory Exploration: Toddlers are very good at using all of their senses to learn about the world. The "oral mode", an important style of learning for infants, continues into toddler hood. They bite everything, not just their playmates.

Cause and Effect: Children are eager explorers. They are constantly studying cause and effect. Biting produces a predictable response. Often, the response is dramatic: there is a lot of noise and attention from adults.

Self-Assertion: This is probably the most common reason children bite. It's a way to express frustration when they don't yet have the language skills to do so.

The Preschool staff takes action to reduce the number of biting incidents, including providing access to teething toys, providing numerous sensory exploration activities, providing opportunity to explore cause and effect and offering toddlers options/alternatives to reduce frustrations.

Consistent with preschool policy, parents are not told the name of the child who bit their child. Parents of the biter are informed and work together with the teachers in hopes of preventing further incidents of biting. We recognize how upset parents may be when they learn their child has been bitten; however, we also recognize that biting is a normal component of child development. Despite our many concerted efforts to prevent biting incidents, they are bound to occur. No child is ever excluded from our program because of biting.

Grievances

The failure to handle differences and concerns can disrupt harmony among parents and staff and affect the well-being of children. We encourage parents to use conflict resolution steps when problems arise, such as talking directly to the appropriate individuals, identifying the problem, working together to devise possible solutions, implementing the agreed-upon solution and giving feedback to see if the solution worked. There may be times that this process fails. Therefore, the following procedures are established for expressing complaints: If you have a concern about a staff member and/or classroom incident:

1. Talk to the teacher in charge at the time the problem arose. If this person is a teaching assistant, the lead teacher needs to be informed as well.
2. If the problem is not resolved, talk with the Director. More than one meeting may be necessary to fully understand the depth of your concern and to give the Director the opportunity to solve the problem.
3. If the issue is still not resolved, please put your concerns in writing to the Preschool Director stating your desire to issue a formal grievance. **(Email is not considered adequate at this level)**. Please include specific date, time, people and place of the incident. The Preschool Director will return a written response within 10 school days. Both documents will be forwarded to the FUM Preschool Board Chair for information purposes only (there will be no Board Chair action at step #3).
4. If the matter is still unresolved, you may put your concerns in writing to the FUM Preschool Board stating your desire to issue a formal grievance. **(Email is not considered acceptable at this level)**. Again, please include specific date, time, people and place of the incident. Letters will be considered by the appropriate committee or designate and a response will be given following the next scheduled board meeting. Any decision of the board will be considered the final resolution of the matter.

If the concern is regarding any other matter, parents may skip step one.

The preschool reserves the right to ask a family to meet with the preschool board ethics committee.

Preschool Board of Directors

The Board system was created by the elders of First United Methodist Church 30 years ago when this preschool was founded. Its structure and method of operation was laid out in the by-laws created by the church, copies of which are available on the preschool website. The FUMP Board is made up of 13 preschool parents (voting members), as well as the Preschool Director and the church's Director of Children and Family Ministries (both non-voting members). Members are nominated by a committee made up of the Board Chair (who heads this committee), the Preschool Director, and at least 2 other members of the Board. Once the nomination committee has put together a slate of candidates for open Board positions, this list is presented to the Board for approval and those nominated are asked to join. When considering nominations for the Board, several factors are taken into consideration:

- Board members must have had their children enrolled in the school for at least one full semester prior to joining.
- All Board members are asked to serve for at least two years, thus only parents who will be in the school at least that long are considered.
- At least half of the Board parents must be church members.

Finally, the nominations committee considers other qualities that have proven over time to make for good Board members and which reflect the desires of the church. These qualities include the ability to do hard work, dedication, loyalty, honesty, professionalism, ability to maintain confidentiality, ability to put the good of the school as a whole above personal interest or friendships, commitment to following the policies and procedures of the school and the church, and willingness to accept and support the decisions of the majority of the Board and work within them.

Once on the Board, a member may continue to serve for more than two years if they so choose. In a school like ours in which families are only here for a few brief years, it is helpful to have some members willing to serve for several years. Every Board member serves on at least one subcommittee or assigned role. The Board's standing roster, roles and committees are listed in the monthly newsletter. The dates of all Board meetings are also listed in the newsletter. Normally, the Board meets on the second Monday of the month (skipping June and December), although due to scheduling conflicts such as Spring Break we sometimes have to move the meeting to the third Monday. Meetings begin at 6:30 pm, usually in room 108 and run until the business of the evening is done. Anyone is welcome to attend the Board meetings. The agenda for the meeting is set in advance by the Chair. Occasionally the Board has to go into executive session to discuss confidential information such as personnel issues. Anyone interested in being considered for nomination to the Board should contact the Board Chair.

Preschool Calendar

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| August 18-21 | Staff Inservice / Preparation* |
| August 24 | Orientation |
| August 25 | First Day of Preschool |
| September 7 | Holiday/Labor Day* |
| September 9 | Open House |
| September 25 | Staff Development (TAEYC Conference)* |
| Oct. 15 & 16 | Parent/Teacher Conferences* & Book Fair |
| November 20 | Vision/Hearing Screenings |
| November 25-27 | Thanksgiving Holiday* |
| December 18 | Staff Development* |
| Dec. 21 - Jan. 1 | Winter Break* |
| January 4 | Staff Development* |
| January 5 | Preschool Resumes |
| January 18 | Martin Luther King, Jr. Day* |
| February 4 & 5 | Group & Individual Portraits |
| February 12 | Staff Development* |
| February 20 | FUMP Family Music Festival |
| March 15 - 19 | Spring Break* |
| April 2 & 5 | Holiday (Good Friday & Easter Monday)* |
| April 15 & 16 | Parent/Teacher Conferences* |
| May 13 & 14 | All School Picnics |
| May 31 | Memorial Day Holiday* |
| June 2 | Last day of Preschool |
| June 3 | Staff Inservice* |

* NO SCHOOL