

**2012-2013**

# **Preschool Parent Handbook**



**Fairfax United Methodist Church Preschool**

10300 Stratford Avenue

Fairfax, VA 22030

703-591-3177

[preschool@fairfaxumc.org](mailto:preschool@fairfaxumc.org)

# Table of Contents

<b>APPROACH.....</b>	<b>5</b>
Philosophy and Goals.....	5
Physical.....	5
Social .....	5
Emotional.....	6
Intellectual .....	6
Spiritual .....	6
Curriculum.....	6
Positive Reinforcement.....	8
The Value of Play.....	8
<b>OPERATING INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>9</b>
Organization and Staff .....	9
Enrollment Eligibility .....	9
Registration.....	10
Tuition .....	10
Tax Information.....	10
Due Dates and Penalties .....	11
Withdrawal Procedures .....	11
Calendars and Schedules .....	12
<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY.....</b>	<b>12</b>
Attendance.....	13
Medical Emergencies During School Hours .....	13
Insurance.....	13
Medications .....	13
Clothing.....	14
Policy for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse.....	14
<b>MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>14</b>
Transportation .....	14
Arrival and Pick-up.....	15
Family Participation .....	15

Communication..... 15  
Food ..... 16  
Birthdays and Special Events ..... 16  
No favors or gifts, please. .... 16  
Show and Share ..... 16  
Lunch Bunch..... 17  
Field Trips ..... 17  
Conferences ..... 17  
Confidentiality..... 18  
Releases ..... 18  
Emergency Preparedness Plan..... 18  
CHILD CARE PROGRAM LICENSING INFORMATION FOR PARENTS..... 19



Fairfax United Methodist Church welcomes you to the Weekday Preschool Program. The Church provides and supports this program as a community service. The Preschool is part of our total Church life and is a part of the educational ministry. The student body includes children of the congregation, children of other congregations and children whose parents have no church affiliation.

The Preschool admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities made available to children. There is no discrimination on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of educational policies, admissions policies and other school-administered programs.

We invite you and your child to attend any of our Church functions, including our Church School on Sunday mornings. To learn more about our Church programs, please see our web site at [www.fairfaxumc.org](http://www.fairfaxumc.org) for information about times and events. We hope that each family will find friendship and spiritual growth, not only in the Weekday Preschool, but within the total life of the Church.

Diana Jenkins

## **APPROACH**

### **Philosophy and Goals - We are dedicated to developing the whole child**

Fairfax United Methodist Church Preschool is committed to providing a stimulating, happy environment for nurturing our young children's total growth and development: a place where children experience structured freedom, personal acceptance, and guidance from loving teachers. One of our basic human needs is to know, accept, and enjoy our individuality. Therefore, an important Preschool objective is to provide an environment where children can develop as individuals, acquire a comfortable, realistic concept of self, a sense of personal worth, and a love of learning. With a positive awareness of self, a child is freer to develop intellectually, and can work toward a happier relationship with others. Children learn most effectively through positive relationships and through creative exploration and play. Our teachers' task is to help each child acquire happy, useful patterns of behavior, and a sense of wonder and trust which will lead toward becoming a productive, creative adult.

We encourage a balanced growth by placing equal emphasis on physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual development. Our prime objectives are to:

1. Enhance development of individuality, independence, and self-confidence;
2. Provide appropriate opportunities for socialization;
3. Guide experiences in practical living;
4. Promote physical development;
5. Stimulate intellectual development; and
6. Provide a solid foundation for faith development.

The overall program is aimed at fostering a balanced growth for each child in each of these major developmental dimensions:

#### **Physical**

Through play, children begin to understand their bodies and how they work. Crayons, scissors, clay, paint, glue, blocks, woodworking, musical instruments and manipulative toys help develop small muscles. Climbing gyms, balls, bikes, slides, creative movement, etc. help develop large muscles and improve coordination, balance, and strength.

#### **Social**

A young child's first lesson in community living is learning about belonging to a group. Within the group, a child learns to share, take turns, give and receive help, and to follow as well as lead. Children learn to express their needs verbally and to listen while others talk; to feel secure with adults and share their attention with peers. They are encouraged to be self-reliant by learning to take care of personal needs, to finish what is begun, and to clean up and put away materials.

## **Emotional**

Teachers help a child feel wanted, loved and secure by providing structured freedom in this first school experience. They encourage a child's independence and individuality by providing many media through which a child can constructively express feelings, manage personal needs, and develop problem-solving abilities. A supportive environment that fosters creativity at many levels and respects individual differences reinforces emotional health and stability.

## **Intellectual**

Stories, finger plays, poems, dramatic play, music, science, nature, cooking experiences, games, and puzzles stimulate a child's intellectual development in every dimension. These experiences strengthen concentration, observation, and memory; encourage curiosity, reasoning, and a desire to learn; and provide a rich backdrop for development of essential language skills.

## **Spiritual**

A child is a product of relationships with family, friends, and teachers. Relationships are especially significant in Christian learning: a child learns forgiveness by being forgiven; trust by finding adults trustworthy and fair; understanding by being understood and by having an opportunity for social experiences with loving adults and other children of the same age. In this process, children learn to value themselves as well as others. Being with persons who express love, care, acceptance, and kindness through daily living and by experiencing and exploring nature, children become aware of God as a reality in their own life and world. Furthermore, our Preschool is an extension of the educational and outreach ministries of Fairfax United Methodist Church, and age-appropriate elements of Christian education guide all curriculum areas. United Methodist Church School literature for this age level is used to help guide planning. These materials are inclusive in nature, and are consistent with the best principles and purposes of early childhood education

## **Curriculum**

The curriculum of Fairfax United Methodist Church Preschool has been developed around the following overall themes:

1. *Children in relation to themselves* - developing a positive self-concept and an awareness and understanding of physical and emotional uniqueness and growth;
2. *Children in relation to others* - family, peers, the Church, and their home community;
3. *Children in relation to the physical world* - developing a sense of wonder and appreciation for the beauty and variety in the natural world, including animals, habitats, and natural systems;
4. *Children in relation to God* – building awareness that we are children of God who respect, care and love all children in God's creation

These themes are addressed throughout the year by providing a variety of active learning experiences with literature, music, art, science, health, mathematics, and physical education appropriate to the children's developmental levels. At least six activity or learning centers are maintained within each classroom, and children may move freely from one center to another.

Children will have opportunities to participate in large groups, small groups, self-selected groups, and individually. In this way, they encounter many opportunities to gain in language skills, to expand their knowledge, to grow in curiosity, to problem-solve and create, and to improve physical skills.

Activities offered include:

- Group time (stories, poems, filmstrips)
- Creative art activities and craft projects (painting, clay, collage, crayons, scissors, paste, etc.)  
Music (finger plays, singing, instruments, records, creative movement)
- Outdoor play (fenced playground with wheel toys, climbing equipment, sandbox, easels)
- Indoor movement center (for inclement weather days)
- Field trips
- Science and nature studies (walks, gardening, animal care, study of weather and seasons, etc.)
- Snack (food preparation, cooking, nutrition)
- Play equipment and creative materials for independent or guided learning in math (blocks, puzzles, games, educational materials, toys, etc.)
- Writing center (paper, markers, scissors, glue, dictation, support of dramatic play)

Involvement in these activities will engage children in a total learning process developing skills in:

<b>Conceptualizing</b>	<b>Using Language</b>	<b>Cooperative Behavior</b>
Color & shape	Receptive - Listening,	Seeking/giving help
Numbers	following directions	Sharing/turn taking
Space	Expressive - Oral	Establishing/following
Measurement	expression, vocabulary	rules
Size	development	Expression of feelings
Motion	Linking written words with	Role taking
Position	meaning	Dramatic play
Time		
Texture	<b>Thinking/Reasoning</b>	<b>Social-emotional Tasks</b>
Smell	Observing	Adapting to new
Sight	Recalling	environments
Sound	Noticing differences	Self care
Emotions	and similarities	Self-expressions
Relationships	Ordering	Impulse control
	Grouping	Achievement motivation
<b>Sensory/Motor Tasks</b>	Classifying	Perseverance
Visual	Generalizing	Values
Auditory	Making choices	Creativity
Tactile	Questioning	
Gross/fine Motor		<b>Discipline</b>

The approach to discipline at Fairfax United Methodist Church Preschool is an outgrowth of our philosophy on how young children learn, grow, and develop. We believe that a stimulating and loving environment that fully intrigues and involves children, that affords them the right and ability to make real choices, and that protects the rights of each individual promotes the development of inner controls and leads to self-discipline. Classroom rules are limited and are designed to protect persons and property and to promote pro-social behaviors such as sharing and turn-taking, tolerance of individual differences, as children are developmentally able to comprehend and act on such concepts.

### **Positive Reinforcement**

Recognizing and encouraging desired behaviors is the teachers' primary means for effective behavior management. If problems do arise, the teachers:

1. Remind children in positive terms of acceptable behaviors (i.e. "Blocks are for building, not for throwing. Let's see what we can build with these blocks.");
2. Redirect children's activity to an area that may be more calming or involving (i.e. water/sand play, play dough) and, only if warranted;
3. Remove the child from activity briefly until she/he is able to regain a measure of self-control.

This calming time is taken on a chair near the activity center, not in isolation, and generally the child determines when she/he is ready to re-enter the activity. The goal is not to embarrass or call attention to the child, but to offer a brief respite from activity so that the child can gain control of his/her own behavior once more.

At no time is corporal punishment, intimidation, shaming, shouting, or other forms of humiliating and/or frightening "discipline" tolerated. It is our belief that while some behaviors cannot be accepted, each child must always be and feel accepted and loved. An example of patience, love, positive guidance, and forgiveness is a foundation of our philosophy as a Church related early childhood program.

### **The Value of Play**

Our program is founded on the belief that play is the most developmentally appropriate and productive avenue for young children's learning. It is the preschooler's way of exploring the physical world; of relating to others; of organizing ideas, knowledge, and feelings; of adjusting to the demands of the environment; of releasing tensions and solving emotional problems. Because true play is inherently individual and has no pre-determined expectations, there can be no "failure" in play. Each child is free to succeed at self-chosen tasks, and this success leads to feelings of competence, self-worth, and willingness to try new things.

Every area of development is enhanced through self-directed play. Through play children develop physical skills and coordination of large and small muscles. They explore objects and materials and discover what can be done with them. They practice skills useful to later school learning: visual discrimination, recognition of patterns, refined hand and eye movements, etc. In stacking and building with blocks, children learn about spatial relationships, balance, weight, and gravity. In sand and water play, they explore concepts of volume, weight, and comparison. During dramatic play, children practice

social roles, develop communication skills, and expand their understanding of their own and others' feelings. At a time when language ability is insufficient to fully convey feelings and frustrations, play provides an effective avenue for self-expression.

Perhaps most importantly of all, children discover their own personality in play and develop confidence in their own ability to deal with the world around them. Play has all the characteristics of a complete educational process. It secures concentration for a great length of time. It develops initiative, imagination, and intense interest. There is complete emotional involvement. No other activity calls so fully on the resources of effort and energy within each child. Play is the most complete of all the educational processes, for it influences the intellect, the emotions, and the body of the child.

## **OPERATING INFORMATION**

### **Organization and Staff**

Fairfax United Methodist Church Preschool was organized in 1976 to serve the Fairfax community by providing a sound early childhood program in a Christian setting. The program is operated by a Preschool Board comprised of the Director, parent representatives, and various persons responsible for the educational ministries of FUMC. Fairfax United Methodist Preschool is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and licensed by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Accreditation involves a comprehensive process of self-study and professional review to verify compliance with NAEYC's criteria for high quality early childhood programs. FUMC Preschool was found to meet or exceed all criteria regarding staffing, curriculum implementation, administration, and health and safety standards.

Each class is staffed by two full-time teachers, a lead and an assistant. Teachers are hired on the basis of educational background, appropriate experience, and demonstrated skill in working with young children. Above all, they are warm, loving persons with a growing Christian faith and a commitment to providing the best possible preschool experience for children. Teachers are certified in American Red Cross First Aid/CPR, and all are required to continue their professional development by annually attending a minimum of 16 hours of continuing education events in the field of early childhood education.

### **Enrollment Eligibility**

Eligibility for enrollment is without regard to religious preference, race or ethnic background. Enrollment of children with special needs shall be considered on a case-by-case basis and must have prior approval by the Preschool Board.

Sessions for Three-Year-Olds are held Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:15-12:00. Enrollment is open to children who will be 3 years old by December 31st of the entrance year and toilet trained, and is limited to a maximum number of 16 children per class. Four-Year-Olds meet Monday, Wednesday, and

Friday mornings from 9:15- 12:00. Enrollment for this program is open to children who will be 4 years old by December 31st of the entrance year, and is limited to a maximum of 18 children per class.

A Pre-Kindergarten (Transitional) program is offered five mornings per week, Monday through Friday, from 9:15-12:00. Enrollment for this program is open to children who will be 5 years old by December 31st of the entrance year, and have some prior group experience. Class size is limited to a maximum of 18 children.

### **Registration**

Registration for the following school year will be open no later than the first school day after January 1st for families of Fairfax United Methodist Church and those with children currently enrolled. On the last day of this two week period, returning preschool families not currently enrolled, may register. Registration for the community at large will open the first school day after a two week preferential enrollment period. Applications are accepted on a "first-come, first-served" basis. When maximum enrollment is reached, a waiting list will be started. This waiting list will apply for one school year only; it will not "roll-over" into subsequent years.

Application for admission for new students must be accompanied by a registration fee of \$100.00. Registration fees for returning students must be paid no later than May 1st or their space will be released to persons on the waiting list. Registration fees are used to cover administration costs. These fees are non-refundable and cannot be applied toward tuition.

Proof of identity in the form of a child's birth certificate or passport is required by the Commonwealth of Virginia at the time of registration.

### **Tuition**

Tuition is subject to an annual review and may be changed with the approval of the Preschool Board. Tuition is assessed per year but is divided into nine equal amounts for your convenience. Some months have more holidays than others but each month's tuition represents one ninth of the total.

Checks should be written to **Fairfax UMC Preschool**. Payments should be delivered by an adult to the Preschool Office or mailed directly to the Preschool's treasurer at:

Fairfax UMC Preschool  
10300 Stratford Avenue  
Fairfax, VA 22030

On line payments may be made using this address. The account number will be your child's name.

### **Tax Information**

Families who claim dependent child care on Federal and State Tax returns may contact the preschool office or the preschool financial manager for documentation.

### **Due Dates and Penalties**

All tuition is paid one month in advance and is due on the 1st day of each month, August through April. A reminder notice for the August 1 payment will be mailed to all registered families at the end of June. Non-payment of tuition by the delinquent date (August 10) will release the space to persons on the waiting list.

A \$10 fee will be assessed on the first delinquent tuition payment. All subsequent late tuition payments will be assessed a \$25 fee. Tuition payments will be deemed to be late after the 10th of each month, August through April.

If tuition is more than 31 days in arrears, the family will be contacted by the director to discuss if there are other concerns and to determine if they wish to discontinue their child's enrollment. If no effort is made to clear the delinquent account, the child will be considered to be withdrawn, and the space will be filled from the waiting list.

A \$10.00 fee will be assessed on any check returned by the bank due to insufficient funds.

If a child is absent from class for an extended period due to illness, vacation or for any other reason, but expects to return to school and desires a place reserved, tuition will be charged during the period of absence.

If school is closed temporarily due to weather conditions, as a health precaution, or because of similar reasons beyond the control of the school, tuition shall continue to be charged.

### **Withdrawal Procedures**

If, during the school term, a family finds it necessary to withdraw their child from the program, notice must be given in writing one month in advance. With less than 30 days' notice, a one month tuition payment will be required.

If a child is withdrawn during the last two months of school, full tuition must be paid for these months, as a replacement cannot be made at this late date.

If, in the opinion of our staff, any child should be unable or unwilling to participate meaningfully in the group or if the child presents a danger to other children or a continual disruption to the class within the teacher/child ratio approved by the State, the family will be called for consultation. The family and staff can work out the child's continuation for a trial period, with any special staffing/materials considerations to be approved by the Board. After a trial period, after consulting with parents and teachers, the Preschool Director shall make a final decision regarding the child's continuation or withdrawal from the program. Such decision may be reviewed by the Preschool Board.

## **Calendars and Schedules**

Morning classes will be held from 9:15 to 12:00 noon, Monday through Friday. The first few classes of the school year for three-year-olds will be shortened to help children become acclimated to the school routine.

A daily schedule for each class and calendar showing school holidays, dates for major field trips and activities, etc, will be provided for each family ongoing throughout the school year.

The Preschool will follow as closely as possible the calendar of Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) with regard to student holidays, September through May. In addition, the Preschool will observe the following emergency closing policy:

- If county schools open two hours late, the preschool will open one hour late unless parents are notified.
- If county schools close early, the preschool will not be affected.
- Preschool will meet as scheduled if county schools close early due to heat.
- Snow days will not be made up.

Dates for field trips and other school activities, will be provided throughout the year in newsletters and calendars from the Director and the classroom teachers.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The health and safety of your children are very important to us. The Commonwealth of Virginia School Entrance Health form is required as a condition of admission to FUMC Preschool and must be filed with us at the beginning of the school year. This form must be signed by your child's doctor to the effect that she/he is healthy, able to participate in school activities, and has completed required immunizations. Parents must notify the school in writing if their child has any emergency or health information changes or additional immunizations.

In the event your child becomes ill at school, parents will be notified immediately. Arrangements must be made to have your child picked up as soon as possible. It is essential that you keep all work, home and cell phone numbers current. Please notify the preschool office within 24 hours if a student contracts a communicable disease or is exposed to a communicable disease such as by a sibling so that we can promptly notify parents of classmates of the affected family.

*In order to limit the spread of illness as much as possible, please cooperate by keeping your child at home:*

- If there is a deep cough or heavy nasal discharge, usually the first day or two of a cold;
- Whenever a fever has reached 100° or greater and for at least 24 hours after that;
- During the incubation period of a contagious disease;

- When there has been vomiting or diarrhea;
- If less than 24 hours has elapsed since receiving antibiotics; or until your doctor recommends resuming school.
- For the recommended treatment and follow up for parasites

All children are expected to participate daily in outdoor play, weather permitting. Outdoor play is necessary for good physical development and general health. Do not send your child to school if she/he is not well enough to participate in outdoor activities. We cannot arrange for an adult to watch a child inside during this period as both teachers are required to supervise their class outdoors.

**Fairfax United Methodist Church does not allow smoking on the premises.**

### **Attendance**

Preschool attendance is not required by law, but we do take attendance each day. We would appreciate a telephone call or an e-mail informing us of your child's absence. We do notify classmates' families if they have been exposed to communicable diseases and we take proper precautions to halt the spread of infections through the school.

### **Medical Emergencies During School Hours**

To help maintain a safe environment for our children, most of our office and teaching staff have current First Aid and CPR certifications. In the event of an accident or other medical emergency, a parent or designated emergency contact person will be notified immediately. At the beginning of the school year each family must file an Emergency Care Form granting permission for the Preschool to take whatever steps may be necessary to obtain emergency medical care in the event parents or designated emergency persons cannot be contacted. If the emergency warrants immediate medical attention, we will first call 911 and the child will be transported to the nearest medical facility.

### **Insurance**

While your child is at Preschool or involved in an official Preschool field trip, accident insurance is provided under the Church's umbrella policy. If medical treatment should be required as a result of injury sustained on Church premises, this insurance will supplement your personal coverage, if needed. Accident insurance coverage is automatic and included in your registration fee.

### **Medications**

As a general rule, medications are not administered at Preschool, and we make no provisions for storing routine medication. We will however, maintain emergency medications provided by the family physician in the preschool office to be immediately available for severe allergic reactions (bee stings, etc.), serious medical conditions, and other emergency situations. ***Information about such severe health situations must be reported on the Emergency Care Form and Health Form, and medication authorization forms must be signed by both the prescribing physician and the parent each school year. We require that all such medications be brought to school on your child's first school day in September and left at school for the entire school term.*** Parents will be responsible for ensuring that the medication is current and

will not expire during the course of the school year. In the event that the child's emergency medications is given, 911 will be called.

### **Clothing**

Children learn through active exploration of the classroom and playground. They need to feel free to enter activities without fear of damaging their clothing. Please dress them in comfortable, durable clothing. Because our playground has climbers and is surfaced with wood chips, we ask that you send your children in shoes that completely enclose their feet and have soles that are safe for climbing. Sandals are often uncomfortable on the playground surface. Clothing should be easy for children to manage themselves - zippers instead of buttons, mittens instead of gloves, etc. Please remember that we will use the playground daily unless it is raining or extremely cold. We hope you will support our program by dressing your child appropriately for any type of weather: sun, rain, snow, mud, or cold.

### **Policy for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse**

According to the law, the definition of child abuse and neglect is:

- The creating or inflicting by a parent or responsible caretaker of a non-accidental physical or mental injury upon a child under 18 years of age or permitting the inflicting of such injury;
- The creating by a parent or responsible caretaker of a substantial risk of death, disfigurement or impairment of bodily or mental functions of a child;
- Neglect or refusal by a parent or responsible caretaker to provide care necessary for the child's health;
- Abandonment of a child by a parent or other person responsible for his/her care;
- The committing upon a child of any sexual act in violation of law, or permitting the commission of such acts.

Teachers and school employees (including nursery schools and day care centers) are required by law to report suspected child neglect or abuse. If a teacher suspects abuse or neglect has taken place, a report will be made to the Director who will then immediately contact the Department of Social Services and file a report, offering whatever support documents and observations are available.

## **MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION**

### **Transportation**

Transportation to and from the school shall be the responsibility of the parents, but the Preschool will provide parents with the school directory to facilitate the formation of car pools, if desired. The Preschool must be given a written list of persons authorized to transport your child. Your child will not be released to individuals whose names do not appear on this list. Parents must park in designated parking spaces and must accompany children directly to the classroom. Under no circumstances should a child be allowed to run ahead. The Church parking lot is extremely busy and parents are responsible for their child's safety during arrival and departure.

### **Arrival and Pick-up**

So that teachers can adequately prepare the room and be free to greet each child, the classroom doors will open at 9:15. Parents should at all times make certain a teacher is present before leaving a child. If parents wish to visit with one another, please do so outside the classroom. If your child is ever reluctant to stay, follow the guidance of the teacher handling such situations. **Children should be picked up promptly** at the close of the session (12:00). **Prompt arrival and pick-up are important to the child's well-being and feeling of security.**

In fairness to our teachers, a \$25.00 late fee will be assessed for every 15 minutes beyond the close of the session. If the parent cannot be contacted, then the Director will contact those names listed on the emergency form. The child will remain in the care of the teacher, Director, or office manager until an authorized adult picks up the child.

### **Family Participation**

Family involvement helps enhance the quality of our Preschool. The Preschool welcomes parents to visit and observe at any time, although teachers may find it necessary to limit the number of persons who can visit at any one time. Children look forward to having family members come into the classroom to join our circle, cook, read a story, or present an activity. We encourage parents to volunteer their help and various talents to extend the teachers' programs. Please remember, though, that classroom time is not appropriate for conferring with the teacher about your child.

Teachers' telephone numbers are in our directory; you may telephone them at home or meet at an agreeable time. Siblings and non-registered children may not spend extended time in classrooms and may not be left unattended.

Prior to volunteer participation, you will be required to submit the "Guidelines for the Protection of Children and Youth" available from the church.

### **Communication**

We believe in open communication at all times between families and the Preschool. You will receive monthly newsletters and calendars from your child's teacher which will provide specifics about the curriculum, birthdays, field trips, and plans. You will also receive a newsletter from the Director which gives a general school-wide calendar and articles of interest to young families. We have many resources available to you, pertaining to child development, education, parenting, etc. The office maintains an extensive library of articles on myriad topics. Please feel free to ask for information on topics of interest to you. We would like our working parents to be informed about their child's preschool day. Please telephone the teachers and ask any questions you might have, or telephone the office. We are available as partners in your child's early education!

## **Food**

A nutritious snack and juice product are provided for all children daily. Teachers frequently plan food preparation projects as small group or individual classroom activities designed to reinforce an idea, concept, or theme being explored with the children. Fruits and vegetables are included often as well as items such as pudding, class-baked cookies, raw vegetables and biscuits. You will often hear from children or teachers about these special food experiences. Regular snacks include foods such as carrots, apples, bananas, raisins, Wheat Thins, Cheez-its, graham crackers, Goldfish, pretzels and Frito's,. All these foods are approved for children over the age of three years. We strive to avoid peanuts, peanut by-products, excessive sugars, salt, fat, and "empty" processed foods and to help establish good snack choices for the children, although occasional sweet treats are offered.

The juice served is a 100% juice product and contains no artificial flavors or colors. For some special holidays (Christmas, Valentine's Day) we purchase a fruit punch that may contain red coloring. Children always have the option of choosing water for their beverage if it is preferred.

Generally, only one type of snack is offered to the class. If children have special dietary requirements or allergies, teachers will work with you to provide suitable alternatives. Children are encouraged to try different foods, but may choose not to eat what is offered on a given day.

## **Birthdays and Special Events**

Please remember that we strive to offer a peanut free environment in our classrooms and all products containing traces of peanuts or peanut oils should be avoided. All snacks provided for special events or birthdays must be pre-approved by the Director and brought to the Director's office for distribution to the classrooms. Further, goods baked at home, opened or missing the nutritional label will not be distributed to our students. Please notify the Director if you wish to provide snack for a special day. Children with summer birthdays may arrange a "half-birthday" during the winter, or choose another day in the spring before the end of school.

## **No favors or gifts, please.**

Also, please note that no written invitations to private parties may be distributed to children or parents in the parking lot or inside the Church, nor may they be placed in the children's take-home bags. Under no circumstances are teachers to be asked to deliver such invitations. Families are provided with complete mailing lists to facilitate contacts outside of school hours.

## **Show and Share**

It is requested that children limit items brought from home. Some teachers often assign "Show and Share" days as a part of their curriculum to better accommodate children's sharing. Please check with your child's teacher on this point. Guns, knives and other toys which encourage rough and violent play are to be left at home. Expensive or fragile electronic toys may not be suitable to bring, as all of the children will want to touch or operate them. Pets, interesting nature items, and many other items are welcome additions to our classrooms. If you have questions, please check with your child's teachers in advance to avoid any potential conflicts.

## **Lunch Bunch**

Lunch Bunch is an extended day option for children enrolled in the Four-Year-Old and PreK programs. It is held on Wednesdays from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. beginning in October. Children bring a bag lunch and drink from home to be eaten in the classroom. The remainder of the Lunch Bunch session will focus on a particular theme for the day. There is a charge for each session and payment is due when a reservation is made through the Preschool Office. The extended day option will be offered to the first 18 families who sign up and a waiting list will be maintained. A minimum of 9 children is required for each session, and refunds will only be issued if school is closed due to inclement weather.

## **Field Trips**

Field trips are scheduled as far in advance as possible so that parents can receive ample notice. A signed permission slip will be required for each field trip to assure that parents are aware of their child's location during school hours. Permission slips will be issued at least one week prior to each trip and must be returned before the day of the trip or the child will not be allowed to participate. Teachers may occasionally take children on walks around the church premises, to the adjacent Parish House yard, etc. to enhance our curriculum. For these walks, we do not send home a permission slip.

Virginia State Law requires all children under the age of eight who are riding in cars to be in child safety restraints and seated in the rear. Parents of participating children are required to provide a car seat or booster seat and be willing to help install it on the day of the field trip for their child to participate. No child under the age of eight will be allowed to participate without an appropriate safety restraint. Additionally, adults riding with students must wear a seat belt.

Parents provide transportation for all off-premises field trips. Parents volunteering to drive on field trips will review the safety guidelines prior to departure and will be responsible for the enforcement of the safety policies during the trip. Field trip drivers will be required to provide car make, model, license plate number, driver's license number and insurance carrier. Children deemed present for school and under our supervision for the field trip must leave from the school and return to the school at the end of the field trip. Families who meet us at the field trip site are welcome but must pay their own admission, if one is required, and assume all risks and liabilities. Some field trips are not suitable for younger children. Siblings are not permitted to accompany parents supervising other children on field trips at any time.

## **Conferences**

Two formal conferences are scheduled each year. Prior to each conference, formal assessments and informal observations appropriate for young children will have been conducted. This information will be discussed and written copies provided. During the fall conference, goals for the child will be discussed. During the spring conference the child's progress along with additional classroom observations will be shared. If at any time a parent desires a conference with the teachers, the teachers and/or the Director will be available upon request.

**Confidentiality**

Access to student documentation (i.e: registration, medical, evaluations, etc.) is available to preschool staff only on an `as needed` basis and to the individual child's parents at their request. Documentation is kept secured in preschool office. Assessment information is used as a tool to help preschool staff and the student's families aid the student in their physical, social, emotional and intellectual development. Information regarding your child will be released to outside agencies only with your written consent.

**Releases**

As the parent or guardian you agree to allow and permit your child to participate in planned pre-school activities conducted by the Fairfax United Methodist Church Pre-School (the "Pre-School") that are conducted in the normal course of Pre-School activities under the direct supervision of the director and/or faculty of the Pre-School. Except for injury that your child may sustain as a direct consequence of the proven gross negligence or willful misconduct of any officer or employee of the Pre-School in the conduct of such activities, you agree to hereby forever discharge, waive, and release the Pre-School, and all of its officers, directors, trustees, employees, and agents, from any and all claims, demands, accountings, liabilities, obligations, actions, causes of action, in law or equity, known or unknown, contingent or matured, and whether within the contemplation of the Guardian or not, which Guardian may have had, now have, or may have in the future, arising out of or existing by reason of my child's participation in the activities of the Pre-School.

During the school year, the preschool will be taking photos of many of the children, staff and parents at play and work. These photos could be used in future publications such as newsletters and brochures, multimedia presentations or to place on the church and/or preschool web site. No names will be attached to any photos.

By signing the registration form, you are giving Fairfax United Methodist Church and Preschool permission to take photos of your child for the purposes stated above and that you do not expect, nor require, any financial remuneration for the reproduction of such photos now or in the future. If you prefer not to have your child included, please request an opt out signature card.

**Emergency Preparedness Plan**

Fairfax United Methodist Church has an Emergency Preparedness Plan. The plan provides for Snow and Ice Storms, Flooding, Fire, Tornado/Hurricane, Chemical Spill, Intruder, Terrorism and Missing Child. Please ask the Director if you would like to see a copy of this document.

## CHILD CARE PROGRAM LICENSING INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

The Commonwealth of Virginia helps assure parents that child day programs that assume responsibility for the supervision, protection, and well-being of a child for any part of a 24-hour day are safe. Title 63.1, Chapter 10 of the Code of Virginia gives the Department of Social Services authority to license these programs. While there are some legislative exemptions to licensure, licensed programs include child day centers, family day homes, child day center systems, and family day systems. The state may also voluntarily register family day homes not required to be licensed.

Standards for licensed child day centers address certain health precautions, adequate play space, a ratio of children per staff member, equipment, program, and record keeping. Criminal records checks and specific qualifications for staff and most volunteers working directly with children are also required. Standards require the facility to meet applicable fire, health, and building codes.

Compliance with standards is determined by announced and unannounced visits to the program by licensing staff within the Department of Social Services. In addition, parents or other individuals may register a complaint about a program which will be investigated if it violates a standard.

Three types of licenses may be issued to programs. Conditional licenses may be issued to a new program to allow up to six months for the program to demonstrate compliance with the standards. A regular license is issued when the program substantially meets the standards for licensure. A provisional license, which cannot exceed six months, is issued when the program is temporarily unable to comply with the standards. Operating without a license when required constitutes a misdemeanor which, upon conviction, can be punishable by a fine of up to \$100 or imprisonment of up to 12 months or both for each day's violation.

If you would like additional information about the licensing of child day programs or would like to register a complaint, please contact the Regional Office of Social Services closest to you or call 1-800-KIDS-LIL (543-7545). Richmond area: (804) 692-2394.

**Fairfax Area Licensing Office**  
11320 Random Hills Road, Suite  
Fairfax, Virginia 22030  
(703) 359-6709

**Northern Regional Office**  
320 Hospital Drive, Suite #23  
Warrenton, Virginia 22186  
(540) 347-6345

**Central Regional Office**  
1604 Santa Rosa Road  
Wythe Building, Suite 130  
Richmond, Virginia 23229-5008  
(804) 662-9773

**Eastern Regional Office**  
Pembroke Office Park  
Pembroke Four Office Building, Suite 300  
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23462-5496  
(804) 473-2116

**Verona Licensing Office**  
200 Post Office Box 350  
Verona, Virginia 24482-0350  
(703) 248-9345

**Piedmont Regional Office**  
Commonwealth of Virginia Building  
210 Church Street, S.W., Suite 100  
Roanoke, Virginia 24011-1779  
(703) 857-7971

**Western Licensing Office**  
190 Patton Street  
Abingdon, Virginia 24210  
(540) 628-5181

**Peninsula Licensing Office**  
825 Diligence Drive, Suite 203  
Newport News, Virginia 23606  
(804) 594-7594

*APPENDIX I (12/95) - MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR LICENSED CHILD DAY CENTERS SERVING CHILDREN OF PRESCHOOL AGE OR YOUNGER*