

# **Weekday Children's Ministry**

## **Parent Handbook**

### **2023-2024**



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## **First United Methodist Church**

1380 W. Main Street

Dothan, AL 36301

(334)793-2179

[www.facebook.com/fumcdothan.childcare](http://www.facebook.com/fumcdothan.childcare)

Program Policies/Procedures

Welcome to the Weekday Children's Ministry of First United Methodist Church. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your child's life. We believe your child is a special gift from God and we want to provide the best love and care possible.

### **MISSION STATEMENT & PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

Our mission at FUMC is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Our goal in the Weekday Children's Ministry is to provide a nurturing, developmentally appropriate environment that encourages each child to develop mentally, physically, spiritually, socially, and emotionally. Age appropriate learning experiences are provided to allow each child to progress at his or her own pace and to experience success through hands-on activities.

### **LICENSING INFORMATION**

Our program is exempt from state licensure; however, we follow all guidelines outlined by the State of Alabama Department of Human Resources for exempt childcare centers. All teachers are required to have a background check, drug testing, and must provide multiple references. They also must have current CPR certification and 8 continuing education units per year.

### **HOURS OF OPERATION**

FUMC Weekday Children's Ministry offers Full-time Daycare, Preschool, & Summer Camp (for school-age children)

- Full-time Daycare operates Monday-Friday from 7:00am-5:30pm
- Preschool operates Monday-Friday from 8:30-12:30 (August-May).
- Summer Camp operates Monday-Friday from 7:00am-5:30pm (during summer months)

We maintain an open door policy for parents during business hours; therefore, parents are always welcome to call or drop-in to see their children. We appreciate your taking into consideration the class schedules when dropping by.

### **ENROLLMENT**

Enrollment is open to children ages 6 weeks-5 years old

Daycare: 6wks – 5 yrs old

Preschool: 3 yrs old by December 31<sup>st</sup> (Young 3's class) – 5 days  
3 yrs old by September 1<sup>st</sup> – 5 Days  
4 yrs old or 5 yrs old by September 1<sup>st</sup> – 5 Days

We strive to provide a positive class setting by ensuring all children will benefit from being a part of our program. If your child has special needs, it may be determined that the setting and/or structure of our program is not a beneficial environment for him or her. Parents of children with special needs are encouraged to meet with the Director prior to enrollment to discuss the child's needs.

The following items are required to enroll in our program:

- Completed Enrollment Forms
- Tuition (Fee) Agreement
- Parent Handbook Acknowledgment Agreement Form
- Media Release Form
- Exemption Affidavit (full-time Daycare only)
- Current Blue Slip (Immunization Form)
- Copy of Current Insurance Card
- Registration Fee

## TUITION

FUMC Weekday Children's Ministry accepts checks and credit cards as forms of payment. A recurring credit card or ACH payment may be set up through the Smartcare app as well. Receipts will be given for payments made by credit card if desired. All payments must be placed in the payment drop box located beside the office or handed directly to office personnel. **Teachers may not accept any form of payment.** All checks should be made payable to *FUMC*.

There will be a \$30.00 fee charged for all returned checks. Returned checks will not be re-deposited. Parents will be responsible for re-issuing a second check. If at any future time the bank returns a parent's check, all future payments must be made by credit card or certified check. **Childcare services may be suspended until full payment of tuition and NSF charges have been made.**

Childcare tuition and fees are based on enrollment (a reserved space), not on attendance. To maintain a reserved space, fees must be paid during the absence of a child. No credits will be given due to child illness, scheduled school holidays, vacation, closings due to emergency situations, or inclement weather.

Non-payment of tuition is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program. Timely payments are essential for continued enrollment; however, if you anticipate difficulty with paying on time, please discuss the matter with the Director immediately. **If payments are not kept up to date, the child will forfeit his or her spot in the program.** Please refer to the tuition (fee) agreement form for further details regarding tuition payments.

### Preschool Tuition

Tuition payments are due on Monday of each week for the current week and are considered late after 5:30pm on Wednesday afternoon. There will be a charge of \$5.00 (per week) for any late payments. Tuition must be paid in full regardless of whether your child attends the program. Full tuition is due for weeks with holidays or inclement weather days and **no credits for tuition or lunch payments will be given for absences.**

### Full-time Daycare & Summer Camp

Tuition payments are due on Monday of each week for the current week and are considered late after 5:30pm on Wednesday afternoon. There will be a charge of \$5.00 (per week) for any late payments. Tuition must be paid in full regardless of whether your child attends the program. Full tuition is due for weeks with holidays or inclement weather days and **no credits for tuition or lunch payments will be given for absences.**

Children, who have been enrolled in our Full-time Daycare program for at least one year, will receive a “vacation” week, in which tuition does not have to be paid. The vacation week may be a week of your choice, but your child may not attend school during this week. Parents must notify the office two weeks, in writing or via email, prior to the planned vacation in order to be exempt from tuition.

### Key Fobs

FUMC’s doors remained locked at all times. Upon enrollment, each parent will be issued a key fob that allows them access into our front doors. A deposit of \$5 per fob is required and will be returned when the key fobs are turned into the office. Additional key fobs may be requested.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Within FUMC Weekday Ministry, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with our employees who have a “need to know” in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about faculty/staff, other parents, and/or children will not be shared with parents as we strive to protect everyone’s right of privacy.

Outside of FUMC Weekday Ministry, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent of a child has given written consent, except where otherwise provided for by law.

You may observe children at our center who are disabled or who exhibit behavior that may appear inappropriate (biting, hitting/kicking, spitting, etc). You may be curious or concerned about the other child. Our Confidentiality Policy protects every child’s privacy. Employees of FUMC Weekday Children’s Ministry are prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you.

### **MANDATED REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT**

Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any **suspicion** of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The employees of FUMC Weekday Children’s Ministry are considered mandated reporters, under this law. Our employees are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior or condition prior to making a report. Under the Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. We at First United Methodist Church take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

As mandated reporters, the staff at FUMC Weekday Ministry cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in “good faith.”

Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the child’s body
- Severe verbal reprimands
- Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness, season
- Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (car seat, seat belt, etc)
- Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Not providing appropriate meals/food

- Leaving a child unattended for any amount of time (including in the car by him or herself)
- Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
- Sending a child to school over medicated to hide symptoms, which would typically require the child to be kept at home until symptoms subside
- Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation

## **PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

FUMC Weekday Children’s Ministry requires the parents of enrolled children, at all times, to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect. One of our goals is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn, and develop. Achieving this environment is not only the responsibility of the employees of FUMC Weekday Children’s Ministry, but is the responsibility of each and every parent or adult who enters the center. Parents are required to behave in a manner that fosters this ideal environment. **Parents who violate the Parent Code of Conduct will not be permitted on the property thereafter.**

### Swearing/Cursing

No parent or adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on our property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. Such language is considered offensive by many people and will not be tolerated. At NO time shall inappropriate language be directed toward members of the staff.

### Threatening of Employees, Children, or other Adults

Threats of any kind will not be tolerated and will be reported to the appropriate authorities. Parents must be responsible for and in control of their behavior at all times

### Physical/Verbal Punishment

While reprimands may be necessary while at the Center, it is not appropriate for parents to physically or verbally abuse their child. Doing so may cause undue embarrassment or emotional distress. Parents are always welcome to discuss a behavior issue with the teacher and/or Director to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective disciplinary procedures.

Parents are prohibited from addressing, for the purpose of correction or discipline, a child that is not their own. Of course, no parent or other adult may physically punish another parent’s child. If a parent should witness another parent’s child behaving in an inappropriate manner, or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their own child, it is most appropriate for the parent to direct their concern to the classroom teacher and/or the Director.

Furthermore, it is inappropriate for one parent to seek out another parent to discuss their child’s inappropriate behavior. All behavior concerns should be brought to the classroom teacher or Director’s attention. At that point, the teacher and/or Director will address the issue with the other parent. Although you may be curious as to the outcome of such a discussion, teachers and/or the Director are prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you. You may be assured that we will not discuss anything about your child with another parent or adult visiting the center.

### Confrontational Interaction with Employees, Other Parents, or Associates

While it is understood that parents may not always agree with the employees of FUMC or the parents

of other children, it is expected that all disagreements be handled in a calm and respectful manner. Confrontational interactions are not an appropriate means by which to communicate a point and are prohibited.

### **PARENT'S RIGHT TO IMMEDIATE ACCESS**

Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in our care.

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (Custody Order, Restraining Order, Protection from Abuse Order, etc), FUMC Weekday Ministry must be provided with a **Certified Copy** of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order.

**In the absence of a court order** on file with FUMC Weekday Ministry, **both** parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. We cannot, without a court order, limit the access of one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, we suggest that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access. FUMC Weekday Children's Ministry will contact the local police should a conflict arise.

FUMC Weekday Children's Ministry will dismiss any child whose parent is prohibited from entering the Center. Due to the parents' right to immediate access policy, we cannot have a child at the Center when the child's parent is prohibited access. FUMC Weekday Children's Ministry will not agree to any request to maintain a child's enrollment even if the parent agrees to stay out of the center.

### **DISMISSAL FROM PROGRAM**

FUMC Weekday Children's Ministry reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time. The Director or designee will assist the parent in gathering their child's belongings at the time of dismissal and parents are required to leave the property in a calm and respectful manner, immediately.

Reasons for dismissal from the FUMC Weekday Ministry program include, but are not limited to:

- Continuous negative or disruptive behavior by the child
- Excessive biting
- Failure to pay tuition & fees on time
- Routinely late picking up your child
- Physical or verbal abuse of any person/child or property
- Our inability to meet the child's needs
- Lack of compliance with handbook regulations

### **WITHDRAWAL POLICY**

Two weeks written notice is required when withdrawing a child from our program for any reason. If the required notice is not given, parents will be charged tuition for two additional weeks.

A withdrawn child and his/her parents are required to call and request an appointment with the Director if they wish to return to the program following the withdrawal.

Parents who wish to change their child's days of enrollment or make a change to the program in which they are enrolled, must submit a request to do so two weeks in advance of the proposed change.

### **ARRIVAL PROCEDURES**

Each child must be dropped off and picked up every day by an adult. Arrival time begins at 7:00am for Full-time Daycare and 8:30am for Preschool. Please refrain from bringing your child to his or her classroom prior to these times as the teachers will be busy preparing activities for the day. Parents must sign children in/out electronically each day. In the event of an emergency (fire, tornado, etc), we must have an accurate count of the children present for the day.

Children in our Preschool classes may begin arriving at 8:30 each morning. While arrival by 8:30 isn't required, it's highly recommended so that your child doesn't miss any valuable preschool time.

It is normal for some children to have difficulty separating from parents, or cry when being dropped off. Please make your drop off as brief as possible; although, we do discourage parents from sneaking out of the center. A smile, cheerful good-bye kiss/hug, and a reassuring word is all that is needed. The longer the parent of an anxious child drags out the departure, the more anxiety the child is likely to feel. If your child is upset when you leave the center, feel free to call back after some time to check on his or her progress. We will call you if your child does not settle down; however, most children quiet down quickly as they are reassured by the teacher and become interested in the toys and other children.

Parents are required to notify the child's teacher or administrative staff of any special instructions or needs for the child's day. The parent must present the special instructions in the form of a letter and verbally discuss them with either the classroom teacher or administrative staff. Special instructions include, but are not limited to: early pick-up, alternative pick-up person, health issues over the previous night which need to be observed, and/or any general issues of concern which the child care providers should be aware to best meet the needs of your child throughout the day.

FUMC Weekday Ministry does not serve or provide breakfast in the morning. Parents are required to feed their child a nutritious and filling breakfast prior to arriving. Full-time Daycare children who arrive before 8:30am may bring and eat their breakfast in their classroom or Rainbow Room.

### Notification of Absence

We ask that you call and inform us if your child will be late or will not be at the center on a scheduled day. This will enable us to more effectively maintain appropriate ratios, accurately plan for lunch, and help the classroom teachers effectively plan for the day. Lunch is ordered daily by 9:30am. If your child has not arrived by 9:30, and we have not received a phone call, we will assume they are not coming. A lunch will not be ordered for your child if they arrive after 9:30am and we have not received notification they will be late.

### **PICK UP PROCEDURES**

Parents or other authorized adults are required to sign their child in/out. Once a parent signs their child out, the parent is then solely responsible for supervising their child while on the premises. The parent may not allow the child to wander through the hallways, bathrooms, other classrooms, and/or playground. Parents are encouraged to handle all business issues prior to signing out their child.

### Late Pick Up

Preschool parents picking up after 12:30pm and Full-time Daycare parents picking up after 5:30pm are considered late and will be charged a late fee of \$1.00 per minute, according to the center's clock. Payment is accepted at time of pick up or can be added to the **next month's/week's** tuition. Children of parents who are running late will be taken to the office to await arrival.

A child's services could be terminated should the child be picked up late excessively regardless of the reasons for the late pick up. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that someone (either a parent or Emergency/Alternate pick-up person) is available to pick up the child on time.

#### Emergency/Alternate Pick Up

At enrollment, parents will be given a form to list Emergency/Alternate Pick-Up information. Parents are encouraged to include on this form any, and all persons who, in the course of events, may be asked to pick up their child from FUMC Weekday Children's Ministry. In an emergency situation, the child's parents will be called first. If they cannot be reached, the staff will call the person(s) listed on this form until someone can be reached.

Should the staff contact a parent, and the parent is unable to pick up the child, it is then the responsibility of the parent to arrange for their child to be picked up by someone on the emergency list. Failure of the parent to make such arrangements could result in dismissal from the program.

If someone will be picking up your child other than those authorized, the office must be notified in advance or the child will not be released until the parents can be contacted for consent. This person, as well as those listed as emergency contacts or alternate pick-ups, will be required to provide proof of identity (driver's license) prior to the child being released. There will be NO EXCEPTIONS to this rule. All changes and/or additions to the Emergency/Alternate Pick-Up information must be made in writing. Only custodial parents have the rights to make changes or additions to this form.

#### **EMERGENCY CLOSING AND INCLEMENT WEATHER INFORMATION**

In the event of an emergency closing and/or inclement weather, parents will be notified of the closing via the local TV and radio stations. Should the school need to close in the middle of the day, the staff will attempt to reach the child's parents first to arrange for pick up. Should the staff be unable to reach the parents, the person(s) listed on the emergency contact form will be contacted. Parents will be notified of closings via text message, email and social media.

Should the center need to close for any reason, tuition will not be refunded or reduced for closures.

#### **CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENTS**

Children will be placed in classrooms based upon their date of birth. Younger children could advance every 6-9 months depending upon classroom ratios and developmental milestones. Children in our 3P & 4P classes will promote to the next class based on their age by September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current year.

Young 3's – 3yrs old on or before December 31<sup>st</sup> (of the current year)

3P – 3yrs old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> (of the current year)

4P – 4yrs old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> (of the current year)

FUMC Weekday Children's Ministry reserves the right to re-assign a child to another classroom at



anytime, at our sole discretion, during the child's enrollment. Parents will be notified via phone, email, or by letter prior to re-assigning/moving a child to another classroom.

### **CLASSROOM RATIOS**

6wks-7 months	1 to 5
7-13 months	1 to 5
13-18 months	1 to 5
18-27 months	1 to 7
2yr olds	1 to 8
2 ½ - 4yrs old	1 to 11
4 yrs old-school age	1 to 18

FUMC Weekday Children's Ministry strives to have two teachers in every classroom at all times, unless ratios are low or there is no other staff available to cover during a teacher's absence.

### **CURRICULUM INFORMATION**

Our school has a list of objectives which includes those for three year olds, four year olds and five year olds. The majority of our curriculum is based on these objectives. The preschool classes will use the Language Arts portion of the A Beka curriculum to enhance their reading lessons. They will also be taught to write letters, blends, words, and sentences.

Conferences with parents will be requested by the teacher at least once during the year. Check your school calendar. Certainly, you may ask for a conference at any time you feel it is necessary. Your child's teacher is interested in any problem or concern you or your child may have.

### **PERSONAL BELONGINGS & NECESSARY SUPPLIES**

Diaper bags and/or backpacks should be brought daily to carry your child's belongings. These items include: diapers, wipes, bottles/food, pull-ups, complete change of clothing, classroom work, important papers, etc. Please send all items labeled with your child's first and last name.

The following items must be supplied daily for each child enrolled in the program:

#### Infants

Diapers, wipes, ointments, pacifier, formula/breast milk bottles (ready to feed), cereal, baby food, juice, and two complete changes of clothing. All bottles must be pre-mixed, ready to feed and baby food must be in unopened jars (no glass).

Be sure to prepare one more bottle than you think your child will consume in a day to assure your child won't run out while in our care. Prepared bottles will be stored in the classroom refrigerator and will be warmed in a water bath prior to feeding. No bottles will be warmed in a microwave. All bottles must be taken home by the parents each night to be washed.

Breastfeeding mothers are welcome to come to the center during the day to feed their child. Appropriate, private feeding locations will be made available.

### Toddlers

Diapers and/or Pull-Ups, wipes, ointments food & drinks, two complete changes of clothing, cup, and a nap mat for rest time (full time students).

### Two's & Preschoolers

Complete change of clothes, cup (2's), and a nap mat for rest time (full-time students).

## **LUNCH/SNACKS**

Children enrolled in full time daycare are served two snacks and lunch daily; children enrolled in preschool are served one snack and lunch daily.

**Parents are required to provide written notification of any allergies (food or otherwise), with instruction for treatment should a child have an allergic reaction. If your child is allergic to the entrée being served, you must provide a lunch for your child on that day.**

## **NAP/REST TIME**

Daily nap/rest time for children ranges from approximately 12:00-3:00, depending upon the age group. All children are expected to rest during this time. Children are not required to go to sleep during rest time, but must lie quietly on their mat as to not disturb other children who are napping. Parents must provide a nap mat for children to cover up with during naptime. A cot is provided for each child to lie upon. Nap mats will be sent home each week on Friday to be washed unless they become soiled during the week.

## **TOYS FROM HOME**

Due to the risk of damage, sharing issues, and loss, children are not permitted to bring in toys from home, unless specifically requested by the classroom teacher for use as part of the curriculum. Parents are responsible for enforcing this policy with their child.

## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

Our main goal is to keep every child safe, healthy, & happy. If your child is exhibiting any of the following signs or symptoms, please refrain from bringing them to school:

- Fever
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Runny nose (green in color)
- Sore throat and/or deep or productive cough
- Discharge in eyes (pink eye)
- Hand, Foot and Mouth
- Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)
- Frequent scratching of body or scalp due to a rash, lice, or any other spots that resemble childhood diseases, including ringworm
- Child is irritable, continuously crying, or requires more attention than we can provide without neglecting the health, safety, and well-being of the other children in our care

If a child begins to exhibit any of the above signs or symptoms while in our care, they will be excluded

from participation in the program and parents will be contacted to pick up the child.

**Parents are required to pick up an ill child within 30 minutes of notification by phone.** If a parent is reached, but cannot pick up their child within 30 minutes, it becomes the parent's responsibility to arrange for alternate pick up with someone listed on the child's emergency contact form. The staff will not continue to call those listed on the emergency contact list once a parent is reached. If a parent can not be reached, the staff will begin to call people listed on the emergency contact form, until arrangements can be made for the child to be picked up.

Children will not be permitted to return to the program until they are no longer contagious. A doctor's decision as to whether or not the child is contagious may be required. FUMC reserves the right to refuse to allow a child to return if the Director or designee believes the child to be too ill to participate in the program.

**Children excluded from the program due to a fever may not return to the program until they are fever free, without fever-reducing medication for 24 hours.** If a child is sent home due to a fever, he or she is not permitted to return to the program the following day at a minimum. A fever is defined as a temperature reading on the thermometer of at least 101 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.

Children are required to be excluded from the program for loose bowels or diarrhea which occurs 4 or more times in a 24 hour period of time. Children may return to the program when normal bowel movements resume.

If your child will be absent due to illness, we request that you notify the office. This enables our staff to keep track of any illnesses which may occur at school. This information will only be shared with staff on a "need to know" basis. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the Director, so that the parents of the children in the school may be notified that a communicable disease is present. We will take all measures to protect your child's confidentiality.

We strive to maintain strict cleanliness and hygiene standards. Children's hands are washed before and after meals and after using the restroom. All employees are required to wash their hands frequently and also use hand sanitizer.

Infants sleep in separate cribs with clean sheets used only by them. Beginning at toddler age, we use cots that can be easily sanitized. Each child has a separate cot and nap mat. Cots are sanitized daily and blankets (nap mats) are sent home weekly to be washed.

## **DISPENSING OF MEDICATION**

Parents will provide any medication necessary for their child while at the center. FUMC Weekday Children's Ministry will only dispense over-the-counter and/or prescription medication that is in original, labeled containers and only to the child for whom the medication container is labeled.

Parents are required to complete a Medication Form through the office each day that medication is to be dispensed. Prescription medications will only be administered at the center if they are required to be given 3 times per day. Medication requiring to be given only twice per day must be given prior to arriving at the center and after leaving the center.

FUMC Weekday Children's Ministry will dispense over-the-counter, fever reducing/pain medication on an "as needed" basis with a note detailing the reason for administration and appropriate dosage. Parents are required to supply an unopened bottle of the fever reducing/pain medication clearly labeled with their child's name (one note and bottle of medication is required per child). Prior to administering the medication, the staff will contact a parent or person listed on the emergency contact form, if a parent cannot be reached, to inform them of our need to administer the medication. The staff will also inform the parent or emergency contact person if it is necessary for the child to be picked up due to illness. Parents are responsible for ensuring all prescription medication is properly labeled by a pharmacist and replaced prior to the expiration date.

### **ACCIDENT REPORTS**

Should your child be involved in an accident during the course of the school day, a staff member will complete an Accident Report and it will be sent home at the end of the day with the person(s) picking up the child. Depending upon the severity of the accident, the parent may be notified immediately.

### **CLOTHING & ATTIRE**

Children are engaged in various activities during the course of the day, some of these activities can be messy, and/or athletic in nature. Additionally, children are engaged in outdoor play daily, weather permitting. Due to these activities, children are required to be dressed in seasonably appropriate, comfortable clothing. Coats, gloves, hats, etc must be provided in the winter months.

Parents are encouraged not to dress children in overalls, or clothing with difficult closures. These types of clothing present particular challenges for children in relation to toileting and diapering.

Children 3-5 years old must have one seasonably and size appropriate complete change of clothing at the center at all times. Children under 3 years of age must have at least one, we encourage 2, seasonably and size appropriate complete change of clothing at the center at all times. A complete change of clothing includes: shirt, pants/shorts, underwear, socks, and shoes.

All clothing items must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. FUMC Weekday Children's Ministry is not responsible for lost or damaged items of clothing.

### **PARENT PARTICIPATION & BIRTHDAY/HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Parents are invited and encouraged to be involved in their child's school activities. There are many different ways in which parents can participate and volunteer at the center. Parents may volunteer to attend trips, read in the classroom, assist teachers, and/or coordinate special events. Teachers will have posted outside their classroom volunteer opportunities as they arise. Parents who are unavailable to volunteer directly in the classroom may donate items to their child's classroom or to the program.

We encourage the children to celebrate their birthdays with their classmates at school, but some like to have parties outside the program as well. If parents would like invitations distributed at school, please ensure all children in the classroom receive an invitation, unless the party is gender specific.

### **PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION**

Communication between parents and teachers is essential in providing a positive experience for the children. We have many forms of communicating with parents. Communication methods include the following:

- **Initial meeting with parents** – Prior to enrolling your child into our program, the Director and/or the Assistant Director will show you around the center and answer any questions you may have. This is a good time to share any concerns you may have about your child with us as well as if he or she is on any type of medication or has special needs of which we need to be aware.
- **Email** – This is our primary means of communication with parents. Items sent via email include: important reminders, announcements, billing statements, etc. Please ensure we have your most current email address on file at all times.
- **Classroom Schedule** – Each classroom has a schedule posted inside the classroom to inform parents of their child’s daily activities.
- **Daily Reports** – A written report is sent home daily with all children in our infant, toddler, and 2 year old classrooms. This report contains information regarding your child’s food intake, elimination, sleeping patterns, and general behavior. We will also use these reports to notify parents when your child’s supplies are getting low (i.e. diapers, wipes, etc)
- **Parent/Teacher Conferences** – Conferences between parents and teachers are encouraged to keep the lines of communication open. If you desire a conference with your child’s teacher, please contact the office and we will assist you in scheduling a meeting at a time convenient to you and the teacher. Please refrain from talking with your child’s teacher at length during arrival/dismissal times as the teacher is responsible for supervising the remaining children in the classroom.

## **BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

At FUMC Weekday Children’s Ministry we maintain a positive discipline policy, which focuses on prevention, redirection, love, consistency, firmness, and positive reinforcement. We stress two main patterns of behavior: respect for other people and respect for property. Young children often have difficulty expressing their feelings. Sometimes they may hit, throw toys, bite, etc. We will try to prevent problems, redirect when appropriate, discuss inappropriate behavior, encourage making amends when the offense involves another person, and withdraw privileges.

A period of “time out” will be used when a brief cooling off period is necessary. During time-out a child will be removed from the group and will be temporarily unable to participate in program activities. Children will be separated from the group only when the teacher has tried other methods for guiding the child’s behavior and these methods have been ineffective or the child’s behavior threatens the well-being of themselves or other children.

Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES will there be spanking, physical or verbal abuse, name calling, or isolation. Neither food nor sleep will ever be withheld from children as a means of punishment. Also, children will not be punished for lapses in toilet training.

## **INCIDENT REPORTS**

If a child displays disruptive or negative behavior while at school, an Incident Report will be sent home notifying parents of the behavior. This includes any type of behavior that is disruptive to the class and other students such as: biting, hitting, kicking, pushing, scratching, spitting, defiance of direction, etc. A parent conference may be necessary if the behavior does not improve within a reasonable time period. Each situation will be dealt with, by the Program Director, on a case-by-case basis.

**Please Note:** Dismissal could be deemed necessary if child's behavior does not improve or worsens or we feel we can no longer meet the needs of the child.

## **BITING**

FUMC Weekday Children's Ministry recognizes that biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior for children in the toddler through 2 ½ year old classrooms. Parents with children in these classrooms should expect that their child may be bit, or will bite another child. The staff understands that parents are concerned and can be upset when their child is involved in a biting incident. We ask that you remember this is a developmentally appropriate behavior, and the staff is working to identify situations which provoke or elicit this behavior so that it may be prevented in the future. Parents are expected to work with staff to identify methods and strategies to curb this behavior.

Parents will be notified by an Incident or Bite Report that a biting incident occurred during the course of the day. The staff may not discuss with either parent the identity of the other child involved in the incident. This information is considered to be confidential and cannot be disclosed.



# Parent Handbook

## Acknowledgement Agreement Form

This form acknowledges I have received a copy of the FUMC Weekday Children's Ministry Parent Handbook. I understand it is my responsibility to read, understand, and comply with all standards set forth in the handbook. Failure to do so could result in the termination of my child's position in the program.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print)

Father's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print)

Mother's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_