

# St. James UMC Preschool 2008-2009 Parent Handbook

## Mission Statement

The St. James United Methodist Church Preschool is a ministry of St. James United Methodist Church and has as its mission to provide opportunities for spiritual, academic, and social growth and maturity through qualified instruction and prayerful nurturing.

## Program Overview

At St. James Preschool your child will participate in a variety of activities such as:

- Experiencing and learning foundations and truths of the Christian faith
- Working with paints, clay, crayons, blocks and other manipulative materials
- Enjoying stories, dramatizations and books
- Learning to share, take turns, plan, work, think, and reason as he or she works and plays with others
- Learning to respond rhythmically to music, singing new songs, and listening to music
- Reinforcement of good health and hygiene habits

The **daily schedule** allows for a balance between:

- \*active and quiet activities
- \*familiar activities and new and challenging ones
- \*teacher-directed activities and child-selected activities
- \*indoor and outdoor activities (weather permitting)

## Admissions, Enrollment and Tuition

**Admission** is open to all children without regard to race, color, or religious affiliation. Since we are a United Methodist Church supported preschool, we will ask that all children participate in chapel on one day during the week.

**Admission age and policy for class placement:** Children will be placed in classes based on their age as of August 31 of the current school year. There is a one-week leeway on either side of that date for parent and teacher discretion.

**Registration** is the first week in February. Returning students who are church members will have first priority, with other currently enrolled and their siblings following after. St. James Preschool will operate a registration lottery after the registration deadline. A registration fee is needed in order to be fully registered.

A waiting list will be established and maintained throughout the year. A fee is not required to be on a waiting list. As soon as a space is open, you will be notified. If you are still interested, you will be required to pay the registration fee at that time.

All returning children must have an updated enrollment/registration form on file.

The registration fee is equal to one month's tuition:

- 1 day - \$45; 2 day - \$90; 3 day - \$105; 4 day - \$115; 5 day - \$130

## **Tuition**

- Ones \$45 for each 1 day session/monthly
- 2 day program \$90 monthly
- 3 day program \$105 monthly
- 4 day program \$115 monthly
- 5 day program \$130 monthly

September's tuition will be due by September 10<sup>th</sup>. Tuition will be due on the first day of each month, and is considered late if received after the 10<sup>th</sup>. A late fee of \$10.00 will be assessed to any account past due. Reminders will be given out only in the case of delinquent payments. Your child's place will not be held after 30 days of nonpayment, unless arrangements have been made with the Director. Please make checks payable to St. James Preschool and return in the tuition envelopes to your child's teacher. A \$20 fee will be charged for returned checks. **NO CASH PLEASE!**

A written withdrawal notice should be made to the Director. A 1 month notice for withdrawal is required, and parents are financially responsible for this notice period. For example: if you plan to take your child out of the school at the end of January, please let us know when you pay your January tuition. If you plan to leave in the middle of a month, your tuition will be prorated.

## Supply Fees

An annual supply fee is due the first month of school to assist financially with all activity and craft needs.

- 1 day \$15
- 2 day \$30
- 3 day \$35
- 4 day \$40
- 5 day \$45

### Scholarships

Scholarships are available based on family size, income, and special circumstances. Applications are available from the director and will be reviewed by the St. James UMC Council on Ministry, which provides the scholarship money.

### Operation

St. James Preschool opens the Tuesday after Labor Day and closes the Friday before Memorial Day. The Preschool is open from **8:50 am – 12:00 pm.** Orientation days fall during the week prior to school starting. Times and specific dates are to be announced.

A full program is planned for each day, so children should arrive by 9:00 am.

St. James Preschool is a private program and is not licensed with the state. However, we try to maintain the standards of other licensed programs. Our staff-child ratio is as follows:

Ones: 2:8

Threes: 2:15 (Max)

Twos: 2:10

Fours: 2:17 (Max)

### Arrival, Departure and Field Trips

**Children should not arrive any earlier than 8:50 am.** To get to know parents and child care providers we ask that you walk your child to the classroom during the first week of school. Beginning the second week of school our “Kiss-n-Go” drop off will begin. At this time you have the option to drive up and let the director or a teacher help your child out of the car and escort him or her into the school. Our “Kiss-n-Go” will operate from 8:50-9:05. **Parents in our One year old program should escort their children to the classroom throughout the entire school year.**

**Departure** for our ones and twos begins at 11:45. Departure for our threes and fours begins at 11:55. All children will wait for their parent or provider in the windowed hallway. Parents have the option of driving up and having their child walked to the car, or parking and walking up to the preschool. **You may only walk up to the preschool if you have parked in the CLMC parking lot. The middle drive thru will be blocked. You will have access to 8<sup>th</sup> St. only if you choose to drive up and pick up.**

**Any child remaining at 12:10 will be taken to the Director’s office to await pick-up. A late fee of \$1 per child will be charged for each minute a child is left at the preschool after 12:10.**

### **Field Trips**

Teachers of our 3, and 4 year olds may take the children on various excursions from time to time. You will be notified at least a week in advance and we will ask that parents help with transportation and supervision of the children. A signed permission slip for each child to take these trips will be completed prior to each field trip. **A driver’s information form must be completed by every driver.** If the Director does not feel comfortable with the amount of parental supervision, the field trip may be cancelled. **All children should have a child restraint seat in order to participate in any field trip. Our staff and volunteer drivers will not transport any child without a child restraint seat.**

### Clothing and Personal Items

A child’s style of dress plays a major role in how well he or she functions at the Preschool. Children should be dressed in washable, comfortable clothing that is weather-appropriate and suitable for full participation in any activity.

Parents should keep an extra change of clothes in their child’s bag or cubby at all times. Clothing should be placed in a labeled bag. Coats and jackets should be marked with the child’s name.

Shoes should be worn at all times. They should fit properly and be appropriate for play, including running, jumping and climbing. Tennis shoes are the best choice of footwear.

Children should not bring toys from home unless it is Show and Tell day. Personal toys can easily get misplaced or cause conflicts over sharing. Toy guns and other pretend weapons are never allowed. Check with the teacher if you would like to bring something special to the preschool to be shared with all of the children.

**Every child should have some form of book bag large enough to hold artwork, change of clothes, and a communication folder.**

### Potty Training Policy

**4’s - All four year olds must be potty trained in order to attend the three day and five day classes.**

3’s - We would like all of our 3 year olds to be potty trained when our school year begins. However, if your three year old is not completely trained, we will work with you as best we can. We want these children to wear pull ups until they can verbally tell the teacher, “I need to use the potty”. During this time, if our teachers have to deal with dirty pull ups on a daily basis, we have the right to call for a conference to discuss

further actions considering your child's potty training, and possibly suspend your child until he or she is fully trained.

We know accidents will happen, but our three year old rooms are not equipped with a changing station for frequent accidents.

**2's** - We also ask for parents in our two year old program to communicate with the teachers when the big changes in toilet learning are happening. For instance, from diapers to pull ups and then again from pull ups to big kid underwear.

#### Outdoor Play

We will have daily outdoor play on all but rainy or extremely cold or hot days. All children should be dressed appropriately for the weather. Children who are too ill to participate in any outdoor play should remain at home. We do not have sufficient staff to supervise the children who have to remain indoors.

#### Snack Time

Each teacher decides how snack will be provided in her classroom. You may be asked to bring items for the whole class one or two times a year, or asked to provide your child with a snack each day. We will post any food allergies in the classroom, and have the right to ask that certain foods not be brought into the room.

#### Health Policies

The health policies of St. James Preschool are designed to meet the health needs of children and staff and it is important to understand that these policies are written for the protection of everyone in the school.

#### **Illness of children**

**If your child has a contagious disease, he or she should be kept home and the preschool must be notified.**

**A child should not be brought or left at the Preschool** with any of the following symptoms:

- Fever – After a fever, a child's temperature must be less than 100 degrees without fever reducing medicine, for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Diarrhea and vomiting – After diarrhea or vomiting, a child must be free of diarrhea or vomiting for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Strep – If your child has a positive strep test, they can return after 24 hours of being on an antibiotic.

- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) – Children with conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) may return after treatment with antibiotic eye drops. Bring doctor's note or medication to readmit child to school.
- Ringworm – May return to preschool following treatment with fungicidal. Oral antibiotics required if in the scalp. Bring doctor's note or medication to readmit child to school.
- Other highly contagious conditions including measles, mumps, chicken pox, scarlet fever, lice, scabies, pin worms, roseolla or viral infections.

**If your child becomes ill while at school**, he or she will be isolated from the other children, and you will be called. Please cooperate by picking up your child promptly. Parents should be sure that emergency telephone numbers are current and that emergency contact persons are able and willing to pick up a sick child if the parent cannot be reached.

Medications: We prefer not to administer medications. If at all possible give your child the needed medication prior to school and the next dose after he or she is at home. However, if there is unique situation where a child must have a dose of medicine during preschool hours, the following guidelines must be followed:

- \*Send only prescription medicine in its original container with instructions on the label
- \*Sign and date a form giving the preschool permission to administer the medicine.
- \*Hand the medication to the director with instructions to put in the refrigerator or first aid cabinet.
- \*No medicine with an expired date can be given.
- \*Inform the preschool when the medicine is to be discontinued or of any possible side effects.

#### Developmental Delays Policy

As preschool providers who care about all children, we are taking an active role in monitoring the development of all children in our program to make sure we can access the appropriate resources your child deserves. Below is our policy on what we do when there is a concern about a child's development.

#### We do this by:

- Being familiar with developmentally appropriate practices that takes into account the age, development, and individual needs of each child.
- Consulting the developmental milestones; this is used when there is a concern in regards to a child's development or behavior.

- Observing the child and documenting any concerns found in development.
- Meeting with the parents at a convenient time to families, to discuss the concerns the staff and family may have about the development of the child.
- Assisting the parent(s) with resources that are available in our community.

We have listed a few below:

- ECHOES – A community Inclusion Program
- Child Developmental Services Agency
- Pitt County Schools
- Pitt County Mental Health Department
- Pitt County Health Department

Once a developmental delay is suspected we:

- Work as a team with the family to provide the appropriate learning environment for their child.
- Ask the families to sign a release/consent form so that the provider may communicate with an outside agency, therapist, or any services the child might need or already be receiving. This is to help the staff better understand how we can provide an appropriate environment to assist in the learning and development of your child. All information is kept confidential and only shared with outside agencies that the families have signed a release to contact.
- Work with outside agencies to come to our center to provide the services your child may need.

#### Child Abuse and Neglect

Caregivers are required to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect according to the North Carolina Law on Child Abuse and Neglect. If such a case is observed or suspected, it will be immediately reported to the Director, who in turn will notify the Pitt County Department of Social Services.

#### Guidance and Discipline

The staff will provide guidance through speech. They will:

- give positive directions and suggestions.
- use short, clear, meaningful sentences.
- give choices only when children have a choice.
- speak firmly, yet gently.
- avoid shaming and blaming children.
- avoid making comparisons between children.
- redirect or channel to more constructive activities or actions.

- give approval when deserved.
- avoid favoritism.

The staff will provide guidance by their actions. They will:

- give children help when needed.
- prevent problems by planning appropriate activities and by arranging equipment and the environment.
- make sure children understand limits.
- help children understand the consequences of their actions if limits are tested.
- be consistent, yet flexible when necessary.
- locate themselves in strategic positions when supervising the children.
- be alert to children's needs.
- give special attention to the health, safety and well-being of the children.

The following **guidance techniques** will be used:

- **Indirect guidance:** arranging the environment, schedules, or group composition to prevent problems.
- **Direct guidance:**
  - stating the desired behavior in a positive way
  - time-out for second offense
  - reinforcing appropriate behavior
- Time out immediately for physical aggression (hitting, kicking, or biting).
- Redirecting inappropriate behaviors to acceptable behaviors.
- Reducing some inappropriate behaviors by ignoring them.

#### Limits

The purpose of all existing limits at St. James Preschool is safety and consideration of others.

- Quiet voices are encouraged inside.
- Children walk inside and run outside on the playground.
- Toys should be used in the area designated for them. For example: table toys on the tables, blocks in the blocks area.
- Children are encouraged to explore the materials that have been set out for the day's program. Toys not being used should remain on the shelves.
- Children are redirected from throwing toys.

- Smocks are necessary when playing in water or painting.
- Every child is expected to and should be encouraged to participate during clean-up.
- Group participation is encouraged, but not forced.
- The record player, cassette player, CD player, and VCR are operated by the teachers.
- With permission from the teacher, nature items, records, and books may be brought from home to be share with others.
- When on the playground, children do not climb on the fence, and gates are kept closed.
- Sand, rocks, water, pails, shovels, or sticks are not to be thrown.
- When climbing, a child may climb as high as he or she can climb by him or herself.
- Gun play is replaced by friendly activities.
- Biting, spitting, and other unpleasant behaviors are dealt with immediately.
- Children should not stand on furniture or sit on tables.
- Children are encouraged to keep sand and sand toys in the sand area.

#### Teacher Workdays

During the school year, the Preschool may close for teacher work days. We will take some of the same days scheduled by Pitt County Schools. Parents will be notified in advance in order to make other arrangements for their children.

#### Inclement Weather

We will follow the Pitt County Schools' closing schedule for inclement weather. If there is a 1-hour delay announced by Pitt County Schools due to weather conditions we will open 1 hour late (10AM). If there is a 2-hour delay, we will start school at 10:30. Dropping off at 10:30 and picking up at 12:00. Tune into WNCT Ch. 9 and WITN Ch. 7 for all St. James information.

#### Birthdays and Special Occasions

Birthdays are special, and if you choose, you can celebrate your child's birthday during class. We ask, however, that you check with your child's teacher for class schedules, as well as the number of children in the class. You may share party cookies or cupcakes. Any goody bags will go home with the children for parents to monitor. **You may also take this opportunity to honor your child's birthday by giving a gift to his or her class.** Check your classroom wish list for items.

We do celebrate religious holidays during the year. These will include class parties. We encourage your participation during these "special" events. Sign up sheets for parties will be in your child's room.

#### Parent Involvement

There is a real value in a partnership between parents and teachers in the education of the child. Communication between the Preschool and the home is extremely important. St. James Preschool is committed to encouraging and supporting this partnership.

The **Preschool** will be responsible for making the child's parents or guardian aware when:

- a child's behavior seems different from that which is usually observed;
- there is communicable disease within the group;
- routines in the Preschool have been changed;
- their child's group is planning a field trip;
- the child is showing symptoms of illness.

**Parents** are responsible for making the Preschool aware when:

- a child will be absent from Preschool;
- a child is to be picked up earlier than usual;
- a child is to be picked up by someone other than the person or persons name on the application-this permission must be given in writing or in person by the parent. Staff members will also ask for the person ID before allowing the child to leave with that person.
- the child has taken medication in the past 24 hours;
- the child has exhibited unusual behavior at home or acquired new mannerisms;
- family routines are changed, for example, house guests, father or mother being away, death of a pet, or any other affecting situation.

#### **"TLC" – The Leadership Committee**

- "TLC" represents a group of parents who have been selected by the director to help facilitate the growing numbers of needs and responsibilities of the preschool.
- Together, the members of this committee, are committed to growing, nurturing, and serving the students and staff of the preschool in a variety of ways.
- Our overall goal is to help provide assistance to the director and staff and serve as the liaison between the preschool and the director.

- Our major responsibilities will include: organizing and planning all fundraising efforts; organizing and planning all preschool sponsored social activities; assisting the director with overall organizational needs of operating the preschool; and maintaining a close and direct relationship with all “room moms” to ensure that all students and parents are kept abreast of activities, events, and opportunities for involvement.
- This committee will meet the first Tuesday of the month and will be present during all preschool-sponsored events.

#### Parent/Teacher Communication

Although an appointment is encouraged for conferences, parents can, at any time, observe classroom activities and children.

Your teacher will make periodical calls to your home to let you know how your child is doing and answer any questions you may have.

At any time a parent can set up an appointment to meet with a child’s teacher and/or the director for any reason. Teachers may plan formal conferences with parents if problems or concerns arise about a child’s development or behavior. Teamwork between home and school is essential to quality care of children.

Each day parents are responsible for checking their child’s bag for artwork or memos. It is very important for parents to know what is happening at school.

The preschool staff will keep parents informed through a preschool newsletter, which will be published weekly and sent by email to hold down printing costs. Let your teacher know if you want a hard copy.

#### **Director**

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