



# First Presbyterian Preschool

Come Grow With Us!

Parent Handbook



An NAC accredited preschool

***First Presbyterian Preschool***

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## **OUR MISSION**

The mission of First Presbyterian Preschool is to provide a safe environment where young children from various faith traditions and cultures are given opportunities to learn about God's love throughout the nurturance, acceptance, understanding, and love provided by those who guide their development.

## **OUR PHILOSOPHY**

The purpose of First Presbyterian Preschool is to provide a safe, happy and nurturing environment where children can grow socially, emotionally and cognitively. We believe that children learn best through play and activities that are appropriate for every child's age and development. The growth and education of each child is dependent upon a cooperative team of parents and teachers working towards one common goal. Our school welcomes staff, children and families of all abilities, faiths, races and backgrounds. Emphasis is placed on the uniqueness of each child so that they may learn to value others in that same way. This process will be done with the consideration and care you would expect to find in a Christian environment.

## **OUR GOALS**

These goals were set by our staff in correlation with our mission and philosophy. We will revisit these goals regularly to ensure they are being met.

1. To teach compassion/caring in a loving Christian environment.
2. To develop children in all areas (socially, emotionally, cognitively, physically and spiritually).
3. To teach through play inspiring children to want to learn.
4. To encourage children to feel good about themselves and their ability to learn and grow.
5. To work collaboratively with the families.
6. To continue to grow and learn to ensure we are providing the best early childhood education possible.

## **FAITH DEVELOPMENT**

Our program is a ministry of First Presbyterian Church of Arlington. We believe in guiding the children in their faith development by model and example. Children enrolled in the infant class and up will have Chapel at least once a week. The children will sing songs and hear a Bible story that is consistent with the beliefs of Christian faith. Faith development is also an intentional part of our curriculum; we will use the First Look faith curriculum. This curriculum is based on three basic truths: God Made Me, God Loves Me and Jesus Wants to be my Friend Forever. Parents are always welcome to attend chapel. Chapel is held every Thursday and Friday at 9:30am in the Chapel.

## **CURRICULUM**

First Presbyterian Preschool's curriculum has emerged throughout the years based on what is best for young children and drawing from many developmentally appropriate resources. There is not a "set" curriculum but rather, the teachers are provided resources and guidance to ensure that educational objectives are met and are age appropriate for all developmental stages. For example, the learning objective would be the destination. The method used to reach these objectives would vary from teacher to teacher, but the program ensures that the methods used are developmentally appropriate. We have found that this works best as it allows for teacher's individual styles. Just as we accept differences in young children, we also accept that each teacher is an individual with their own style of teaching, temperament, and energy level.

The curriculum consists of seven primary areas. These include language, cognitive, fine and gross motor, social, emotional, and faith. The vehicles used to focus on these areas include music, play, blocks, creative art, manipulative play, and outdoor play. Teaching is both structured and unstructured with some classrooms incorporating more structure depending upon teaching style and the age of the children. Children learn both in large group and small group activities with hands-on being the preferred method of learning. The environment is designed to encourage learning so that the teacher may act as a facilitator in unstructured settings.

## ACCREDITATION

Our preschool received accreditation from The National Accreditation Commission (NAC) on July 13, 2012. Our accreditation is valid for three years. On February 13, 2016 we were again awarded accreditation for the next three years. Our program must show we are maintaining accreditation criteria by submitting an annual report. This report discusses ways in which we are meeting accreditation criteria, improving our facility and continuing to grow as a staff. We are proud to be an accredited preschool. To learn more about NAC accreditation you can visit [www.earlylearningleaders.org](http://www.earlylearningleaders.org).

## ENROLLMENT/REGISTRATION

We accept enrollment applications year round depending on availability. We accept enrollment applications for children ages 6 weeks - Pre-K, (age as of September 1st). Our In House Enrollment, for returning children and church members, will begin in March. Registration to the public will open one week after our In House Enrollment. In order to enroll your child at First Presbyterian Preschool you will need to complete all registration and medical forms. The forms should be on file before the first day of school. The state requires that we have completed forms on all children entering our school, a current shot record, doctor's note, and a notarized authorization for emergency medical care. Our program fee is due upon enrollment and is a non-refundable fee.

Enrollments are accepted without regard to race, religion, sex, or national origin. The first 30 days of enrollment will be a probationary period for all children. We strive to meet all children's needs. However, if your child's unique needs cannot be met by our program we reserve the right to ask for assistance or help in finding a more suitable school for your child. Our goal is to provide a quality education for all children.

### FPPS Classroom Ratios:

<b>Infants</b>	<b>1:4; 2:8</b>
<b>Toddlers</b>	<b>1:5; 2:10</b>
<b>Twos</b>	<b>1:6; 2:12</b>
<b>Threes</b>	<b>1:9; 2:12</b>
<b>Pre-K</b>	<b>1:12</b>

# **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

## **ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL**

Our regular preschool hours are 8:45am-2:45pm. Children may arrive for school between 8:35am and 8:45am. Our school day begins promptly at 8:45am. Children must be accompanied by their parent/guardian at drop off time. Children may not walk themselves to class. Please note that regular day drop off and pick up and AM care drop off is done at the main entrance (South doors).

We offer AM Extended Care with drop off 6:45am and PM Extended Care with 6:00pm pick up option. Children who are not picked up by 3:00pm will be taken to the director's office and a late fee will be assessed. Late fees are charged as: \$1 for each minute per child after 3:00pm. If your child is enrolled in extended care it is important your child is picked up on time. The late fees for extended care are: \$1 per minute per child after 6:00pm. With respect for your child and your child's teacher we ask that you are prompt for drop off and pick up times.

It is very important that you sign your child in and out each day. There are two computers located in the South hall (near the front office) for sign in/out. You will need to enter your child's four digit code to sign your child in and out each day. If someone other than yourself or a regularly scheduled person will be picking up, we ask that you inform the front office. Please make sure the person picking your child up is on your authorized pick up list and always direct the person picking up to the office so identification can be checked, security code can be checked and they can be walked to the classroom.

## **RELEASE OF CHILDREN**

Absolutely no one other than the parents will be allowed to pick up a child from school unless:

1. The person is listed on your pick up authorization form (in your registration packet).
2. Has a photo ID to be checked by the front office before the child is released to that person.

**AND**

3. The person picking up can state the child's 4 digit code

Please make sure the teachers and front office are informed if someone other than a parent is going to be picking a child up. These guidelines help to ensure the safety of your children. Thank you in advance for your help.

## **DISCIPLINE & GUIDANCE POLICY**

We believe that children learn best from natural and logical consequences and for that to be effective the child must be given an opportunity to benefit from discipline. First Presbyterian Preschool will not allow corporal punishment. Hitting, shaking, pinching or any other form of physical discipline will not be allowed, and will result in immediate termination of the staff inflicting such punishment. An effort must be made to clarify expected behaviors with the children, and when misbehaviors occur, we will use this as an opportunity to teach the child to problem solve. For example we would ask the child:

- What caused the problem?
- Ask the child to suggest alternative behaviors.
- Have the child choose an alternative behavior to use if this problem occurs again.
- Ask the child if there is something he/she needs to say or do to correct what has happened (such as an apology or fixing what was broken).

This method is appropriate from about 2 years of age on. If inappropriate behavior continues the director will observe the child in the classroom to observe if there are any causes for the behavior. At this time the parent may be asked to conference with the teacher and director to discuss the behavior issues. For our younger children (infants and toddlers) the teachers will let the child know if a behavior is inappropriate in clear direct statements. The child will be removed to a safe place in the room if he/she has hurt another child. We believe trust will develop when discipline is given in love. It will enable the child to understand that it is the behavior that is inappropriate and not the child.

Every attempt will be made to ensure your child's adjustment to the school. When negative behaviors (these are defined as those actions that endanger other children or teachers) occur, they will be dealt with initially by the classroom teacher. The teacher will make you aware of these behaviors if they persist. The teacher may make recommendations to the parent or ask for recommendations that work at home. Parent input and feedback will be encouraged. If the negative behavior persists the director will become involved. If none of these efforts effect a change in behavior it will be necessary to remove the child from the school.

## **SNACKS/LUNCH/WATER**

Snack will be provided for our toddler classes, parents of two year olds and older will sign up to bring snack on a rotating schedule. You will

need to sign up with your child's teacher. We recommend healthy snacks that are low in sugar. In addition, as a safety precaution, we ask that all food be commercially prepared packaged foods in factory sealed containers and fruits must be whole or commercially prepared. Please keep in mind that children in your child's class may have food allergies. Please keep your child's teacher informed of any food allergies your child may have or have developed while in school. Our teachers will make sure to inform families if there is a food allergy in a classroom.

*Children with Food Allergies should have a written care plan that includes:*

- a) Instructions regarding the food(s) to which the child is allergic and steps to be taken to avoid that food;
- b) A detailed treatment plan to be implemented in the event of an allergic reaction, including the names, dose, and methods of prompt administration of any medications.

Each child should bring a well-balanced lunch on a daily basis. Parents are responsible for their child or children's nutritional needs. If your food requires refrigeration please make sure to include a cool pack in your child's lunch. We do not microwave any foods. Send your child with milk or water and carbonated beverages (sodas) are not allowed. When packing a lunch for your infant/toddler please remember that food should be cut into bite size pieces and make sure your child's lunch box is taken home daily for cleaning.

Every child needs to bring a non-breakable water bottle/cup each day. Water bottles should be clearly labeled with your child's name. They will be available to the children throughout the day. Please take your child's water bottle home daily to be cleaned. Non spill sippy cups work best for toddlers, two year olds and older do best with water bottles for proper development.

## **SCHOOL DRESS**

Clothes worn to school should be comfortable and weather appropriate. We ask that the children wear sturdy shoes (no flip-flops please) as we do play outside on a regular basis.

Please provide a complete change of clothes for your child that is labeled and weather appropriate. This should be in your child's backpack or locker every day in case of spills or accidents. Accidents can happen at any age so we ask that we have a change of clothes for all age groups. If your child is potty training you may want to send 2 or 3 changes of clothes, including shoes, to ensure we are covered if there are any accidents.

## **POTTY TRAINING**

When you feel the time is right for your child to start potty training we want to do everything possible to support you in this endeavor. We do have a few requirements:

- The child must be showing interest and having some success when at home.
- No plastic underpants.
- Please supply many changes of clothes, **including shoes**.

Communication between parents and teachers is vital during this time of learning.

## **DIAPERS**

If your child is in diapers, you should write the child's name on their diapers. Your child's teacher should have a collection area for the diapers and wipes to be used that day or they may ask for the diapers and wipes at drop off . Additional diapers and wipes should be in your child's backpack in case more are needed (especially if your child is here for extended care).

## **REST TIME**

All children in our program observe a rest time each day. Please provide a crib sheet and blanket or a nap mat for your child's rest time. These items need to be taken home and washed on a weekly basis. Each child is supplied with a plastic nap mat. This mat will be only for your child.

## **ITEMS SUPPLIED BY PARENTS**

These are the items we must have when your child enters our school:

- Completed enrollment forms.
- Doctor's note saying the child is well to attend school.
- Current shot record or affidavit.
- Paid program fee.
- Wet wipes and diapers (if needed)
- Tissues - 5 boxes for each child (toddlers through PreK).
- Classroom snack - sign up with your child's teacher (see Snack Policy) \*only 2's through PreK.

## **COMMUNICATION**

We have an open-door policy to all families. If you have a concern regarding any element of school, your comments and concerns are welcome. Parents are encouraged to visit their children and to speak to office staff without securing prior approval. There is a comfortable and private area for nursing mothers where they can be provided a pillow, step stool and/or water. When dropping in for an unannounced visit, please check in at the

office prior to going to the classroom. A copy of the state of Texas minimum standards and the most recent licensing report is available in the front office.

Direct communication is always best! Discussions will always be dealt with in a professional and confidential manner. We also have a suggestion box if you would prefer your concern be confidential.

## **PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Each teacher will arrange a pre-conference with each family prior to the first day of school. This will help ease separation anxiety and enrich your child's school experience. Throughout the year your teachers will work closely with you to keep you advised of your child's progress. You will also be able to schedule a parent/teacher conference in the fall and spring.

As the year progresses we ask that you discuss any concerns you may have with your child's teacher. Our staff is available to hear your concerns and work with you to address your needs. You are always welcome to ask for a special conference with your child's teacher or the director if needed. Please keep in mind that the teachers cannot discuss any confidential information at drop off or pick up time so a scheduled conference may work better.

Parent Communication Folders will go home daily with information about your child's day. There is also a section for parent/teacher comments. Please make sure to read all notes sent home and return the folder each day. We will also send a weekly recap email to families, and have a monthly newsletter. We believe communication is vital for a successful school year!

## **PARENT VOLUNTEERS**

We are always happy to have parent (family) volunteers in our school. At the beginning of the year we will send home a list of volunteer possibilities (fundraising, room parent, programs, teacher appreciation, etc.). Criminal background checks must be completed before a parent can volunteer in the classroom. These forms are available in the preschool office.

## **ROLE OF PARENTS**

No one knows their children better than a parent. Parents also have the greatest influence on a young child's life. We value all information/feedback given from families. It is vital to our children that parents and teachers work together to ensure the children are getting the best care possible. We always want to know if there are areas we can grow to help your child/family in any way.

## **PARTIES**

You may bring a special snack for your child's birthday, but please make prior arrangements with your child's teacher. If you and your child are planning a birthday party or playgroup please keep the following in mind:

- We can only give information about families that allow us to release their address and/or number.
- If the school is assisting in any way to invite the children then every child in the class needs to be invited.
- It needs to be clear on the invitation that this is a personal party or event that is not sponsored by the school.

Christmas and Valentine's Day will be celebrated in the three and four year old classrooms. The classroom parties should have parent volunteers coordinate with the teacher with regard to the party. A party planning form will be provided for the person in charge. Please keep in mind that food served and favors provided must be age appropriate. We ask that younger siblings not attend the parties, as the party is intended to be a special time for classroom children.

## **SECURITY**

Our facility will be locked at all times. Each preschool family will be assigned a designated code to gain access to the building. Anyone coming to the preschool that does not have a code must come to the main (South) doors and ring the doorbell. Please keep the preschool informed if there are any issues that arise, that would make it necessary for your family's code to be changed. We are happy to work with families in these instances.

We will only release children to the people listed on the pick-up authorization portion of your enrollment forms. Please keep this list updated throughout the year if any changes need to be made. If you need someone other than an authorized person to pick your child up you must call the office and identify yourself by stating your child's computer and door code. Then give the name of the person who will be picking the child up. The person picking the child up will then have to come to the front office so we can verify the information and a copy of his/her driver's license will be taken. We will also ask this person to state the child's code(s). Please know that these measures are to ensure the safety of the children at our school.

## **EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS**

The safety of the children is our number one concern. We have an emergency action plans in place to ensure your children will be safe in any situation. We practice fire drills once a month and tornado/bad weather drills once every three months.

Teachers each have a backpack with 1<sup>st</sup> aid supplies, emergency information for each child, and the current daily attendance sheet. These backpacks are accompanied by a walkie -talkie and a key to the building. The preschool has a cell phone that will be used to call appropriate emergency responders, state licensing and parents.



### **FIRE**

When an alarm is sounded, the teacher will gather the children together calmly in the room. They will exit through the preferred exit (posted on wall in the classroom) and continue out away from the building. Children younger than 24 months, children who have limited mobility or who otherwise may need assistance will be evacuated and relocated to designated safe area by placing children in 1 or more evacuation cribs and exited through south door or preferred exit and around to First Christian Church of Christ. The teacher will count children to make certain all are accounted for before leaving the room and will count the children again when out of the building. The director and office manager will close the classroom doors and check to see that everyone is out of the building. No one will re-enter the building until the "all clear" is given.



### **TORNADO**

An alarm will sound if there is a storm approaching. The following actions are to be taken:

- The children will be taken to the Westminster Room, which is a large inside room with no windows.
- If directed, the children should sit on the floor with their backs against the wall and heads down on knees, covering their heads with bent arms.
- Parents are encouraged to stay at home and not come pick up their children when they hear the warning, thus placing both parents and children in jeopardy.



## **TOXIC SPILL**

In the event of a Toxic Spill, all centers and schools are to be notified by their local Fire Department. They will then give us information about evacuation procedures. Notification may also come through the emergency broadcasting network. Windows and doors must be kept closed and blankets, rugs, etc., pushed against door bottoms and window sills to prevent contaminated air from entering the building in the event the spill is too close to prevent evacuation. If the toxic spill happens inside the building the children will be evacuated from the building in the same manner as they would in a fire drill. Both Poison Control and the Fire Department would be notified along with the parents.



## **MEDICAL EMERGENCY**

The parent will receive a copy of the Incident Report, which is to be signed, returned to the office and kept on file as mandated by TDFPS. The staff will notify the office (Director or designee) that a child is ill or injured, or they will bring the child to the office themselves. This will depend on the type of situation. The director or their designee will assess the situation if the injury/illness is such that treatment can be given at the school it will be given at this time. In case of illness the child must be isolated until someone arrives to transport him/her home. There must be staff with that child at all times. If there is any question about the child needing to see a doctor, the parent or emergency contact person is to be called at this time. If there is no doubt that the child must receive immediate attention and the parents or emergency contact cannot be reached, the director will act in the child's behalf and either transport to the nearest medical facility or call an ambulance, if the situation appears to be life threatening. The person who was with the child at the time of the accident, or when he/she became ill must document all of this on the Accident Report form. That person must note who administered treatment.

The following facility will be used as an alternate pick up site in the event of an emergency evacuation:

First Christian Church  
910 S. Collins St. Arlington, TX 76010

The children will walk to this site through the North parking lot. Parents will be notified if their child will need to be picked up at First Christian. Children will be counted at departure of our school and arrival at this site. Teachers are to carry their first aid backpacks which include our emergency information cards for the children. The director or her designee will be in charge of carrying all authorization for emergency medical care forms.

## **HEALTH/SAFETY POLICY**

Your child's health is important to us. Each child must have a doctor's note stating the child is well to attend school and a current shot record or notarized affidavit. These forms must be turned in to the office on or before the child's first day of school.

If your child has any food allergies or other allergies it is important that both the office staff and our teachers are informed. Please include this on your child's enrollment forms and verbally tell our staff. This will ensure we are aware of your child's allergies and that we can take the appropriate precautions for your child's safety. We will make a classroom peanut or dairy free if there is a child with an extreme allergy.

As part of the school's responsibility for promoting the total development of the children, the teachers will be observing the children as they come into class, as well as throughout the day. If the teacher observes signs of illness, the child will be taken to the office where further assessment of the situation will be made. If your child is ill you will be notified and expected to pick your child up immediately. If the parents cannot be reached we will call the people listed on your emergency contact form. Your child will be kept in the front office until picked up to lessen the exposure to the other children. We do not have provisions to care for sick children, other than briefly while we wait for the parent to arrive.

Children should not be brought to school if exhibiting any of the following symptoms, and should be free of these symptoms for 24 hours without medicine:

- Fever (100.4° or higher)
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea

- Any symptoms of the usual childhood diseases: Scarlet Fever, German Measles, Mumps, Chicken Pox, Whooping Cough, or Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease.
- Common cold symptoms
- Thick, colored mucus discharge from nose
- Sore throat
- Croup
- Any unexplained rash
- Any skin infection: boils, ringworm, impetigo, lice, etc.
- Pink eye or other eye infections

You will be called to pick your child up from school if he/she exhibits these symptoms while at school.

**The school must be notified if your child has or has been exposed to a communicable disease (strep throat, pink eye, pin worms, viral infections, measles, mumps, chicken pox, lice, etc.).** We appreciate your calls if your child will be absent.

## **ACCIDENTS/INJURIES**

We work very hard to make our school a safe place, but know that accidents can and will happen. If your child is injured while at school you will receive an incident report when you pick your child up. This form will explain how your child was injured and who was in charge when the injury occurred. This form needs to be signed by the teacher in charge, director, and parent. If an injury is serious the parent will be notified and in the event of an emergency an ambulance will be called.

## **MEDICATION**

The school **will not administer medications** except in the case of extreme allergic reactions and/or other chronic conditions. These special situations must be arranged in advance through the director. Any medication given must be in the original container, clearly labeled as belonging to the child, dated as current, have a signed release from the parent on file, and a doctor's note. Please note parental instructions must be consistent with labeling on the medication and/or doctor's note. FPPS will not give the initial dose of medication except in the instance of a severe allergic reaction. \*Authorization to Dispense Medication forms are available in the front office.\*

**Medicines should never be left in a child's backpack. Please make sure all medications are brought to the front office where they will be administered if needed.** The one exception would be diaper rash creams

and teething gels for infants and toddlers. These must be accompanied by a signed parent note and should be given to the child's teacher.

## **TUITION/PAYMENT**

Tuition is due by the 15th of each month. If the 15th falls on a weekend, tuition will be due the Friday before. A \$25 late fee will be assessed for payment not received by the 15th. Those not paid in full by the 15th of the next month could be dropped from the program.

Example: Tuition due September 15th, after September 15th - add \$25.  
Not paid in full by October 15th - possible drop from program.  
If special financial hardships arise please contact the office staff and a written agreement will be drafted. A \$25 fee will be charged on all returned checks. We accept cash, check, and most major credit cards as forms of payment. If you choose to use a debit or credit card, the service fee will be applied to your payment. Please note our school will no longer accept American Express. We also offer EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer) payments that can be automatically drafted out of your account, forms available in your registrations packet and in the front office. If your account is not paid in full, we will be unable to release any information on your child or finances.

## **ANIMALS**

Animal visitation is discouraged due to licensing requirements. Parents are to be notified in advance if an animal is scheduled to visit the classroom. If you plan to bring an animal to the classroom you must notify the director one week in advance. Documentation of vaccinations must be brought to the office prior to the visit. Animals prohibited by licensing include: chickens, ducks, and reptiles.

## **SCHOOL CALENDAR**

We follow Arlington ISD calendar with the exception of starting one week later. We will follow Arlington ISD in observance of student holidays and inclement weather decisions. If Arlington ISD closes due to inclement weather we will be closed too. Notice of school closures will be available on most major news channels.

## **SUMMER CARE**

Our summer camp dates and registration forms will be available in March. Summer camps run Monday through Friday from 8:45-2:45, there will be extended care in the summer. The registration fee will be \$75 and is

due at the time of enrollment. Summer camps are available for children ages 6 weeks through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

### **WITHDRAWAL/DISMISSAL**

We ask that you give a two week notice if you will be leaving our school. We understand that this is not always possible and will do our best to work with families. Our program fee is non-refundable, but we will work with you on the last month's tuition if you are leaving during the school year.

### **Local Child-care Licensing Office**

◊**Central Texas**◊ - **Fort Worth**  
1501 Circle Dr. Suite 310 Ft. Worth,  
Texas 76119  
(817) 321-8604

Copies of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Child Care Minimum Standards are available in the front office.

### **Preschool Office Hours:**

**M-F 8:30am-5:30pm (office will be closed when preschool is closed for holidays).**

### **Summer Office Hours:**

**M-F 9:00-3:30 (the preschool office will be closed the last two weeks of July).**

We do everything we can to prevent abuse and neglect of children by annual trainings, displaying poster for reporting abuse or neglect, and reporting suspected abuse or neglect to the child abuse hotline.

**1-800-252-5400**

A parent or a child who is a victim of abuse or neglect should call the hotline or confide in the preschool office, the church staff or someone who can help.

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.