



WELCOME

We are very pleased that your child is enrolled at First Presbyterian Preschool. Please read this *Parent Handbook* for our procedures and policies. We hope it will be helpful. New parents, in particular, are encouraged to review the *Parent Handbook* with the Director. Please do not hesitate to approach a teacher or the Director if you have any questions or concerns. We will be working together to make sure you and your child experience Preschool as happy and fun.

MISSION STATEMENT

First Presbyterian Preschool provides a safe, nurturing environment for young children of diverse economic, racial, and religious backgrounds. We know from child development that there are universal, predictable sequences of growth and change that occur in children. At the same time we recognize that each child is a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth as well as an individual personality, learning style, and family background. The appreciation of all of these factors provides the framework for the learning environment at this school.

The program follows the *Florida School Readiness Performance Standards* and the *Florida Prekindergarten Education Standards* as guidelines for designing and implementing an appropriate learning environment for two, three, four and five year olds. The curriculum is based on the basic developmental needs of young children and offers opportunities and activities through an integrated approach. **We believe that young children learn most effectively through concrete, play-oriented activities and that learning is an interactive process.** Teachers prepare the environment for children to learn through active exploration and interaction with adults, other children, and materials. These activities match the child's interest and understanding. All interactions and activities are designed to develop the child's positive feelings towards learning. We take seriously our responsibility to prepare the children for kindergarten and offer many different learning opportunities including early literacy and math skills. We also work with the children on the important social skills that they will need throughout life.

CURRICULUM GOALS

The Creative Curriculum for Preschool (Dodge, Colker and Heroman) is used as the core curriculum for all the classes. The curriculum includes goals in all areas of development:

- *Social/emotional*: to help children achieve a sense of self, take responsibility for themselves and others, behave in a prosocial way by showing empathy and getting along with the other children and adults;
- *Physical*: to help children develop large muscles and fine motor skills through activities indoors and outdoors;
- *Cognitive*: to help children become confident learners by providing the experiences and materials to allow them to think, explore, question, and solve problems;
- *Language*: to help children listen and speak, and then to make sense of written language and print through the alphabet, writing letters and words.

We also use the book *I love You Rituals* by Becky Bailey to enhance our interactions with the children.

ENROLLMENT AND ORIENTATION

The majority of students enroll in mid-August at the beginning of the school year. Some children may enter the program during the year if an opening is available. Enrollment is complete when the parents meet with the Director, are introduced to the school, complete the packet of forms and provide the information requested for the child's record folder.

Orientation to the Preschool program is arranged individually with families. Parents are encouraged to bring their child for a classroom visit prior to the enrollment day. These short visits with the teachers and in the Preschool environment help the child with the transition to our school. During the first days of school the teachers and the Director keep in close touch with parents.

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

Preschool opens at 7:30 a.m. with breakfast served to those children whose parents request it. Other children begin their day with free play. We prefer that the children be at school before 9am so that they can participate fully in the morning activities.

A schedule of activities is posted in each classroom. A daily routine for the children adds to their feelings of security. The classroom teachers plan activities for their class. Group times, literature, art activities, music and bulletin boards will often reflect a theme. Be alert to what is being studied. You are welcome to add books or other materials from home that reflect the theme being studied. Afternoon activities include nap time, snack, a group time for stories, art, music, outdoor play, and indoor play. Preschool closes at 5:30 p.m.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

It is important for your child's attendance at Preschool to be consistent. We understand that there will be absences for illness or family matters. Please inform your child's teacher, or the Director, if your child is going to be absent from class. A phone call to Preschool on the day of an unexpected absence is very helpful. If your child receives School Readiness funding you will be asked by the Director for written documentation for any absence over three days in a calendar month. VPK families will be given the VPK attendance policy at the beginning of the year.

Please try to have your child at Preschool by 9am each day.

If a child's irregular attendance interferes with Preschool learning and activities, we will ask parents to make arrangements for the child to be here on a more regular basis. If a consistent schedule for the child cannot be arranged by the parents the Director reserves the right to exclude the child from First Presbyterian Preschool. This would always be done in consultation with the parents.

MEALS AND SNACKS

Snacks: there is no charge for snacks. Nutritious snacks are provided mid-morning and after Nap in the afternoon. Snack menus are posted in the lunch room. We may occasionally vary from the daily snack menu for a celebration or special event.

Parents are asked if their child has any allergies on the enrollment forms. It is very important for us to be told about any known **food allergy** so that we can make special accommodations, if possible. This will be done in conversation with the Director. If your child develops a food allergy, please discuss this with the Director. On occasion, you may be asked to consider another child's allergy in planning for food being brought to school.

LUNCH AND BREAKFAST (meal charges can be found on p.11 of this Handbook)

Breakfast is served between 7:30 and 8:15 a.m. Please have your child at school by 8.05am if you would like him/her to eat breakfast. Children who do not eat breakfast every day at Preschool may buy an occasional breakfast for \$1.50. Please put the \$1.50 in the yellow mail box, marked with your child's name.

For children who buy a "school lunch", the lunches are purchased from Elder Care Services and are delivered to the Preschool each day. We start serving lunch to the youngest children at 11:30 a.m. The older groups eat at 11.45am and 12.30 p.m. Parents are welcome to come and eat lunch with their child or occasionally to take their child out for lunch before Nap.

Menus will be provided by the Director and are also posted weekly in the lunchroom.

Parents have the option of sending a lunch from home. An appropriate lunch could be a sandwich, a piece of fruit, and yogurt. Cheese and crackers, cheese sticks, cold cuts, carrot sticks, fruit, rice cakes, fruit cups and pudding are also appropriate. The teachers are also willing to reheat food in the microwave. **Please do not send candy, gum, or**

soft drinks to Preschool. We provide all children with milk if they do not bring a drink from home. Please put your child's name on his/her lunch box or bag and place it in the refrigerator each morning. Empty lunch boxes can be picked-up from the classrooms in the afternoon.

From time to time we may ask parents for cooperation with eliminating certain foods at Preschool because of another child's food allergy. In such circumstances, written information would be given by the Director. It is a parent's responsibility to inform the Director of any food allergies and to discuss with her what special arrangements may be needed.

We participate in the Florida Department of Health *Child Care Food Program*. Parents can apply for Free or Reduced meals if their income indicates they are eligible. All families are required to reapply to the program by October 1 each year. The Director is the determining official for this program and all paper work is kept confidentially in the Preschool office.

DISCIPLINE

At First Presbyterian Preschool we try to maintain a loving, caring environment. Children are encouraged to be responsible and to respect others. Teachers use positive approaches to help the children to behave constructively, including:

- planning appropriate activities for the children
- being actively involved with the children
- redirecting a child who is unsettled
- planning ahead to prevent problems
- encouraging appropriate behavior
- maintaining consistent, clear rules
- encouraging the children to identify and verbalize feelings
- communicating with parents regarding behavior at school and home

If a child loses self-control, we may remove the child from the area with the other children to help him/her regain control and composure. We try to keep in close touch with parents to work out effective methods to help improve a child's behavior. This may involve addressing special needs that could be the cause of hurtful or disruptive behavior. The Director will help parents with community referrals for a child or family who may need additional support. Parents are required to sign our printed Discipline Plan at enrollment.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The teachers value their relationships with parents. Parents who show an interest in their child's learning and friendships at Preschool also show their child that they value the child's day-to-day school experiences and learning. We want to keep in close touch. Please let us know how your child is feeling about school. Please tell us about

any issues at home or circumstances that may be affecting his/her behavior. Parents may call or leave a note for a teacher or the Director. The teachers make many efforts to keep in touch with parents regarding a child's progress and development. Daily conversation, notes home, phone calls, email, bulletin board announcements and parent letters are some of the ways we communicate with parents. **Please do your part by reading notes, emails and bulletin boards and responding when necessary.** Your child will have a named folder where the teachers and Director will leave notes for parents. Please check the folder daily for notes and art work.

Formal parent conferences are scheduled mid-year and at the end of the year, but we encourage you to call and set up a conference anytime you feel one is needed. A telephone conversation may suffice. If a teacher cannot come to the telephone at the time you call, please leave your name and number and she will return the call. **Please let us know immediately when you have a change of address or telephone number.**

We encourage parents to volunteer their time at Preschool at least once each year. Participating with your child in the work and play of Preschool helps strengthen the home-school bond. Knowing more of what goes on at school can add to conversations and learning at home. In cooperation with the teachers, parents can volunteer to read with the children, to bring items or traditions from home to share, to accompany a field-trip or simply to spend time with their children and friends during the school day.

Other opportunities for family engagement may include: Fall Open House, Parent Breakfasts, class parties, Parent Seminars, Spring Program, fund raising activities, playground workdays. Parents can participate in the governance of the Preschool through the Board of Directors. There are three parents elected to the Board each year. Please talk to the Director or your child's teacher about ways you would like to be involved. Please also watch for specific requests for parent volunteers and offer to help. We appreciate our parents!

OPEN DOOR POLICY

Parents are welcome to visit the Preschool any time. Our *Open Door Policy* gives parents access to their children both in person and by phone during normal Preschool hours. Please remember that First Presbyterian Preschool is a smoke-free zone.

CELL PHONES AT PRESCHOOL

We ask that parents **do not use their cell phones** while on the Preschool premises. The children need their parents' full attention as they come and go from Preschool. These are also important times of the day for parents to connect with teachers and we cannot do this if you are talking on your phone.

PHONE CALLS / E-MAIL

In order to give the children our full attention, we are not always able to answer the phone or open email immediately. Please be patient. We will respond as soon as possible. The Director is in the office almost every day and then she is readily available by phone or email. Communicating with parents and families is an important part of her work day but she may be unavailable while at a meeting away from the building. You may leave voice-mail on the Preschool phone and your message will be retrieved by the Director at the first opportunity.

HEALTH

Every child is required by the Florida Department of Children and Families, Child Care Licensing to have the following two **medical forms** in their Preschool record. These are provided by your child's doctor's office at your request:

1. Form DH 3040, "School Entry Health Exam" form. Physical examinations are valid for two years.
2. Form DH 680 "Florida Certification of Immunization" showing that your child has received age-appropriate immunizations.

State Child Care Standards state that if these records are not provided within 30 days of enrollment the child shall not be allowed to remain in the program.

If your child becomes ill at school we will contact you. If we cannot reach a parent we will use the Emergency Contact numbers you have provided. We will call if a child has a fever over 100°, vomiting, diarrhea, head lice, suspected pink eye, or any other indicators that the child is not well enough to be at school. **Parents are requested not to bring a sick child to Preschool** and to make sure that the child is symptom-free before returning to school. **Please call to inform us when your child is sick.**

Parents are requested to keep a child at home when he/she has a fever, rash, diarrhea, vomiting, a bad head cold or cough, or head lice. A child who is being treated for pink eye may return to Preschool. A child identified as having head lice may return to school the following day if treatment has occurred and been verified with the Director.

MEDICATION

No medication will be given to a child unless a parent has filled out a form requesting it. Medication forms are in the red folder in the Resource Room. Prescription medication must be brought to school in the pharmacy container which bears the pharmacy label with your child's name. Non-prescription medication must also be in the original container marked with the child's name. The container must indicate the dosage **age-appropriate** for your child, otherwise we need a doctor's note indicating the appropriate dose for your child. A medication form must be completed by the parent for **all**

medication, including topical creams. Medication must be given to a teacher, not left with the child or in the child's bag. The same teacher administers the medication daily.

Parents may come to Preschool during the day to give a child medicine if they prefer. Please remember to take medication home when it is no longer needed at Preschool.

ACCIDENTS

Teachers complete an Accident Report for accidents that happen at Preschool. Parents will find the completed Accident / Incident form in the child's folder at pick-up time. Please sign the form and return it by placing it in the yellow mail box. We will call you about any accident other than a minor scrape or bump. All the teachers at First Presbyterian Preschool are trained in CPR and First Aid. We will not hesitate to call 911 if professional help is needed. Parents would then be immediately contacted.

SAFE ARRIVAL AND PICK UP

The main entrance to the Preschool is through the gate and then the 4-5 year-old classroom door. At the beginning of the school year parents will be given the code number for the coded lock on the main door. If you forget the code, please ring the door bell at that door. Please only share the door code with someone who is listed on your child's record as an additional authorized drop-off / pick-up person. **Make sure you sign your child in on arrival every day. Please accompany your child into the building or playground and alert a teacher that your child has arrived. The clip-board for sign-in will be close to your child's teacher.** For security reasons, please do not allow your child to operate the door-code or to open the outside door or gate. Please check your child's folder and cubby each day for messages or information from the teachers. Parents should also read bulletin boards daily for information.

In the afternoons the sign-out clip-board will be with your child's teachers. If your child is to be picked up by someone unknown to the Preschool staff and/or not listed on your child's information form, please give us advance notice and we will ask the individual for picture ID. We will only release your child to someone whose name is on record unless special arrangements have been made with the staff in advance.

Do not pull your car into the church parking lot or driveway during the morning hours. Please park in the loading-zone along Adams Street. This rule is essential for the safety of the children and to keep cars moving. You may park in the church lot in the afternoons if unmarked spaces are available. **Do not park in a reserved space in the lot at any time.**

NAP TIME

For Nap Time please send a blanket or towel and a *small* pillow, all marked with your child's name. The children are given an assigned, individual cot for the year. Children may also bring a soft toy or "snuggly" for nap, for example a teddy bear or stuffed

animal. Parents are responsible for taking home the blanket and pillow for laundering on Fridays. Nap items may be left in your child's Nap Room cubby over the weekend.

CLOTHING

Please send a seasonal change of clothing for your child to have on hand at all times. The Preschool provides the two year olds with bags on their hooks outside the classroom and their clothes may remain in their bag. Otherwise spare clothes are kept in a labeled ziplock bag in your child's cubby in the 4s and 5s classroom. When your child borrows Preschool emergency clothing, **please return the laundered clothing as soon as possible.**

Clothes worn to Preschool should be comfortable and easy to wash. We are sometimes messy in our work and play. We provide smocks for classroom painting activities. The paint that we use is "washable," but if it does get on clothing we advise pre-treating the stain before laundering.

Please mark all clothing items, including sweaters, coats, hats, gloves, and bags with your child's name.

Sneakers are the preferred footwear. Cowboy boots, open-toed sandals and flip-flops cause accidents.

TOYS

Other than a Nap Time "snuggly", please do not allow your child to bring toys from home unless authorized by a teacher, such as for class "Show and Tell". Please explain to your child that toys from home will be put-up to take home at the end of the day. It is too difficult to protect special toys from being broken. (We do make exceptions for the "security toys" of some of the youngest children.) Please do not allow your child to bring any guns, swords, weapons etc. to Preschool. Books are always welcome.

On rainy or very hot days we sometimes watch videos. The teachers carefully choose what is shown. We do our best not to show videos that contain racial or gender stereotypes, inappropriate language, or disturbing violence. We may choose not to show a DVD brought from home, particularly feature movies, which often have "scary" characters.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are planned by the teachers to enhance classroom learning. Parents are always informed in advance of any trip away from Preschool using transportation. A general *Field Trip Permission Form* is completed at enrollment. Walking trips in the downtown area are a regular part of the program for the older children. We frequently visit the Leon County Public Library and the downtown parks. Parents are always welcome to accompany the children on a field trip, and parent drivers are sometimes

needed. If we go on a Field Trip involving parent drivers, there will always be a Preschool teacher riding in the vehicle with your child. Please watch for “sign-up” information and volunteer to help with class trips.

The youngest children (the T.C. Bear class) do not usually leave the building until January, unless for a short trick-or-treat walk on Halloween.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Teachers enjoy taking photos of the children for use in the classrooms. Parents are asked to sign a Photo / Video Release Form at enrollment giving permission for photos of their child to be used in the classrooms and hallways of the Preschool, on the Preschool website and FaceBook page and in other occasional promotional materials.

We arrange for a local photographer to take annual fall portrait photos and spring class photos for parents who order them. Class photos are on display in the lunch room.

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHS

The names and photographs of the staff are posted on the Preschool website as a help to parents.

FIRE DRILL

The children participate in a monthly fire drill. Drill procedures are monitored closely by the Department of Children and Families, Childcare Licensing department. The Director also runs occasional practice drills for severe weather or an emergency lock-down of the building.

T SHIRTS AND TOTE BAGS

First Presbyterian Preschool T-shirts and tote bags are available for sale from the Director for \$10.00 each. We encourage you to buy a yellow T-shirt for your child. It is the perfect shirt for school days. Occasionally we ask all the children to wear a Preschool T-shirt for a particular event. No child will be excluded for lack of a T- shirt. Shirts are also available in adult sizes.

THE EARLY LEARNING COALITION of the BIG BEND

Parents are encouraged to visit the website for the ELC of the Big Bend. www.elcbigbend.org The Early Learning Coalition works closely with child care providers and parents to help prepare children for school. The ELC can provide information about the State of Florida School Readiness program and Voluntary Prekindergarten.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

In the event of severe weather the Preschool may be closed. If the local *State of Florida* offices or the *City of Tallahassee* announces a closing for weather problems, First Presbyterian Preschool will also close. Parents are expected to pick up their children as quickly as possible.

An email notification will be sent to parents as soon as possible in the event of Preschool closing unexpectedly. Parents can listen to WFSU FM or WNLS 1270 AM radio stations, or TV Channel 6 for emergency announcements.

If there is ever a need for us to evacuate the building we would walk to the Leon County Public Library or the Adams Street fire-station and contact parents from there.

VOLUNTEERS AND PARTICIPANTS

We are fortunate to be offered occasional volunteer help from a community member or organization. All volunteers are supervised closely by the teachers and Director and receive orientation to the program prior to their work. Volunteers are introduced to parents and soon become familiar with the program. Volunteers are never alone with the children.

We also welcome volunteer, practicum and field placement students from FSU, FAMU and TCC. These students work under the direct supervision of the Director and the Lead Teachers. You will be informed when students are working in your child's class. We are occasionally asked to participate in FSU, FAMU or TCC research studies and projects. Such participation is only with the full knowledge and permission of the parents and under the supervision of the Director and Lead Teachers.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays or other special events may be celebrated at Preschool with refreshments provided by parents. Please let your child's teacher or the Director know in advance if you are planning to bring a treat to share. Parents are welcome to come to Preschool to join in the celebration.

When parents are planning a home birthday party for their child, party invitations may be placed in the Preschool folders *if* the whole class is being invited. If only a few Preschool friends are to be invited, please do not distribute invitations at Preschool. You may call the Director who will share a child's contact information, if permission has been given by the parent(s).

SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

The new school year begins the same day as Leon County Schools, this year on Monday August 15, 2016. First Presbyterian Preschool is a year-round program.

2016 - 2017 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE / Preschool is closed:

Labor Day	Monday, September 5, 2016
Veterans' Day	Friday, November 11, 2016
Thanksgiving	Thursday, November 24, 2016 Friday, November 25, 2016
Christmas and New Year	Monday, December 26, 2016 Tuesday, December 27, 2016 Wednesday, December 28, 2016 Thursday, December 29, 2016 Friday, December 30, 2016
Martin Luther King Jr Day	Monday, January 16, 2017
Spring Holiday	Friday, April 14, 2017
Memorial Day	Monday, May 29, 2017
Independence Day	Tuesday, July 4, 2017
Teacher Planning Day (tentative date)	Friday, August 11, 2017

****** If parents need childcare for any of the days that First Presbyterian Preschool is closed for holidays, they are responsible for finding and paying for childcare elsewhere.**

Parents whose children are in the VPK program will be given the VPK calendar and other VPK materials following the first day of VPK on Monday August 15, 2016.

TUITION

Monthly tuition and meal fees are due in advance by the fifth business day of each month. After the fifth day there is a late fee of \$25.00. If tuition is not paid in full by the tenth of the month, we reserve the right to end your child's enrollment at First Presbyterian Preschool unless alternative arrangements have been made in writing with the Director. Please make your checks and money orders payable to *First Presbyterian Preschool* and put them in the yellow mailbox in the four and five-year-olds' classroom. Receipts will be placed in your child's folder.

No tuition refunds are given.

One month's advance notice of withdrawal of a student must be given to the Director, in writing. Tuition will be due for no less than one month after notice of withdrawal has been given.

No reduction can be made in tuition for vacation, illness, or other absence of less than two weeks within a month. A reduction for an extended absence may be made at the Director's discretion. Please talk to the Director about your circumstances.

Tuition is paid on a monthly basis regardless of the number of school days or holidays in a given month. In the month of December an allowance may be made for meal charges at the parent's request.

2016-2017 FEES

The fee schedule listed below is for children in the two younger classes, the Two and Three year old class (known as the T.C. Bear class) and the Threes and Fours class. For children who are enrolled in the Voluntary Prekindergarten program (VPK) please see the tuition plan below for the extended-day hours at Preschool.

Annual Supply Fee	\$150.00 due September 1 st
Full-time tuition	\$695.00 per month (prorated tuition for new students for August 15-31, 2016 is \$430.00)
Breakfast	\$33.00 per month, \$1.50 per day
Lunch	\$60.00 per month, \$2.75 per day

EXTENDED-DAY TUITION (for students enrolled in VPK, 9.15am – 12.15pm daily)

Children who are enrolled in the State of Florida VPK program at First Presbyterian Preschool are eligible for 540 hours of class time for which there is no charge. The calendar for the VPK days and hours will be distributed by the Director at the beginning of the school year.

The private-pay fees for the **Extended-Day** hours at Preschool, before and after the morning VPK hours, are:

Extended-Day tuition	\$500.00 per month, beginning September 2016 (prorated Extended-Day tuition for new students for August 15-31, 2016 is \$300.00)
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Additional **Extended-Day** fees for VPK students:

Annual Supply Fee \$150.00 due September 1st

Breakfast \$33.00 per month, \$1.50 per day

Lunch \$60.00 per month, \$2.75 per day

After the VPK year is over in May 2017, the 4s and 5s tuition for the summer months will be the standard Preschool monthly tuition of \$695.00 for June and July, and a prorated amount for August 1 – 18, 2017.

***** The Board of Directors reserves the right to review all fees during the school year. *****