

PARENT'S HANDBOOK 2023 - 2024

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These Forms, tuition for September, and tee shirt money- MUST be turned in at your child's visitation day in August or at least one week before your child begins attending classes. (*Therefore*, if your family will be out of town during visitation week then everything must be turned in before that week for your child to start classes on time. Contact Karen to arrange to turn it all in before August 28,2023. 704-483-5532 or karen@unitypres.org)

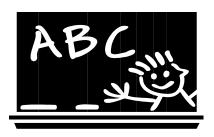
Evacuation Plan-due at visitation
Certificate of Health- due at visitation
Emergency Information- due at visitation
Pick-up permission Form- due at visitation
Handbook Agreement Form- due at visitation
Daily Attendance Form- due at visitation



Our Mission:

- -To provide a safe, Christian, joyful environment for preschool children.
- -To teach children about the love of God, both through activity and through our mirroring the gentle, insistent love of God.
- -To assist children in learning how to share, welcome, work, and play with others.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES



SOCIALLY

To grow in one's ability to work and play: to live with peers To adjust to the group To develop relationships

To learn to share

To learn responsibility

EMOTIONALLY

To develop healthy feelings about self
To begin learning to take turns, accept changes, accept defeat
To become more self-reliant
To begin and complete a task

PHYSICALLY

To learn good habits and begin independence To develop large and small motor skills To learn how to control muscles To learn safety rules

MENTALLY

To learn to listen and follow simple directions
To perfect speaking skills
To grow in self-confidence
To develop an increased interest in learning
To develop an increased interest in the world around them







SCHOOL YEAR

Unity Preschool will be in session for nine months beginning September 5, 2023 and ending May 21, 2024. We closely (not exactly) follow the Lincoln County school (LCS) calendar. During the 2023/2024 school year Unity Preschool will be open on the following three days that LCS will be closed: Tuesday, September 26, Monday, October 16 and Monday, March 4. Unity Preschool will be closed on the following day that LCS schools will be open: Thursday, December 21. **Staff only Workdays are scheduled to keep the staff up to date on trainings, certifications, and continuing education**. The Preschool will not be open for children on our staff only workdays which are also days LCS will be closed: Tuesday, October 17, Thursday, January 4, and Tuesday, March 5.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

1. <u>Closings or Delays</u>- In the event that the Preschool must close due to inclement weather, families will be notified by phone announcement or weather code announcements on the following television, radio stations, and websites:

WSOC-TV, channel 9 wsoctv.com/weather 102.9 WLYT-FM- Lite 102.9 WCNC 6 News, channel 6 www.wcnc.com/weather WBTV, channel 3 www.wbtv.com/weather 99.7 WRFX-FM- the Fox

Unity Preschool follows Lincoln County schools for delaying or closing decisions. If we are to be delayed:

One-hour, preschool will begin at 9:45 a.m.

Two-hours, preschool will begin at 10:30 a.m.

Three hours- preschool will begin at 11:00am and extend to 1:30pm

If LCS are virtual, preschool will be closed.

<u>Make Up Policy-</u>In the event that Unity Preschool has missed three or more days in a calendar month due to severe weather, priority make-up days will be offered after the first two days, for only those classes that apply. (We will not make-up the first two days in each calendar month). Make-up days will be offered in the following order: Jan. 5th, 4th, 3rd February 20th and Mar 13th OR Mondays and Fridays may be used as make-up days at the Director's discretion.

- 2. <u>Tornado Warning during preschool hours-</u> In the event that a tornado warning has been placed in Lincoln County during preschool hours the following will occur:
 - a. All Staff and students will move to the safety of the hallway for the duration of the warning. Classroom doors will be closed until after the warning has been officially lifted and teachers have been notified by the Director or Assistant Director that it is safe to reenter classrooms.
 - b. All doors to the building will be shut and locked and remain that way until the warning has been officially lifted. No one will enter or exit the building during the warning.
 - c. After the warning has been lifted, parents will be notified of pickup procedure for that day. Depending on time warning is lifted, pickup may be at normal time. However, if warning is lifted near or after scheduled pickup time, Director or Assistant Director will decide on a pickup procedure that is safe and efficient for students and parents. Parents will be notified by Director, Assistant Director, or child's teacher of pickup time and any changes to pickup procedure.
 - d. For the safety of all- The entire staff, including the Director and Assistant Director, will be with the students. THEREFORE, Phone calls to the school during this time will remain unanswered until the Warning has been lifted and all staff and students have re-entered their classrooms.

SCHOOL HOURS/ATTENDANCE

School days run from 8:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Drop off and Pick up of students is done by carpool at the front surround of the preschool. Parents (or those authorized by them) are expected to be in the carpool line when it begins by 8:45am and by 12:30pm.

The building doors will be locked except during carpool times. If you arrive after the door is locked, (in the morning -get your child out of the car first and then), ring the front doorbell. The staff member who opens the door will take your child to his or her classroom in the morning or bring your child to you in the afternoon. While we recognize that there are always situations that occur, habitual tardiness will not be tolerated and could result in either the child being sent home for the day or expulsion from the program. Morning drop off begins at 8:45am and ends when the last child in line has been unloaded. Afternoon pickup begins at 12:30pm and ends when the last child in line has been loaded. If late pick-up occurs a \$10.00 fee will be charged. After 1:00 p.m. additional charges will accrue at the rate of \$1.00 per minute. These fees are due at the time incurred so be prepared to place your late fee in the black lock box before ringing the doorbell. Late fees that are not paid at that time will be billed to your account and a note will be sent home in your child's bag. Children who consistently arrive late, miss school frequently, and are not picked up on time begin to feel intimidated, insecure and afraid. Please help us make your child's preschool experience a positive one by bringing them on time regularly and by picking them up promptly. Drop off and pickup procedures are as follows:

CARPOOL LINE POLICY

-We will have carpool drop-off and pick-up at 8:45am and at 12:30pm. All parents will be required to utilize carpool drop off and pick up and will not have access to the building. Therefore:

- 1. parents or their authorized drivers are expected to be in the carpool line by the time it begins at 8:45am and at 12:30pm.
- 2. the carpool line begins at the front entrance to the preschool building (second building on campus)

 Cars line up behind each other in a single file line. The carpool line will wind around the church building (1st building on campus) and continue down and around to the large parking lot (near the playground and behind the manse (house).
 - Should the space be needed, the line can continue up to and around the top parking lot (in front of the manse (house)
- 3. -Should all the above spots be taken when you arrive, park in the spaces provided in the upper parking lot until you can safely enter the carpool line.
- 4. -Do not enter the church staff parking lot which is located in front of the last 2 buildings on campus (CYC and Administration buildings).
- 5. -Do not line up or park on the main road.
- 6. Once you reach the parking area in front of the preschool building, proceed to your space in the following way:

 -Tk, 4's, 3's- enter the surround area in front of the preschool door.
 - -2's, MMO's and families picking up children in both categories-park in one of the empty lined parking spaces to the left of the surround.
- 7. All drivers are also expected to display **the preschool issued name plate**, on the passenger side visor, or hung by the mirror, of their car, beginning when they enter the carpool line (morning and afternoon) and only removed from that spot after their child has been taken by a staff member from the car in the morning or buckled into their car seat in the afternoon.
- 8. Parents will be provided with enough name plates for each person listed on their Permission to pick up form, for them, and for their spouse. It is your responsibility to distribute them to your authorized drivers and explain our carpool procedures, so they are prepared the first time they pick up or drop off.
- 9. All nameplates will be issued at the beginning of the year. Ask your child's teacher at the visitation day and before school begins if your family requires more nameplates.
- 10. If one of your nameplates gets damaged or lost, request a replacement in writing to your child's teacher at least 24 hours before it will be needed again. We will no longer recognize handwritten nameplates.

- 11. For safety reasons children will not be placed in a car without a **preschool issued name plate**.
- 12. In the mornings, children will be escorted to class by the staff member who removes them from car.

 In the event you need to pick up your child outside of normal pick-up times, contact your child's teacher or the preschool office and we will meet you outside the front door with your child
- 13. In the afternoon, Staff member will try to buckle child in their seat.

Should that prove challenging then you will be asked to exit your car and buckle them in quickly so the carpool line does not get delayed.

- 14. Parents should not need to park in the parking lot but on those rare occasions when it is necessary, it is allowed ONLY in the following spaces:
 - The lined spaces in the parking lot at the entrance in front of the manse (house).
 - ☐ The lined spaces in the parking lot in the rear of the manse near the playground.
- 15. Parking is NOT allowed at any time:
 - □ NO PARKING ANY TIME-in spots that are not designated by painted white lines (including the long strip of parking lot and grassy area that does not have painted strips for parking)
 - □ NO PARKING ANY TIME- The lined spaces in the lot in front of the church office and in front of the CYC, beginning at the church mailbox.

DO NOT PULL INTO THESE AREAS TO BUCKLE YOUR CHILD OR DROP OFF/PICK UP YOUR CHILD.

16. Always follow these directions and any directions given by a staff member (for the safety of our staff and your family)

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

- 1. The child must be 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 years of age by August 31 of the current calendar year. (Mothers Morning Out- child must be walking and not turning 2 by August 31. And 3 year olds must be toilet trained.)
- 2. To be in compliance with North Carolina law and before entering the program, each child is required to have on file at the preschool an up-to-date health form and current immunization records signed by a doctor and **updated each year as long as the child is enrolled**.
- 3. A registration form and fees must be turned in each year. Registration fees (\$ 90) are non-refundable. All children in the 3's,4's and TK classes must be toilet trained. Children will be registered in the following order as long as they are registering before the open date to the Community:
 - 1.) children of church members who are already enrolled in the program, 2) children of non-church members who are already enrolled in the program, 3) children of preschool staff, 4) children of church not already enrolled in the program, 5) children of non-church members who are not already enrolled in the program.

Once registration is open to the Community, all available spots will be filled on a first come basis.



ADMITTANCE

* TK must be a)5 by August 31st or

b) turning 5 by December 31st and had at least 1 year previous preschool experience.

**Eligibility for all other ages follows the August 31st deadline.

***3's must be toilet trained, able to wear underwear instead of pull-ups.

****MMO must be walking.

When your registration form and fee are submitted and a spot for your child has been confirmed, Enrollment begins and is active for the school year which starts in September and ends in May.

TUITION-Because our annual budget and projected staff salaries are set in relation to the number of children enrolled, monthly tuition must be paid as long as your child is enrolled. Illness, vacation, snow days, Christmas breaks, Easter breaks, and other circumstances will sometimes cause your child to miss several days. Tuition remains the same from September through May regardless of the number of days your child attends.

Tuition for 2023/2024 year will be set:

TK- Monday through Thursday - \$ 225.00 per month
4 year olds- Monday through Thursday - \$ 225.00 per month
3 year olds- Tuesday through Thursday - \$ 205.00 per month
2 year olds- M/T or W/Th - \$ 190.00 per month

MMO-1 year olds- Tuesdays or Thursdays \$ 97.00 per month

- 1. **Tuition** is due and payment is expected on the first day of each month even if your child is not in class on that day or if preschool is closed. Even though tuition payments are due each month, families can also choose to pay future months ahead of this schedule. Partial monthly payments are not accepted at any time. A locked drop box is located outside the preschool building for your convenience and to ensure on time payment.
- 2. **Sibling discount-** Families with more than one child attending Unity in the same year have a \$10 a monthly flat rate family discount.
- 3. **Payment** is considered late after the grace period which begins on the 2nd day of each month and ends at 1:00pm on each date listed below. Late fees will be charged to all accounts not paid by the deadlines according to the following:
 - a. Tuitions that are received within one week past the deadline below will be charged a \$25 late fee
 - b. Tuitions that are received within the second week past the deadline will be charged a \$30 late fee
 - c. Tuitions that are received within the third week past the deadline will be charged a \$35 late fee
 - d. All late fees are due the same month they apply. No exceptions.
 - e. If tuition and late payment have not been received by the last class day of the current month, the child will be automatically dismissed from the program and will be allowed to return when all fees are paid in full.

On time payments for 2023/2024 are tuition payments that are received by 1:00pm on the dates listed below (no exceptions or extensions)

September- due at your child's visitation day/time in August.

October 10th-Tuesday

November 9th-Thursday

December 7th-Thursday

January 11th- Thursday

February 8th- Thursday

March 7th-Thursday

April 11th-Thursday

May 9th- Thursday

- 4. **All checks, money orders, or bank drafts** must be made payable to "Unity Preschool".
- 5. Cash payments must be the exact dollar amount. No change provided.
- 6. **Payments** will be received in the following ways:
 - a. In the child's folder place in envelope labeled with child's name and class.
 - b. mailed through USPS in enough time for Preschool to receive it no later than the stated 'on time' deadlines.
 - c. <u>Online payments by Bank drafts</u>- mailed directly to the preschool after you set them up with your bank in enough time to be received by the deadlines above. (The bank will have time to process everything, and the preschool will receive the check on time if they are drafted by the 25th of the month before they are due.)
 - d. <u>Dropped in the Drop box</u> located outside the front entrance to the preschool building. This box has been added to assist with on time payments. Feel free to use it when your child is not here on deadline days and to make sure your payment has been dropped either by the night before the deadline or before 1 o'clock on the day of the deadline to avoid having to pay late fees. (See on time dates and late fee amounts listed above)
- 7. **Returned checks-**There will be a \$15.00 charge for a returned check.
- 8. No adjustments or deductions in tuition will be made due to a child's illness, vacation, or other absences. The tuition remains the same regardless of the number of days your child attends and any attendance during the month constitutes a full month's tuition.

WITHDRAWALS

- *When your registration form and fee are submitted and a spot for your child has been confirmed, Enrollment begins and is active for the school year which starts in September and ends in May.
- 1. If it becomes necessary for a parent to withdraw his/her child before May, it is preschool policy that the parents give a minimum of 30 days written notification. One month's notice or one month's tuition is therefore required.
- 2. Child care services may be terminated by the preschool when the pattern of any or a combination of the following becomes excessive or a problem:
 - a. Child absences, late pick-ups (3),
 - b. habitual late arrivals,
 - c. request for special needs of the child which the program is not prepared to meet,
 - d. failure to pay required tuition,
 - e. failure to comply with policies concerning ill children, failure to comply with the rules.
 - f. If a child's behavior problems endanger other persons, materials, and/or the positive environment, the child may be required to leave the program.



DISCIPLINE

Unity Preschool is committed to providing children and families with quality learning and care in a safe and loving environment. A major part of the obligation is to use a system of discipline that will provide a positive learning experience leading each child to develop a strong sense of individual worth and responsibility. Discipline is a way of protecting children and teaching them responsibility for their own actions. The staff will follow these guidelines for discipline and behavioral management:

<u>Positive reinforcement for desired behaviors(Praise)</u> - given consistently throughout the year.

Modeling desired behaviors(Practice what you preach!) - Children learn more from the way adults	
and treat them and others, than from what adults tell them.	
Establishment of clear and simple rules - will be posted, taught, and reinforced throughout the year.	
<u>Redirection/Guidance</u> - children will go to another activity or be given clear guidelines and assistance in dealing with behavior.(For example: sharing - teacher may give each child a time limit and ask one child to wait for his/her time)	
<u>Removal of privilege</u> - Example: riding the tricycle in an unsafe manner- the child may not be allowed to ride anymore for a specified time period. (This may be a few minutes or for the rest of that outdoor play period)	
<u>Quiet time in the classroom</u> - separating the child from the activities of the other children for a short period of time (3 to 5 minutes). The teacher will then quietly discuss the incident with the child. When the child returns to the group, the incident is over and the child is treated with the same affection and respect shown the other children.	
Quiet time outside the classroom- Sometimes a child needs extra time and a new space for self-discipline to be effective. During this specified time period (3 to 5 minutes), the child will be in the Director's care.	
<u>Informing parents</u> - Behavioral teaching can only succeed if parents are working with children in the home, so parents will be informed about their child's behavior in the classroom.	
If a child does not respond to appropriate discipline and/or places others in danger - a parent will be notified immediately. If the behavior continues, the parent may be asked to come and pick their child up from the Preschool for the rest of that day. The teacher will counsel with the parents, child, and Director to ascertain the reason for the behavior and to devise a possible solution. If the	
behavior persists, the child's enrollment may be terminated by the Director.	

Praise and positive reinforcement are effective methods of the discipline of children. When children receive positive, non-violent, and understanding interactions from adults and others, they develop good self-concepts, problem solving abilities, and self discipline. Based on this belief of how children learn and develop values, the staff at Unity Preschool will practice the following discipline policy

We:

- 1. DO praise, reward, and encourage the children.
- 2. DO reason with and set limits for the children.
- 3. DO model appropriate behavior for the children.
- 4. DO modify the classroom environment to attempt to prevent problems before they occur.
- 5. DO listen to the children.
- 6. DO provide alternatives for inappropriate behavior to the children.
- 7. DO provide the children with natural and logical consequences of their behaviors.
- 8. DO treat the children as people and respect their needs, desires, and feelings.
- 9. DO ignore minor misbehaviors.
- DO explain things to children on their levels.
- 11. DO use short supervised periods of "quiet time"
- 12. DO stay consistent in our discipline.

We:

- DO NOT spank, shake, bite, pinch, push, pull, slap, or otherwise physically punish the children.
 DO NOT make fun of, yell at, threaten, make sarcastic remarks about, use profanity, or otherwise verbally abuse the children.
- 3. DO NOT shame or punish the children when bathroom accidents occur.
- 4.DO NOT deny food or rest as punishment.
- 5.DO NOT relate discipline to eating, resting, or sleeping.
 6.DO NOT leave the children alone, unattended, or without supervision.
- 7. DO NOT place the children in locked rooms, closets, or boxes as punishment.
- 8.DO NOT allow discipline of children by children.
- 9.DO NOT criticize, make fun of, or otherwise belittle children's parents, families, or ethnic group.



HEALTH

Attending preschool on a regular and timely basis is very important to a child. Every effort should be made to have your child attend, provided he/she is well enough. However, Unity is equipped to care for <u>well children only</u>. We ask that parents cooperate with us by not sending your child to school when he/she:

- 1. Shows signs of a fresh cold
- 2. Has a fever or unidentified rash
- 3. Is in the incubation period of an infectious disease
- 4. Has had an upset stomach (vomiting or diarrhea) in the last 24 hours
- 5. Has had a fever in the last 24 hours of 100 degrees or more
- 6. Has taken medications to reduce fever/symptoms in the past 24 hours
- 7. Is unable to participate in outdoor play (Teachers are unable to supervise children who cannot go outside with the rest of the class)
- 8. Shows any deviation from usual behavior of appetite
- 9. Has pink eye- child may return when there is no discharge from the eye
- 10. Has Head Lice-child may return 24 hours after treatment if head is **nit free**
- 11. Has strep throat- Child may return 48 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and no fever for 48 hours

* The preschool should be notified if a child is ill with a communicable disease* and anytime a child is absent.

Any child who becomes ill at school will be isolated as much as possible from the other children. The parent or emergency contact will be called to come immediately and take the child home.

FIRST-AID/MEDICINE

The Director and all lead teachers are, or will be, certified in Infant/Child CPR and first aid. Superficial wounds will be washed and a Band-Aid placed on the wound. No medications or topical applications will be given or applied to children. In the event of a serious injury, the teacher will have instructions as to what to do in addition to calling the parent or emergency contact person.

Please refrain from asking teachers to give prescribed or over-the-counter medicines to your child. Due to insurance regulations we are not allowed to do so.

HEALTH CERTIFICATE

A health certificate and a copy of your child's immunization record is required from your child's doctor. All children must be immunized per North Carolina state law. These forms are due upon admission into the preschool and new updated forms are due each year after that in August. Please turn in the form at your visitation day or by one week before your child attends classes. Turning in this paperwork after the deadline could delay your child's start date. (For any medical/religious exceptions to the law, contact Karen Taylor at karen@unitypres.org)



BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

We feel that it is important to celebrate birthdays. Parents may furnish a special snack (healthy snacks preferred) on that day to be shared with the other children in the class. Please check with the teacher to make sure she knows the exact date the snack will be provided. In lieu of individual treat bags (which we discouraged), parents may donate a class gift in your child's honor to be wrapped and opened by birthday boy/girl. A suggested list of books and other classroom supplies is available upon request. Please check with your child's teacher to set a special day if he/she has a summer birthday. For safety reasons, please do not send any balloons or use candles.

CLASSROOM VISITATIONS -

UPDATE: NO VISITATIONS DURING COVID RESTRICTIONS

While we sometimes like visits from our family members during the preschool day, advance notice to your child's teacher is needed as most preschool children need to be prepared for a change of routine. Any events listed in green ink on the preschool calendar are parent/family participation and parents/families are encouraged to attend.

SNACKS

Nutritious snacks (fruits, crackers, cheese, cereal, vanilla wafers etc.) are provided each day by the preschool and water will be served to encourage this healthy habit. Parents may provide a nutritious snack for their child's class by making arrangements with the teacher. (Please ask teacher which snacks are age appropriate and what allergies are present before sending.) Teachers will be conducting some cooking experiments on occasion and children will eat the foods they have prepared. (Parents may be asked to help supply ingredients.) If your child has any food allergies, please notify the teacher and Director at the beginning of the year or as soon as knowledge of the allergy is known, so precautions may be taken to avoid health problems. With the exception of lunches and special classroom snacks, please do not send any other food to school with your child (breakfast, candy, gum, etc.). This will avoid hurt feelings when there is not enough for everyone.

DRESS AND POSSESSIONS

Children should come to preschool dressed in comfortable, washable, play clothes and rubber-soled shoes (for safety reasons, please do not send child in flip-flops). Children should be dressed appropriately for the weather, as we will go outside each day, weather permitting. Label all removable articles of clothing with the child's name. (Staff cannot be responsible for lost articles of clothing) Please send an extra change of clothing for your child to keep at school in case he/she should need it. (Remember to change to winter-appropriate clothing when the weather turns colder.)

Toys should not be brought to class except by the request of the teacher (Show and Tell days), since they tend to cause contention between children or may be lost or broken. **We discourage toy weapons of any kind being brought to school**. Security blankets may be brought if needed during the child's transition period. Videos should not be sent unless prior arrangements have been made with your child's teacher to avoid disappointment.



MESSAGES-When to contact us

The teachers or director cannot accept verbal messages from the child. Please call, text, or email and leave a message for your child's teacher when:

- 1. Your child's ride home changes from the regular routine.
- 2. Your child is going to miss class that day or in the future.
- 3. You have a message for the teacher.
- 4. Your child is sick
- 5. Your child suddenly cannot attend a scheduled field trip after you have filled out a permission slip (please call early if it is the day of trip)

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Conferences will be held mid-year for the four-year-old and TK classes. The dates will be announced in advance and sign-up sheets will be posted. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher if you have a question, problem, or suggestion. However, we ask that you do not discuss the children in their presence or try to talk with the teacher at length during the program hours so that they may give their full and undivided attention to the children.

GRIEVANCE POLCY

Any problems that you may have should be discussed with your child's teacher. Open and honest communication at this level is very important. If a solution cannot be reached, then a conference with the Director, teacher, and parent may become necessary. If the problem still cannot be resolved the complaint may be brought to the Preschool Board. **All Board decisions will be final**.

WHAT TO BRING:

- 1. Regular bath towel for resting, if required by teacher. NO MATS
- 2. Change of clothes to be kept at Preschool should they be needed in an emergency. (Please mark all items brought to school with the child's name!)
- 3. Lunch and a drink (please pack with a cold pack/thermos as we will not be able to refrigerate/ heat AND send all necessary implements, ie: spoon, fork, napkin, etc). All items including drinks must fit inside the lunch box.
- 4. Book bag large enough to hold papers/projects and lunch box, and is still able to close.
- 5. Item for Show-and-tell (on that designated day only)-no real or toy guns or weapons please
- 6. Items requested by the teacher

WHAT NOT TO BRING

- 1. Money, unless for a specific purpose
- 2. Breakfast, Candy, or Gum
- 3. Jewelry
- 4. Toys-exception show and tell-no real or toy guns or weapons please