



Weekday School Ministries

Aldersgate UMC

2025-2026 Preschool Parent Handbook

1320 Umstead Road
Durham, NC 27712
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www.aldersgatewds.org
evie@aldersgate.org

WELCOME LETTER

Welcome to Aldersgate Weekday School Ministries!

Since 1990, we have provided exceptional childcare to the North Durham community. Our current location at Aldersgate United Methodist Church has been our home since 1998. Decades of experience provide your child with a safe, fun, and nurturing environment every time they walk through our doors. We welcome all children from our diverse community and do not discriminate based on race, color, nationality, or religion.

Day by day, our staff will be your child's guide as they meet new friends, develop creative expression, and gain self-confidence. Throughout the year, our teachers' expertise and innovation will provide your child with a wide variety of exciting experiences and instill a lifelong love of learning. As an ecumenical preschool in partnership with a United Methodist church, we also tell each child the simple truth that God loves them.

Please read through this entire manual carefully, especially if you are joining our school for the first time. If you have any questions after reading, do not hesitate to reach out. We are here for you.

Thank you for choosing Aldersgate Weekday School Ministries. We look forward to getting to know your family!

Sincerely,

Evelyn Johnson, Director of Weekday School Ministries



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STATEMENT OF FAITH

Aldersgate Weekday School Ministries is closely partnered with, but legally separate from, Aldersgate United Methodist Church. The school and the church are in ministry together to support you, our families.

We are a Christian community. Therefore, we believe the holistic growth of a person involves spiritual, emotional, and physical development. To attend to our students' spiritual development, we incorporate Bible stories into their weekly curriculum and hold chapel time once per week. The preschool staff, along with the pastoral staff of Aldersgate United Methodist Church, lead chapel time. The children sing songs, listen to a simple Bible story and pray. Parents are welcome to attend this weekly 30-minute service at any time.

Religious teaching at our preschool consists of basic, messages such as "God loves you." We focus on popular, essential Bible stories like Noah's Ark and the nativity story. Though we frequently reference Christian stories and teachings, we strive to welcome families of all faith traditions. Our teachers and staff model faith in God through attitudes of thankfulness, sharing, patience, forgiveness, joy, fairness, and love.

If you have questions or concerns about our faith traditions, do not hesitate to reach out to Evelyn Johnson, our Director.

To learn more about Aldersgate United Methodist Church, visit www.aldersgate.org.



OUR EDUCATIONAL APPROACH

Children learn on a daily basis from everything they see, hear, do and say. Preschool enhances and nurtures their developmental process in the earliest years of learning. Aldersgate Weekday School Ministries is devoted to ensuring that each child enrolled in this program will receive a quality experience, setting a foundation for their future education.

Our classrooms are organized into centers. Centers found in most rooms include Blocks, Manipulatives, Art, Language/Books, Sensory Table and Science/Discovery. Each class will also participate weekly in a Music class. Classroom curriculum is structured around the use of themes for each month. The themes will include topics such as Community Helpers, Fire Safety, and Dinosaurs, plus a specific Bible and science theme each month.

Our classrooms are each self-contained and have a low student-teacher ratio. We carefully balance teacher-directed activities with student-initiated activities. We believe children succeed in an environment where they both know the daily routine and have access to free-choice activities.

We believe that giving positive verbal rewards reinforces a child's good feeling about their behavior and encourages acceptable behavior. We believe that asking a child to stop and think about unpleasant behavior enables them to work on self-control. Our preschool staff places great emphasis on the need for children to express their frustrations verbally rather than physically. We do not believe that corporal punishment is an acceptable method of dealing with young children's behavior at our preschool.

The staff will work with the children throughout the year to help them resolve their conflicts by talking them out in a respectful manner. If this is not successful, a child displaying unacceptable behavior or not cooperating in a group activity is seated by a teacher and placed in time-out. Time-out is not a punishment, but rather a time when a child may calm down, remember what behavior the teacher is requesting, and decide when they are ready to rejoin the group with acceptable behavior.

If behavior problems persist, the parent may be asked to attend a conference to discuss what may be helpful in motivating the child to behave in an acceptable manner.

ENROLLMENT

ORIENTATION

Parent Orientation provides an opportunity for parents to meet teachers and receive important information regarding the school. Orientation is for parents (adults) only and is held at noon on the Thursday before Preschool begins. You will receive a postcard in the summer with your child's specific date and time to meet their teacher. This is generally the Friday before school starts.

We also have a Meet the Teacher time, which allows parents and children to familiarize themselves with our classrooms and day-to-day activities. We strongly encourage and rely on parents to become involved in their child's preschool experience.

REGISTRATION

The Non-Refundable Registration Fee is **\$50 for all current students and \$50 for new students who are members of Aldersgate United Methodist Church.** The Registration Fee is **\$75 for new students who are not members of Aldersgate United Methodist Church.** Registration fees help with expenses such as paperwork, postage and miscellaneous expenses.

Registration for the following year will be held in January for current students and church members and will open to the public in mid-February. Classes are filled on a first-come, first-served basis according to the date the registration fee is paid. The registration fee must accompany the application. May tuition for the upcoming year is paid as a deposit by May 15th to guarantee your child's place for the upcoming year.

If classes are filled when a parent inquires, the child's name will be placed on a waiting list. A deposit is required to put a child's name on the waiting list. As vacancies occur during the year, they will be filled from the waiting list or from new registrations according to the above procedures.

WITHDRAWAL

If your child needs to be withdrawn from Aldersgate preschool, a one-month written notice is required so that another child can fill the vacancy. If more notice is possible, it would be appreciated. Refunds will not be given for children who withdraw from the preschool program. The written or emailed notice of withdrawal will be placed in the student's records.

DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION

Preschool hours are from 9:00 a.m. to noon.

Aldersgate preschool DOES NOT follow the public school traditional calendar schedule. Please refer to the calendar on the next page for all important dates and school activities. The chart below specifies details for each class.

CLASS	CLASS SIZE	FIRST DAY	LAST DAY
Toddlers (T/TH)	8 Students	Tuesday, Sept. 2	Thursday, May 21
Toddlers (M/W/F)	8 Students	Wednesday, Sept. 3	Wednesday, May 20
Toddlers (M-F)	8 Students	Tuesday, Sept. 2	Thursday, May 21
2 Year Olds (T/TH)	11 Students	Tuesday, Sept. 2	Thursday, May 21
2 Year Olds (M-F)	11 Students	Tuesday, Sept. 2	Thursday, May 21
3 Year Olds (M/W/F)	13 Students	Wednesday, Sept. 3	Wednesday, May 20
3 Year Olds (M-F)	13 Students	Tuesday, Sept. 2	Thursday, May 21
4 Year Olds (M/T/W/TH)	14 Students	Tuesday, Sept. 2	Thursday, May 21
4 Year Olds (M-F)	14 Students	Tuesday, Sept. 2	Thursday, May 21

ALDERSGATE WEEKDAY SCHOOL MINISTRIES PRESCHOOL

2024-2025

AUGUST	28	Parent Orientation
	29	Meet the Teacher
SEPTEMBER	1	CLOSED for Labor Day
	2	First Day for T/TH Toddlers, all 2s, M-F 3s and all 4s
	3	First Day for M/W/F Toddlers and M/W/F 3s
OCTOBER	17	CLOSED for Staff Development Conference
NOVEMBER	11	CLOSED for Veterans Day
	26-28	CLOSED For Thanksgiving
DECEMBER	9	2s Christmas Program
	10	3s Christmas Program
	11	4s Christmas Program
	22-31	CLOSED for Christmas and New Year
JANUARY	1,2	CLOSED for New Year
	19	CLOSED for MLK Jr. Day
	29,30	Parent/Teacher Conferences
FEBRUARY	16	CLOSED for Presidents' Day
MARCH	10	CLOSED for Staff Development Day
	30,31	CLOSED for Spring Break
APRIL	1-3	CLOSED for Spring Break
MAY	15	Pre-k Graduation at 10:00am
	20	Last Day for M/W/F Toddlers, M-F 2s, all 3s and all 4s
	21	Last Day for T/TH Toddlers and T/TH 2s

TUITION

Tuition is paid for 9 months. The first tuition payment is due on September 1st. Tuition will be due on the first of each month, as follows:

September 1	October 1	November 1
December 1	January 1	February 1
March 1	April 1	

May tuition is paid as a deposit when you register or in May for the upcoming school year.

You now have the option to pay your tuition online: with a bank account direct transfer and no fee, or with your credit card and a 3% convenience fee added. You will be sent a link to pay online.

Payments are due on the **first of the month** and are considered **late if received after the sixth of the month**. If tuition is late more than once, a \$10 late fee will be added.

No refunds will be given for illness, vacations or snow days. Snow days are not made up.

Checks returned for insufficient funds must be paid out in cash, along with the returned check fee charged by your financial institution. After two returned checks, all payments must be made via cash, online or money order for the remainder of the school year. If your last name is different from your child's, please add your child's full name to the memo line. You may hand your check to a teacher in carline or place it in an envelope in your child's backpack. Please make your child's teacher aware you have placed it in their backpack so it is credited to their account.

We offer a 5% discount for each additional child to families enrolling more than one child in our program. We also offer a 5% discount if tuition is paid in full for the year by September 1.

Address checks to:

Aldersgate Weekday School Ministries
1320 Umstead Road
Durham, NC 27712

CLASS	MONTHLY RATE	ANNUAL RATE *REFLECTS 5% DISCOUNT IF PAID BY SEPTEMBER 30	ANNUAL RATE *DOES NOT REFLECT EARLY PAYMENT DISCOUNT
Toddlers (T/TH)	\$235.00	\$1,966.50	\$2,070.00
Toddlers (M/W/F)	\$305.00	\$2,522.25	\$2,655.00
Toddlers (M-F)	\$370.00	\$3,035.25	\$3,195.00
2 Year Olds (T/TH)	\$235.00	\$1,966.50	\$2,070.00
2 Year Olds (M-F)	\$370.00	\$3,035.25	\$3,195.00
3 Year Olds (M/W/F)	\$305.00	\$2,522.25	\$2,655.00
3 Year Olds (M-F)	\$370.00	\$3,035.25	\$3,195.00
4 Year Olds (M/T/W/TH)	\$340.00	\$2,778.75	\$2,925.00
4 Year Olds (M-F)	\$370.00	\$3,035.25	\$3,195.00

FINANCIAL AID

Aldersgate Weekday School Ministries offers a scholarship program for families who need financial assistance for childcare. This is strictly confidential and available until all funds are allocated. Families wishing to receive financial aid are required to complete an application and submit necessary forms. Please contact our Director, Evelyn Johnson, to receive all current scholarship information. Scholarship applications are due by May 15th.

DROP OFF

Teachers use the time before class to prepare to greet the students. Therefore, please **do not bring your child into the school before 8:55 a.m.** It is important that you arrive on time because children arriving late miss instruction time and free play.

We use a carline for drop off in the mornings. Carline will begin each day at 8:55 a.m. We encourage you to use carline instead of walking in to drop off your child; the children do much better adjusting to school when they use carline. A staff person will take students from cars directly to classrooms. We ask you to make your morning good-byes brief.

PARKING LOT RULES

- Always drive SLOWLY.
- Park in marked parking spaces only.
- Bring all children in the building with you.
- Always hold your child's hand in the parking lot.
- Please do not allow children to climb on the walls or play with/throw the rocks.
- Please reserve the handicap spaces for those with handicap tags.
- **Do not leave any child in a car unattended by an adult for any reason for any amount of time!**

PICKUP

We have carline to pickup in the afternoons except for 2 days a month when you will walk in to pick up. Carline begins at 11:50 a.m. and is finished at 12:10 Each family will be given a car tag to hang from the mirror to use during pickup time. Carline will conclude. There will also be two designated days each month for you to park and walk in to pick up your child from their classroom. Pickup procedures will be discussed in further detail at Orientation.

There will be a late fee assessed if you are late on more than two occasions. Teachers have many responsibilities after school and children need to be picked up on time. A written warning will be given the second time you arrive after the carline has finished. After the third incident, a late fee will be assessed. The late fee will be \$1 per minute, due the next day via cash or check when your child returns to school. If there is an emergency and you are going to be late, please call to let us know so that we may assure your child you are on your way.

Students will not be allowed to leave with individuals other than those specified on their registration form, unless the parent gives written permission or calls the office. For the protection of our children, verbal messages by the child will not be accepted. All persons may be asked to provide photo identification at anytime during the school year.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are part of our curriculum for each class. The children will go to the pumpkin patch in the fall and on another field trip in the spring. Field trip permission slips must be submitted before any child will be allowed to attend.

We require parents to participate and supervise their own child(ren) on each outing. If parents are unable to attend, it is the parent's obligation to arrange transportation and personal supervision of their child(ren) by another adult. Teachers are NOT allowed to transport any child at any time during the school year.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

Parents make valuable contributions to our program. You are an important part of our community and we strongly encourage your participation. Please attend Orientation Day and parent's meetings; share your talents, skills, or hobbies; and volunteer to assist if necessary. Each class will also have a Parent Engagement account to view photos from your child's class and receive and send messages to the teachers. Information on how to set up your account will be given at Orientation. Our newsletters from the office and your child's teacher are valuable sources of information concerning your child's activities at preschool; be sure to read them carefully. Email is also an important way for us to send you reminders. Please be sure to update the office with any changes to your email address.

STUDENT DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRESS

Parent-Teacher conferences will be held in January for all students. Written developmental checklists will be done in November and in May for 4 Year Olds; checklists will be done ONLY in May for 2 Year Olds and 3 Year Olds. Copies will be given to parents, and conferences may be scheduled before or after school if desired.

At any time during the school year, we reserve the right to request that the parents of any student have their child evaluated if a student has a difficult time adjusting to our program or if the program has a difficult time adjusting to the needs of the student. The results of all testing will be discussed only with the parents, teacher and Director. If the parents do not desire to have their child evaluated and tested, we reserve the right to ask that the child be removed from the school.

Qualified persons or agencies must conduct any testing and evaluation. If any child who has been admitted to our school is unable to benefit from Aldersgate Weekday School Ministries, the Director may hold a conference with the parents and request that other arrangements be made for the child.



SCHOOL SAFETY



BAD WEATHER OR EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

Aldersgate Weekday School Ministries will close for inclement weather. We will email parents and post on the class Bloomz pages with any changes to our schedule.

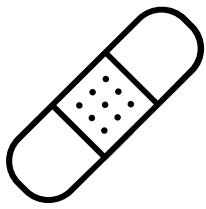
FIRE AND TORNADO DRILLS

Fire drills will be held quarterly or more. Safety procedures are explained and practiced at school. Tornado drills and severe weather drills are held quarterly.

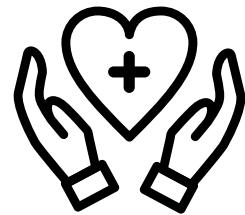
In the event of a fire, staff members remain calm and reassure the children. Children are escorted to the nearest exit and relocated to the shelter behind the Family Life Center. The teachers account for all students and report their numbers to the Director. The Director will check all classrooms and bathrooms and the gymnasium to make sure no child is left inside. In the event of a tornado or severe weather, all staff will remain calm and reassure the children. Children are taken to an inside classroom. Teachers will take books and other activities to do with the children while waiting.

LOCKUP AND LOCKDOWN

The school doors will be locked during school hours. Please ring the front doorbell to gain access to the building. The doorbell is located outside the main entrance doors on the brick wall. If certain emergency situations occur and lockdown mode is necessary, no entrance into the building will be permitted until the lockdown mode is cleared. A red piece of paper on the entrance doors will indicate that lockdown mode is in effect. Phones will not be answered during a lockdown.



HEALTH & MEDICAL



SICK CHILD POLICY

Please do not bring your child to school if they do not feel well enough to fully participate in school. We reserve the right not to admit a child who appears to be ill. Should your child become ill during school hours, we will notify you immediately. The child will be removed from class and remain in the office until the parent or designated representative arrives. If your child contracts a contagious condition, such as chicken pox, please notify the school. Return to school only after the period of contagion has passed.

For the health of all our children, we ask that you not send your child to school if they have had any of the following within 24 hours preceding their arrival at school:

- Head cold
- Sore throat
- Upset stomach
- Fever
- Unidentified skin rash (must be identified by a written, signed doctor's note)
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Pink eye
- Evidence of head lice or other parasites
- Severe coughing

Parents must keep their child home until the child is fever-free and symptom-free (without medication) for 24 hours.

The preschool office has first aid kits available to administer basic first aid. Each classroom is equipped with basic first aid supplies as well. All staff are CPR and First Aid certified. In the event of a medical emergency during school hours, efforts will be made to contact the parent(s). If a parent is not available, decisions related to securing medical assistance will be made by the Aldersgate Weekday School Ministries Director.

Our staff cannot administer medication to the children.

ALLERGIES

Please make both the office staff and your child's teacher aware of your child's allergies. **We are a NUT FREE SCHOOL. Please do not send in snacks that contain nuts, peanuts or peanut butter!**

MEDICAL RECORDS

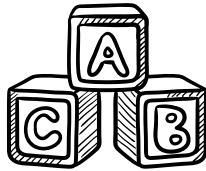
The Aldersgate preschool program is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for both children and staff. In an effort to provide such an environment, we adhere to state regulations requiring each child to have on file a Medical Statement which includes a record of up-to-date immunizations and the signature of the child's physician. The Medical Statement must be completed and in our office prior to school beginning. Each child must provide updated records annually.

IMMUNIZATIONS

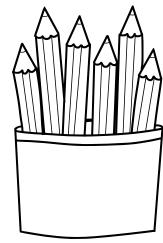
All children attending Aldersgate WDS Preschool are required to be current with their immunizations as jointly recommended by the Advisory Committee on Vaccination Practices (AICP), the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Academy of Family Physicians. The guidelines used by Aldersgate preschool can be found at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/child-schedule.html>

To ensure compliance, immunization histories will be reviewed prior to your child's admission and annually thereafter. Should your child be found to be lagging in their immunizations based on the guidelines above, you will have 30 days in which to meet the immunization requirements. Children not meeting the vaccine policy after 30 days will be withdrawn from the preschool program. Children will be excused from meeting the immunization requirements ONLY for a valid medical reason attested to by a signed note from the child's physician.



CLASSROOM INFORMATION



WHAT TO WEAR

Daily activities include active and sometimes messy play, and the children should feel comfortable enough to enjoy themselves without worrying about their clothes. Children are asked to wear comfortable play clothes and tennis shoes. For safety purposes we request that your child not wear crocs or flip flops to school. Please send an extra change of (season appropriate) clothes at the beginning of the school year to leave in your child's cubby including shorts/long pants, shirt, socks, underwear or diapers in a bag, which will be accessible to staff throughout the year. Every child should bring extra socks and shoes with the change of clothes. Make sure your child's name is on all belongings so that they will not get misplaced. We ask children not to wear articles of clothing with strings around the neck. This is a possible choking hazard.

We have Aldersgate preschool t-shirts available in blue, pink, yellow, purple, and navy or brown. Children's shirts are \$12 and Adult shirts are \$15. Order forms are available in the preschool office.

SNACKS

Due to the number of nut allergies in our school, we are a NUT FREE school. Please do not send in snacks that contain nuts, peanuts or peanut butter!



Parents are asked to provide nutritious mid-morning snacks such as goldfish, cheese, raisins, graham crackers, bananas, grapes, cheese crackers, pretzels, etc. for their child's classroom on a rotation basis. All snacks must be in their original packaging and be unopened. We will provide cups, water and paper products. Each month you will receive a calendar notifying you of the day to bring a snack and the number of children in the classroom. If the assigned day is not convenient for you, please make arrangements to trade days with another parent in the classroom. A list of appropriate nutritional snacks will be provided in your Orientation packet.

TOTE BAG or BACKPACK

All students will need either a Backpack or a tote bag (we have some Aldersgate tote bags available for \$5. This is needed to transport their water bottles, extra clothes and other supplies and papers each day.

CLASSROOM HELPERS

This is a program which provides an opportunity for each child to learn responsibility. Each class teacher will keep a record of duties such as line leader, snack helper, etc. These responsibilities will rotate throughout the class, giving everyone an opportunity to develop their leadership skills.

BIRTHDAYS

The teachers will recognize the children's birthdays. The teachers will try to give parents their child's birthday for their monthly snack day. Children are welcome to bring a special snack to celebrate.

LUNCH BUNCH

Lunch Bunch is held weekly on Mondays and Wednesdays and provides an opportunity for students to dine with friends from other classes. Students must bring their own lunch. Spaces are limited and fill quickly at the beginning of each month. Lunch Bunch will be offered for our 3 Year Olds and 4 Year Olds all year and to our five-day 2 Year Olds beginning in January.

A permission slip will be sent home to parents on a monthly basis. The Lunch Bunch fee of \$10.00 (non-refundable) must be paid in advance via cash or check when the permission slip is returned so that our staff can plan accordingly. Children must be picked up promptly at 1:00 p.m. from the playground (weather permitting) or from inside the gymnasium. If a child is left after 1:00 p.m., a late fee will be assessed of \$1 per minute. Lunch Bunch fees are non-refundable and non-transferable once paid whether your child attends or not.