

Director's Welcome Letter

Welcome to Snellville United Methodist Church Preschool & Kindergarten. We are honored that you and your family are joining us and feel privileged that you have placed your trust in us to care for your child.

As a ministry of the church, our purpose is to provide each child a variety of opportunities to foster a love of learning and a strong educational foundation while experiencing the unconditional love of Jesus. Our talented and dedicated staff will provide experiences that stimulate physical, spiritual, emotional, social, and cognitive development. Our main goal is to make learning fun so that your child looks forward to coming to school each day! Our teachers plan and implement lessons which encourage children to be active participants.

We recognize that you are your child's primary teacher, and we look forward to forming a partnership with you to help your son or daughter reach their full potential. Communication is an integral part in the parent/teacher relationship. Our teachers will communicate on a regular basis by email or newsletters that will come home in your child's backpack.

I encourage you to be an active participant in your child's school experience. There will be opportunities to volunteer in the classroom at school events. Your participation is one of the main components that make our preschool and kindergarten outstanding! Please recognize your child's accomplishments when they bring work home and remember that we celebrate the process of learning rather than the finished products. It is amazing to see the growth your child will achieve throughout the year.

This handbook contains policies, procedures, and other useful information designed to make your time at SUMC Preschool & Kindergarten enjoyable. Please feel free to contact me at any time with questions or concerns. My door is always open.

All of us at SUMC Preschool & Kindergarten are looking forward to a wonderful year getting to know you. We cannot wait to see all that God has in store for our students this year.

Blessings Always,
Kathy Noel, Director

A Warm Welcome from Our Pastor

I'm Quincy Brown, and I'm privileged to serve as the Senior Pastor at Snellville UMC. I want to let you know how excited we are to welcome your child to our Preschool and Kindergarten! We're looking forward to sharing with you during this adventurous year where your child will grow and learn by doing.

We care deeply for the students entrusted to our care. It is a sacred privilege to provide them with nurture and guidance. After all, your child is a gift from God! We look forward to being partners with you in raising them in a Godly way.

Our every effort and sure goal is to provide the absolute highest quality of academic excellence in a Christ-centered learning environment that will consistently serve to ignite the God-given potential within your child.

Our teachers look forward to traveling alongside children during their journey here at Snellville UMC Preschool. I'm confident that your child will experience learning opportunities to build character, values, and faith.

If I can be of any assistance to you in any way, please don't hesitate to contact me. Again, welcome to Snellville UMC Preschool and Kindergarten. And congratulations to you for choosing a Christ-centered environment for your child's education.

In the Presence,



Dr. Quincy D. Brown
Senior Pastor

**Snellville United Methodist Church
Preschool & Kindergarten
Parent Handbook**

Our Mission Statement

SUMC Preschool & Kindergarten exists to provide a quality curriculum founded on academic excellence in a Christ-centered learning environment. Our program recognizes that each child is a unique gift from God. Therefore, we attempt to individualize instruction according to the needs and skills of each student.

Our Strategy

Our program nurtures the whole child by facilitating physical, spiritual, and intellectual growth. Our staff serve as Christian role models to guide this growth.

Christian values are taught and modeled in our classrooms. We know that a child's attitude toward learning is established during the first years of school. When these preschool years bring pleasure and satisfaction, children are more likely to enjoy success and build self-confidence. By recognizing each child's potential, we strive to build an atmosphere of love and understanding.

Our children and their families are extremely important to us. We hope to minister to all those who place their trust in us.

Program Goals

1. To provide a nurturing, flexible, and calm atmosphere where self-concept is enhanced, independence is encouraged, and expectations are clear.
2. To provide an atmosphere where the foundation of respect for others is established, along with respect for the equipment and materials.
 - A. To foster security with adults who are not members of the family.
 - B. To encourage neatness in putting items away when the children have finished using them.
3. To develop an active curiosity about the world in which each child lives and to encourage an enthusiasm for learning, which stimulates exploratory behavior and creativity.
4. To develop spiritual growth.
 - A. To observe Christian atmosphere, attitudes, and behavior through adult examples.
 - B. To experience a sense of trust by learning that the church is a safe, loving place and to develop a sense of belonging.
 - C. To participate in prayer, recognize the Bible as a special book, hear and enjoy Bible stories, and to sing and talk about God.
5. To promote emotional growth.
 - A. To build self-confidence and a sense of self-worth by allowing choices within limits and to build on successful experiences.
 - B. To provide a warm accepting environment in which each child can work and play.
 - C. To encourage curiosity and a sense of wonder with an emphasis on self-motivation.
 - D. To help develop self-discipline in each child.
6. To stimulate social growth.
 - A. To promote and instill a sense of caring and sensitivity toward others.
 - B. To develop recognition of group needs versus individual differences.
 - C. To aid in the development of problem-solving skills.
 - D. To help each child learn how to participate in a group.
7. To promote intellectual growth.
 - A. To provide an atmosphere where children discover and explore, teaching independence through learning how and where to find solutions.
 - B. To provide a wide variety of activities within a routine where cooperative play is encouraged. Curriculum areas of art, science, math, cooking, movement, dramatic play, and language provide each child with opportunities to trust their own feelings about what is learned, heard, seen and done, and begin sharing these experiences with others.
8. To promote physical/motor development in which each child uses their body in a variety of active ways by participating in fine and gross motor activities at each child's developmental level.
9. To be supportive of parents and families, encourage involvement, and provide open and honest communication while using tact and discretion.

Certification & Licensing

SUMC Preschool & Kindergarten ("the School") has been certified as a Program of Excellence for Young Children by the United Methodist Church Preschool Association of the North Georgia Conference since 1996. The certification process involves the entire school in self-evaluation, reflection, and improvement. We are exempt from licensing by the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning.

A Glimpse Inside What Your Child Is Learning

At our school, we know that the preschool child is ready to acquire many skills. We believe that children learn best when there is a planned curriculum of activities focused on a particular theme or concept. Through the thematic approach, children are stimulated, guided, and encouraged through carefully planned activities that allow them to develop at their own rate. Within these themes, academic areas of math, literacy, fine motor, large motor, science, social studies, music, religion, and art are incorporated. Age-specific skills are introduced and reinforced throughout the year. As the children are developmentally ready, they will pick up these skills. The atmosphere is always positive, happy, and accepting. The teacher's foremost goal is showing warmth and encouragement to the child. We feel the child's first learning experience must be fun and successful. A good self-image and "I can do it" perspective is a vital attitude to instill in a preschool child.

Below you will find a general overview of the topics your child will have the opportunity to experience this year. Your child's teacher will provide more specific details or additional topics in monthly newsletters.

Toddlers Thematic Units

September:	I Am Learning About Me, Jesus Loves Me, My Teachers Love Me
October:	I Am Growing & Learning About New Things, Jesus Is Our Friend
November:	I Can See & Hear Because God Made Us With Eyes & Ears
December:	Christmas Is A Happy Time When We Celebrate Jesus' Birth
January:	Winter's All Around Me With Cold and Snow
February:	God Gives Us Day and Night With The Sun, Moon, and Stars
March:	God Gives Us Animals, Fish, and Birds & We Can Help Care For Them
April:	God Gives Us Plants and Flowers & Eyes To See The Beauty
May:	God Gives Us Springtime With Birds Singing & Rain With Rainbows

Two-Year-Old Thematic Units

September:	All About Me, My New School, Being A Helper, Playing With Friends
October:	Fall, Apples, Pumpkins, Leaves, My Five Senses
November:	Healthy Foods, My Family Gives Thanks
December:	Christmas, Christmas Trees, Jesus Is Born, Stars
January:	Colors and Shapes, Winter, Snow and Ice, My Community Helpers
February:	Pets, Farm, Zoo
March:	Day and Night, Spring
April:	Easter, Plants, Planting Seeds, Bugs
May:	Transportation, Oceans, Beach, Fish

Three-Year-Old Thematic Units

September:	All About Me, My New Friends, My Family, I Am Unique
October:	Fall, Apples, Pumpkins, Changes In the Seasons
November:	Giving Thanks, Fall
December:	Christmas, Christmas Around the World
January:	Winter, Ice and Snow
February:	Friendship and Love, Groundhog Day, Dental Health
March:	Dr. Seuss, Community Helpers
April:	Spring, Farm Animals
May:	End of the Year Wrap-Up, Summer

Four-Year-Old Thematic Units

September:	Friends At School, Our Families, Apples
October:	Fabulous Fall: Pumpkins, Nocturnal Animals, Fire Prevention, Halloween
November:	Pilgrims, Native American Indians, Thanksgiving
December:	Christmas Around The World, The Birth of Jesus
January:	Winter Wonderland: Weather, Hibernation, Nutrition, Our Amazing Bodies
February:	Groundhog Day, Dental Health, Valentine's Day, President's Day
March:	Dr. Seuss, St. Patrick's Day, Space, Spectacular Spring
April:	Easter, Earth Day, Recycling, All About Bugs, Life Cycle of A Butterfly
May:	Zoo, Wild Animals, Creatures of the Sea

Kindergarten Thematic Units

September:	Five Senses, Apples
October:	Autumn, Our World/Geography
November:	The First Thanksgiving, Motion/Gravity

December:	Holiday Celebrations Around The World, Leo Lionni Author Study
January:	Arctic, Jan Brett Author Study
February:	Dental Health, Weather
March:	Dr. Seuss Author Study, Publishing A Book
April:	Spring/Easter, National and International Park Project
May:	Georgia, American Symbols

Curriculum

Our curriculum allows every child to explore and learn through teacher-directed, self-directed, and hands-on activities. This is accomplished through small and large group activities, learning centers, outdoor play, and numerous enrichment opportunities.

The curriculum was developed using a variety of Early Childhood resources and includes, but is not limited to, publications from Wee Learn, Saxon, and Abeka. Our Bible curriculum allows us to teach the Bible concepts as they relate to young children. Big books, classics, poems, rhymes, stories, finger plays, dramatic play, story dictation, and Letter of the Week are used to introduce skills and concepts that lay the foundation for your child's future success in the area of reading and language arts. In addition to learning about each student, the traditions in their families, and their special place in God's world, the local community is also a focus of our Social Studies units. Our designated handwriting style is D'Nealian. Manipulatives are the basis of our math curriculum. Unifix Cubes, Pattern Blocks, Geo Board and common objects are used to teach math concepts like creating, identifying, copying, and extending patterns. Numeral recognition and counting are taught through "work jobs." This concrete beginning provides a firm foundation for more abstract concepts later.

Our Kindergarten program uses a variety of curricula. The Abeka curriculum is used for Science, Social Studies, and Math. The Saxon curriculum is used for Language Arts. My Smart Journal is a curriculum designed to foster strong written skills. It encourages creative writing and gives the child the opportunity to practice their writing skills on a regular basis. In addition, we use a variety of supplemental materials to prepare students to enter Gwinnett County Public Schools or other public system, or be ready for first grade at any private school. The Kindergarten student will be tested for academic readiness prior to enrollment.

Centers

All classrooms are center based; centers change frequently throughout the school year. The following centers are included in all age levels: books, blocks, manipulatives, dramatic play, art, and science. Other centers may include computer, sand & water play, listening, language arts and math.

Specials

Assembly Chapel

Assembly Chapel is a wonderful enhancement to our program. On a bi-weekly basis, the children gather as a whole, worshipping together in the church sanctuary. There they sing fun songs and are introduced to a member of the pastoral staff who leads them in worship. The children love this time! It allows them to connect with SUMC's ministers and worship with all of their friends in a beautiful, more formal setting. Parents will be invited periodically to join us throughout the year.

Music & Movement

Our Music & Movement class engages the child's body, mind, and spirit through the use of music and props such as scarves and parachutes. Music & Movement offers a positive outlet for energy, helps children learn about their bodies in space and in relation to others, strengthens listening skills, increases self-esteem, deepens sensory awareness, and helps children practice self-control. Additionally, children learn a variety of songs which prepares them for our annual performances. All age groups participate in Music & Movement each week.

Spanish

Numerous studies have shown that children who learn a second language demonstrate greater cognitive development, creativity, and divergent thinking than monolingual children. Our little ones are learning Spanish in a very fun, nurturing, and musical environment. Through structured and spontaneous activities, they are developing fine and gross motor skills, learning math concepts, social awareness, language, and literacy in Spanish. Story time as well as music and movement are part of our weekly activities. Children enrolled in Three-Year-Old through Kindergarten classes attend Spanish each week.

Library

Two-Year-Old - Kindergarten classes visit our library. Our library houses a vast collection of children's favorites. Selections include Caldecott and Newberry Award winners.

Mystery Readers often surprise our students with a story and our Four-Year-Old and Kindergarten classes "check out" books on a weekly basis.

Computer Lab

Technology plays a significant role in all aspects of life today and this role will only increase in the future. The potential benefits of technology for young children's learning and development are well documented. At our school, we utilize age-appropriate computer activities as one of many options to support learning. We currently use the award-winning ABC Mouse which is a full online curriculum covering academic areas such as reading, math, science, art, colors, and music.

In-House Cultural Arts Programs & Field Trips

Our children enjoy special performances by local artists who come to our school every other month. Some examples of our programs include: Lee Bryan-That Puppet Guy, David Ginn's Magic Show, Geof Johnson's Music for Kids, and Dr. Simmons Dentistry.

Age-Appropriate Mission Projects

Children are encouraged to show God's love to others by being "His hands and feet." Our classes are involved in several service projects that focus on family, school, and the community. Partnerships with organizations such as the **Southeast Gwinnett Co-op**, **Operation Christmas Child** and **Relay for Life** allow us wonderful opportunities to grow in Christian service.

School Staff

Our teaching staff is a group of highly trained and dedicated women who maintain professional standards by attending workshops, seminars, and conferences throughout the school year. Staff members are trained in First Aid, CPR, Fire Safety, and Child Abuse Prevention. Teachers also complete at least 10 hours of Bright From the Start certified training each school year. Each teacher was selected because of the special qualities, talents, and skills that they bring to the classroom.

Enrollment

Enrollment is open to any child aged 12 months – 5 years. Students must have attained class age on or before **September 1** of the current school year.

Non-Discriminatory Policy

The School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies and admissions policies.

Immunization Requirements

All students, Preschool-12th Grade, who register in Georgia schools, **are required by law** to have an official immunization certificate on file at all times. Parents are responsible for knowing when their child's next shots are due, having them administered, and providing the School with an updated certificate. These forms must be submitted on or before the first day of school. Acceptable immunization forms for admission into the School are:

*State of Georgia Immunization Certificate Form #3231

*Affidavit of Religious Conviction- This form is for those parents who object to immunizations due to religious beliefs.

Additionally, students in our Kindergarten class are required to have Hearing, Vision, and Dental Form #3300.

Hours of Operation

School Office hours are 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

School instruction hours are from 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

School Calendar

SUMC Preschool & Kindergarten closely follows the Gwinnett County Public Schools calendar with a few exceptions. Early Release days will dismiss at 11:40am. Planned GCPS digital days are full school days for us; those called for inclement weather or similar conditions follow the inclement weather policy below. We dismiss at 12pm on the last day of school before Christmas Break. We are closed Good Friday. We conclude our school year a few days prior to Gwinnett County.

Inclement Weather

In most cases, we follow Gwinnett County Public schools weather plan. Gwinnett's school superintendent works with officials from the Georgia Emergency Management Agency and State Department of Transportation when inclement weather is an issue, assessing road conditions and from there decides on the advisability of conducting school. However, please note, SUMC Preschool & Kindergarten reserves the right to deviate from the county plan.

Holidays, inclement weather days, pandemics or epidemic disease, or any circumstance beyond our control that may result in school closings does not reduce the amount of tuition unless otherwise stated. Cost is figured on the total number of days in the school year and averaged out so that the tuition rate will be the same every month regardless of the number of days scheduled. If a family is

experiencing a financial hardship, they can appeal to the Preschool Board for an exception to the withdrawal policy. The Preschool Board reviews exceptions on a case-by-case basis as needed. Preschool Board decisions are final and cannot be overruled.

If Gwinnett County Schools are closed or delayed due to inclement weather, we are, too. If GCPS announces an unplanned digital day in response to inclement weather or similar conditions, the Preschool is closed.

The decision to cancel in-person school is normally made between 6:00 - 6:30 a.m., and all major radio and television stations in metro Atlanta are notified. WSB radio and your local TV station will keep you updated on any closings. If possible, we will also have a message on the school's voice mail to confirm school closing.

Should severe weather move into the area during the day and we feel the need to cancel classes, we will contact you by phone using the contact numbers provided at enrollment.

Please note inclement weather days will **NOT** be made up unless they exceed 5 days. Inclement weather days that exceed the allotted maximum of 5 will be made up. (*Example: Inclement weather days totaled 6 for the school year. One day would be made up.*)

We usually follow Gwinnett County Public Schools with regard to school closings for extended periods due to county-wide or broader safety issues, such as pandemics. Should school be closed for one full week or more, Digital Learning content will be posted to the Preschool Digital Learning website; links will be emailed to parents/guardians by teachers for the missed days for the full weeks only. Digital services provided include recorded videos, Zoom interactions, and digital material. Pandemic or Epidemic closures will not be made up even if they exceed 5 days. No reduction in tuition is provided when digital learning opportunities are provided in exchange for in-classroom instruction of individual classes that are placed on self-quarantine.

Tuition & Fees

The school is a self-supporting ministry of the church and operates solely on student tuition and fundraising events. Teachers' salaries are paid and supplies are purchased based on enrollment. It is critical that tuition is paid completely and promptly. Tuition is paid on a monthly basis and is due on or before the 1st. Tuition is paid one month in advance with the exception of August tuition, which is due by May 1st of the prior school year for re-enrolling families. For families that enroll during the summer months, August tuition is due at the time of enrollment. Families pay tuition May through April, but not June-July, for services provided August through May.

Payments received after the 1st will incur a late fee of \$30.00. Payments can be made at the School Office or sent in your child's folder. Nonpayment of tuition for two consecutive months, or the equivalent balance due, will result in the relinquishment of the child's place at SUMC Preschool & Kindergarten.

Credit card, cash, check or money orders are accepted, as well as use of our Tuition Express program, which allows automatic bank drafts from your checking or savings account, or payment via credit card. Credit cards will incur a 3% fee of the originally charged amount.

There is no refund of tuition due to absence. In the case of an extended absence, tuition must be paid in full in order to hold the child's place in the class.

Registration Fee

A nonrefundable enrollment fee is due to secure each child's space in a class. This annual fee also helps provide each child with a multitude of resources to enhance the learning environment such as art and craft supplies, Scholastic student subscriptions to Clifford and Let's Find Out Magazines, In-House field trips, special parents events, etc. It will also provide a yearbook at the end of the school year for each child.

Parent Teacher Association Fee

Family accounts will be billed an annual \$10 fee for the Parent Teacher Association. This fee will be placed onto accounts around September 1 and will be due by October 1. The fee helps provide additional resources for the teachers and staff of SUMC Preschool & Kindergarten.

Multi-Child Discount

Any family enrolling a second child will receive a \$25.00 discount off total monthly tuition amount.

Late Pick-Up Fee

Due to Department of Human Resource regulations, it is necessary to ensure the prompt dismissal of all children. Any time after 1:40 p.m. is subject to a late fee of \$1.00 per minute and will be added to your account balance.

Gwinnett County Department of Family and Children Services will be notified of any child left in the program 30 minutes after closing without prior notification from a parent/guardian or someone on their child's emergency contact list.

Withdrawal

Teachers are hired and supplies are purchased based on enrollment. Withdrawal at any point prior to the end of the school year places a severe hardship on the finances of the school. If for any reason you plan to withdraw your child, a one-month notice must be given to the Director in writing. If this notice is not received, parents will be assessed a fee equivalent to one month's tuition.

Arrival & Dismissal Guidelines

Children should arrive at school between 9:25am and 9:40am. Children should be picked up from carpool between 1:25pm and 1:40pm

Late arrivals: Parents must sign student in at the designated area. Your child will be taken to their classroom by an office staff member.

Our campus is secured for the safety of the children, and we require that all parents adhere to the Arrival & Dismissal procedures outlined below. In order to provide for the safety of each child, help traffic run smoothly and avoid unnecessary delays, please adhere to the following guidelines.

Safety Items to Keep In Mind

Please drive slowly through the parking lots. SUMC is a large and active church with many ongoing activities/ministries that overlap with the School hours. Please watch for parents escorting their children into the building, cars backing out, and pedestrian traffic from church members and visitors who may be on campus.

If you have parked to walk your child into the school, please make sure to hold your child's hand.

If you need to come into the building near arrival or dismissal time, please park in spaces away from the carpool lane and avoid spaces designated as Handicapped and Senior Parking unless you have a valid permit or are above the age of 60. Families within the School and SUMC members need these spaces to be available at all times. Also, DO NOT park in the area designated as Stroller Zone outside of Building D. This parking space area is needed for families to access the sidewalk leading into the building.

School staff are not allowed to fasten children into car seats or seatbelts. Please move forward out of the flow of traffic to secure your child.

Please make every effort to have your child at school prior to the beginning of class. Tardiness affects the learning process for both the student who is tardy and the classmates who are interrupted.

Arrival for all Children

To safeguard our community, students, and staff, carpool will be the only drop-off and preferred pickup option available to families of Two through Kindergarten students. Toddler students will need to be walked by parents to the designated door at the end of Building D. The following guidelines have been established and will be followed every morning:

- Temperature checks will be performed. Anyone who has a temperature of 100.4 or higher will not be permitted on campus.
- Teachers will help the child out of the car and to their classroom.

Arrival & Dismissal for children enrolled in our Toddler Class

Parents of Toddlers are required to walk their children to the designated walk-in door. Please use the single door at the lower end of the Cokesbury Building, Building D. There you will be greeted by your child's teacher who will take your child's temperature and ask you to sign your child in for the day.

Upon arrival for afternoon pick up, please show your carpool tag to your child's teacher who will be at the designated door. If you do not have your carpool tag, you will be asked to show your identification. Your child can only be dismissed to individuals listed on their Child Information & Permission to Pick-Up Form.

We have found over the years, transition from home to school is easier for your child if you make your goodbyes positive, upbeat, and brief. If your child should happen to be upset, we encourage you to ask one of the school office staff to check on your child and telephone you with a report on how he/she is doing after your departure. We are happy to do this for you, as we are all parents and understand how unsettling it can be to leave your child unhappy for any reason.

The single door at the lower end of the Cokesbury Building, Building D will be locked and unmanned at 9:40am due to office and classroom responsibilities. If you arrive after 9:40am, please park and walk to the main Preschool & Kindergarten entrance under the brown canopy. Once at the door, ring the bell located on the panel to the right of the double doors. We will greet you at the door where we will ask you a series of health questions, take your child's temperature, require you to sign in your child, and a staff member will take your student to class. Parents will not be allowed into the building to minimize the spread of potential illness.

Arrival for students enrolled in our Two, Three, Four-Year-Old and Kindergarten Classes

Carpool begins the first day of school. Our carpool line forms parallel to the sidewalk outside the Preschool & Kindergarten Main Entrance, Cokesbury Building, Building D, under the brown canopy. Morning carpool begins at 9:25am and lasts until 9:40am. A school staff member will open your car door, help your child out of the car, and walk him/her into the building where another teacher will assist them to their classroom.

All exterior doors will be locked and unmanned after 9:40am due to office and classroom responsibilities. If you arrive after this time, it is your responsibility to park and ring the doorbell located on the right side of the double doors under the brown canopy. Once admitted, please bring your child to the office downstairs and sign them in. A staff member will assist your student to class. Under no circumstance should a child be dropped off and allowed to walk unsupervised into the building or to the classroom. Further parental admittance to the school will be based upon CDC guidelines.

Afternoon Dismissal Carpool for Twos and Threes Classes

Parents with children in our Twos and Threes must use carpool. Dismissal begins at 1:25pm and security procedures are in place for the safety of the children. Students are dismissed from their classrooms and will be picked up from the school main entrance, Cokesbury Building (Bldg D), under the brown canopy.

Each child or family will be assigned a carpool tag to be displayed from your rearview mirror each day. A staff member will be stationed outside at the dismissal location to radio names back to the teachers, so a member of your child's teaching team can bring your child to the loading area for dismissal and assist them into your car.

Please be mindful that arrival and dismissal times are not meant for conversations between parents and teachers. In order for our carpool lines to run smoothly, please be mindful of other cars behind you. If there is anything that needs to be discussed with your child's teacher, please send a note to the child's teacher, walk in to pick up your child at the classroom, or request a conference.

Afternoon Dismissal Carpool for Fours and Kindergarten Classes

Parents with children in our Fours and Kindergarten must use carpool. Dismissal begins at 1:25pm and security procedures are in place for the safety of the children. Students are dismissed from their classrooms and will be picked up from the CHURCH main entrance, Build B, under the large cement awning. PLEASE DO NOT PARK UNDER THE AWNING UNTIL DISMISSAL HAS BEGUN. This space is handicapped access for the church and is also the main entrance used by church members and should be kept clear except during active dismissal. Thank you for your cooperation.

Each child or family will be assigned a carpool tag to be displayed from your rearview mirror each day. A staff member will be stationed outside at the dismissal location to radio names back to the teachers, so a member of your child's teaching team can bring your child to the loading area for dismissal and assist them into your car.

Please be mindful that arrival and dismissal times are not meant for conversations between parents and teachers. In order for our carpool lines to run smoothly, please be mindful of other cars behind you. If there is anything that needs to be discussed with your child's teacher, please send a note to the child's teacher, walk in to pick up your child at the classroom, or request a conference.

Written Permission must be given to the office staff or to the classroom teacher if anyone other than a parent comes to pick up in the afternoon. This includes relatives and friends that you have given us permission to release your child to on the Child Information & Permission to Pick-Up Form. These individuals must present their Driver's License for verification. If at all possible, please give whoever is picking up your child his or her carpool tag. Carpool tags are provided so each parent will have one in their vehicle at all times.

Please note: we will not release your child to anyone who is not listed on the Child Information & Permission to Pick-Up Form. In cases of divorce, where legal custody is an issue, **official documentation** must be on file in the child's permanent records.

There will be times, especially at the beginning of school while children are adjusting to a new routine, that we will be running a few minutes late. We apologize for any inconvenience but ask that you wait patiently outside instead of ringing the bell. We ask this to keep all the children on task and to keep from upsetting our younger children who are making the huge transition from home to school and school to home.

Multi-Family Carpools

Parents often find carpooling convenient. The school assumes no responsibility for arranging carpools. If you are in a multi-family carpool, please see that the office has the following information listed on your Child Information & Permission to Pick-Up Form.

1. Names of all children in the carpool.
2. Names of parents/guardians driving each day. The driver is expected to act as parent substitute for all children in the carpool and should follow all procedures for parents outlined in this handbook.

Please note that school staff are not permitted to transport children to or from school.

Policy for Individuals Not Authorized To Pick Up a Student

In the event an unauthorized adult arrives to pick up a child from the school, the parents will be contacted. If the parent does not provide verbal permission for the release of the child, then the unauthorized adult will be asked to leave the building. If the unauthorized adult exhibits a negative behavior, the police will be notified.

Stormy Weather Arrival or Dismissal

On the rare occasion that there is stormy weather in the area (thunder & lightning) a red flag will be displayed at our entrances. The red flag will indicate that carpool has been suspended due to weather conditions for the safety of the children and staff. Parents are asked to drive around to the church office (Building B). Please park and walk to the main church office entrance where you will be met by preschool staff. If the red flag is out for morning arrival, preschool staff will follow the set morning routine (ask health questions, take temperature checks, and walk children into the building). If the red flag is out during dismissal time, parents must show their carpool tag or picture identification to the preschool staff member manning the office door. The staff member will call your child's teacher who will walk your child to the door. Parents will not be allowed into the building and must remain outside under the cover sidewalk.

Visitation

We have an Open Door Policy at the Preschool and look forward to you being on campus. We encourage you to help in the classroom, substitute, or volunteer for any or all of the fun opportunities throughout the year. You are also invited to attend any Bible Study, parenting, educational, or fitness classes offered by SUMC.

Security

All visitors must report directly to the school office to sign the Visitor's Logbook and receive a Visitor's sticker.

Any student leaving prior to regular dismissal time must be signed out at the school office.

Other Health-related Mass Events may require additional policies or modification to these policies. Such updates will be announced, emailed, and sent home in backpacks.

Dress Code

Please dress your child in comfortable clothing and shoes that are suitable for painting (all paint is washable, however, it may stain), active play outdoors, snack and lunch. Closed toe shoes are recommended for preschoolers. They offer more support for running, jumping, and keep feet free from mulch.

Winter Recess

Even in the cold winter months, we believe outdoor recess is an important and valuable part of the student's day. With that in mind, we ask that you consider the temperature and weather conditions when assisting your child with clothing for the day. There may be times when the weather is deemed too cold for outdoor recess. We make that determination on a daily basis, but please remember that on most days we will have outdoor recess even if it is for an abbreviated time. Winter coats, hats, gloves and long pants are most appropriate on these cold days.

Backpacks

Your child will need a **large** backpack. Please place a COMPLETE change of clothing in a large ziploc bag labeled with your child's name and leave it in your child's bag. Accidents and spills happen occasionally and children feel more comfortable in their own clothing instead of borrowing from others. This clothing will remain in your child's bag unless needed. As the temperature changes during the year, please adjust the clothing as appropriate. If your child has an accident or becomes sick on their clothing, the soiled clothes will be sealed in a plastic bag and sent home.

Announcements and work completed in class will come home by way of your child's backpack, so please check it daily.

If your child wears diapers, please remember to include 3-4 diapers per day in his/her backpack.

Potty Training

Potty training is such a big milestone for children. When you are ready as a parent to begin the potty training process with your child, we are here to help. Our teachers in the two- and three-year-old classes are wonderful in assisting in this way. We ask that parents send disposable training pants such as Pull-ups during this transitional period. Please send the child in Pull-ups until they are completely potty trained and can also communicate to the teacher the need to visit the restroom. Children enrolled in four-year-old and kindergarten classes must be potty trained to attend Snellville United Methodist Church Preschool & Kindergarten. All children potty trained must wear underwear to school.

Classroom Hygiene

Hand washing is the single most important way to prevent the spread of infection. Children are encouraged to wash their hands frequently for general hygiene. Proper hand washing techniques are taught by the teachers and posters are hung in the bathroom. Countertops, table surfaces, and chairs are disinfected daily. Toys are sanitized on a regular basis. Classroom floors and restrooms are mopped nightly. Classrooms are sprayed and sanitized nightly as recommended. High touch areas are cleaned regularly throughout the day.

Snack & Lunch

Parents are asked to send in an individual snack for their child each day. Your child's teacher will provide further information regarding snack time in their class.

Lunch

Please send a well-balanced lunch and drink daily. Be sure to label your child's lunch box, thermos, and utensils. Opened but uneaten food will be discarded at the end of the lunch period. Teachers are not able to heat up food.

On Tuesday and Thursday, the school offers a fundraiser lunch from Chick-fil-a and Papa Johns. Parents will be sent home a Lunch Order Form monthly; participation is \$5 per day selected. Parents must complete the order form by the due date and return it to school with their payment. No late lunch orders can be accepted due to advance placement orders with the vendors. If your child is absent on provided lunch day, refunds cannot be issued.

Water Bottles

Every student is required to bring their own water bottle, labeled with their name, to school daily. Water fountains will be available for refilling these bottles as health guidance and church policy permits, but is subject to change at any time.

Special Events

Birthdays

Parents may wish to send in a special snack or treats for the class to celebrate their child's birthday. All such snacks must be purchased, not homemade. Individually wrapped snacks are preferred.

If you are planning a party outside of school and plan to invite all of the children from your classroom, we are happy to pass out invitations for you. If only a few children are being included, please mail their invitations to their homes.

As a special way to honor your child, many families choose to "gift" the preschool with a book at the time of their child's birthday. A label is put in the front cover of the book, indicating that it was contributed to our school in honor of your child's birthday. The books are then used in your child's classroom and eventually are placed in the school library for everyone to use. This is strictly optional. If you would like to do this, your child's teacher would be happy to make suggestions regarding children's favorite titles or authors.

Holidays

All children experience and celebrate holidays in different ways. As part of our Social Studies curriculum, we will study and celebrate a variety of holidays with the children. All parents are welcome to come in and share the ways their family celebrates different holidays. Exposing children to different holidays and customs promotes understanding and acceptance of a global view of the world we live in.

Field Trips

Our Fours, and Kindergarten classes may take an occasional field trip that corresponds with the thematic unit being introduced in the classroom. There is usually a minimal charge for these. We rely on parents to provide transportation for their own children on these days. They can also personally arrange for their child to carpool with another child in the class. Permission slips will be sent home 1-2 weeks prior to the trip with all pertinent information.

Please be aware that the safety of your child is of the utmost importance to us. Georgia law requires children under age 8 to ride in an approved car seat or booster seat that is appropriate for their height and weight. Children under age 8 are also required to be in the back seat.

No child will be allowed to attend a field trip without written parental consent and an appropriate car seat.

Before departing the school, teachers are required to have permission slips; emergency information for each child; a first aid kit; cell phone numbers; and a copy of the driver's license and insurance card for each person transporting a student. Teachers are not permitted to transport students.

Health & Attendance

In an attempt to prevent the transmission of infections, group childcare settings institute universal hygienic precautions and have exclusion policies that follow criteria established by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and specific regulations set forth by Georgia's Department of Public Health. Therefore, please notify the Office Staff immediately if your child acquires a contagious illness or communicable disease.

School's Definition of Illness

A child who has any of the conditions listed below, or a child who shows extreme discomfort from ears, stomach problems, etc., is considered ill and will be temporarily removed from their class.

1. If the child does not feel well enough to participate in routine activities.
2. If a child has a fever of 100 degrees orally or 99 degrees axillary, behavior change or other sign of illness such as a sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, symptoms associated with COVID-19, etc.
3. Children with signs of severe diarrhea. If the child has one loose bowel movement, the parents will be asked to pick up their child.
4. Children with mouth sores or undiagnosed rashes will not be allowed in school until seen by a physician and it is determined that it is not a communicable disease. A physician's note is required for return.
5. If the child has been diagnosed with an infection such as strep throat, bronchitis, pneumonia, RSV, etc., they may not return until they are fever free (without Tylenol or other medication) for 48 hours, feel well enough to return and are on antibiotic, if prescribed, for 48 hours.

At the discretion of the Director, a child may be excluded if there is concern that they are exhibiting symptoms of a possible illness that is communicable to students.

For the protection of children and staff, we strictly adhere to this policy. We ask that you use your best judgment when determining whether your child is truly well enough to be in the school setting. If you notice they are feeling "under the weather," irritable, or tired, they are not going to enjoy school and it may be best to keep them home for the day.

Please note that if your child is sent home from school with any symptoms listed in items 2-5 above, they will not be allowed back into school until they have been symptom free for 48 hours.

Children Who Become Sick At School

Parents will be contacted and asked to pick up their child within 30 minutes if they become sick at school. If a parent cannot be reached, the next available person on your Child Information & Permission to Pick-Up Form will be contacted. Children who become ill at school are isolated and kept as comfortable as possible until picked up.

Re-Admittance To School

As stated above, children who are sent home with an illness such as fever, diarrhea, or vomiting, must be free of symptoms (without the use of medication) for 48 hours before returning to school.

Example: If your child is sent home at 11:00am, he/she is allowed to come back to school at 11:00 am two days later if he/she has been symptom free the entire 48 hours.

In the case of strep throat, rashes of unknown origin and other conditions listed below (that are contagious to others), a physician's statement must accompany your child stating when he/she can return to school.

Common Infectious Illnesses
Communicable Disease Recommendations
Adopted from Georgia DHR and Children’s Health Care of Atlanta
The following exclusionary policies apply:

Disease, Illness Organism	How it is spread?	When is it most Contagious?	Return to School?
Chicken Pox (Varicella)	Airborne or direct contact with droplets from nose, mouth, and skin lesions of infected individuals.	From 2 days before rash, until all lesions are dry and crusted.	When all lesions have crusted, usually 7-8 days.
Cold Sore (Herpes Simplex)	Direct contact with infected oral lesions or secretions.	While lesions are present.	After lesions are scabbed over.
Common Cold	Contact with droplets from nose, eyes, or mouth; virus can live in environment 24 hours.	Variable- from day before symptoms until symptoms resolve.	No exclusion unless fever or accompanied by cough. If so, must be fever and cough free for 48 hours.
Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye) May be viral, Bacterial, or allergic	Contact with secretions from eyes, or contaminated surfaces.	Variable – allergic conjunctivitis is not contagious.	When cleared by physician, after 48 hours treatment, if bacterial.
Croup (Viral respiratory infection, causes “barky” cough)	Contact with droplets from nose, eyes, or mouth.	Variable – usually from day before symptoms and for 3 days of illness.	When breathing comfortably, cough improved, and no fever for 48 hours.
Ear Infection (Otitus Media) Sinusitis	Not Contagious	Not Contagious	No exclusion unless child too sick to attend.
Fever (100.0 orally or 99.0 Axillary)	Unknown until illness identified, safe to assume it may be spread by contact with any secretions.	Unknown, assume child is contagious while fever is present.	After 48 hours without fever, without the use of fever reducing medication, and child behaving normally.
Fifth Disease (Parvovirus)	Contact with droplets from nose, eyes, or mouth.	During the week before the rash develops.	No need to restrict once rash has appeared.
Gastroenteritis, viral (Adenovirus, rotavirus, Norwalk virus)	Contact with stool, saliva, or vomit from infected individual; directly or from contaminated surfaces.	From 2 days before illness, until vomiting and diarrhea improve.	When no fever or vomiting for 48 hours, and stool returns to normal.
Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (Coxsackie Virus)	Contact with stool, oral or respiratory secretions.	May be contagious for several weeks after infection.	When no fever for 48 hours, and child is

			behaving normally.
Head Lice (Pediculosis)	Close contact with infested individuals and sharing combs, brushed, hats, or bedding.	When there are live insects on the head.	After treatment, if crawling lice are gone, remove nits.
Influenza	Contact with droplets from nose, eyes, or mouth of infected person.	Variable – from the day before, until the first 5 days of illness.	After 48 hours without fever and symptoms are improving.
Ringworm (Tinea Capitis, Corporis, Pedis) Fungal infection	Direct skin or surface contact.	From onset of lesions until treatment begins.	After treatment begins.
Strep Throat/Scarlet Fever	Contact with droplets from nose and mouth.	From onset of symptoms until 48 hours after treatment begins.	After at least 48 hours of antibiotic treatment and no fever for 48 hours (without the use of fever reducing medication).

Medication for Illnesses

Staff members are NOT allowed to give medication to the children. However, if your child is taking medication, prescription or over the counter, parents are asked to notify the teacher as a child’s behavior can be affected by medication.

Allergies

Allergy information is to be recorded by the physician completing the Emergency Treatment Form. This form should be turned in to your child’s teacher by Open House. It is the responsibility of the parent to also inform the child’s teacher of the type of allergy and any special instructions. This information will be listed on a chart in the child’s classroom. If food substitutions are required for snack, cooking experiences, etc., parents are asked to supply proper foods.

Medication for Life Threatening Allergies

If a child has life threatening, allergic reactions and requires an Epi-Pen, a physician’s statement must be on file, and renewed annually.

The School Office Staff is only allowed to administer medication that meets the following conditions:

- Medication has not expired.
- Medication is prescribed for the child only.
- Medication is in the original container from the pharmacy and is properly labeled with the child’s full name, name of medication, the date prescription was filled, the prescription number, the name of the provider who wrote the prescription, the expiration date, and administration. If medication comes in a box with a prescription label, the box must be presented with the medication.

The parent/guardian of the child must assume full responsibility for informing our Staff of any change in the child’s health or change of medication.

Planning For The Individual Student: Entry Into School

Prior to entry into school (or, for a student who is already in school, immediately after the diagnosis of a life-threatening allergic condition), the parent/guardian should meet with the School Director to develop an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP).

The Parent/Guardian Shall Provide the Following:

- Licensed provider documentation of food allergy
- Licensed provider order for epinephrine by auto-injector as well as other medications needed. Medication orders must be renewed at least annually and it is recommended that the order be from an asthma and allergy specialist.

- Parent/guardian's signed consent to administer all medications
- Parent/guardian's signed consent to share information with other school staff
- An up-to-date Epi-Pen (More may be necessary based on the student's activities and travel during the school day.)
- The type of allergies (e.g., to milk, tree nuts, etc.)
- Description of the student's past allergic reactions, including triggers and warning signs
- A description of the student's emotional response to the condition and need for support
- Name/telephone number of the student's primary care provider and allergist
- Method to reach parent/parent designee should an emergency occur, e.g., telephone, cell-phone.
- Age-appropriate ways to include a student in planning for care and implementing the plan; assessment for self-administration.
- Parent/guardian's interest in participating in the training/orientation in the student's classroom

The Director Will:

- Initiate an IHCP based on the information provided by the parent, as well as the doctors' assessment. The plan shall include the student's name, method of identifying the student, specific offending allergens, warning signs of reactions, and emergency treatment. The plan should include, but not be limited to, risk reduction and emergency response during: the school day, before and after school programs, and field trips. The IHCP should be signed by the parent, School Director, and by the student's physician.
- Initiate an Allergy Action Plan (AAP) which, with the parent's permission, will be with the student at all times and appropriate adults should know where the AAP is located. The AAP should include the student's photo, the student's name, specific offending allergens, warning signs of reactions and emergency management, including medications and names of those trained to administer. The AAP should be signed by the parent and School Director.
- Complete a medication care plan, which should include who is trained in administering the Epi-Pen, plans for field trips or short-term special events, where the Epi-Pens shall be stored (including a back-up storage) and how they should be monitored for currency.
- Based on the student's age, class, etc., identify who will be part of the multi-disciplinary team approval. (These may include but not be limited to the Director, classroom teachers, specials teachers, substitutes, local EMS, etc.)
- Assess the student for his/her ability to self-administer epinephrine.
- Determine the appropriateness for the student to carry his/her epinephrine.
- The Director and parents will meet with Staff member to assist them in preparing for their responsibilities.
- The Director will give an overview of the allergies, anaphylaxis and the student's IHCP. As a team, prevention and management of life-threatening food allergies will be discussed.

Emergency Medical Care

If the Director/Staff determines that medical care is needed, every possible effort will be made to contact you so that you can help in planning further steps to be taken in the particular situation.

If emergency medical attention is needed, and the parent cannot be reached, or there is not time to reach the parent first, 9-1-1 will be called and the child will be transported to a local hospital. The Emergency Treatment Form on file will be taken with the child to the hospital. **Parents, it is your responsibility to keep emergency telephone numbers updated. We should be able to reach you at any time during the day if needed.**

Minor Accidents and Medical Care

Staff members are trained in CPR and emergency first aid procedures. When minor accidents occur, that do not require medical attention, the Director/Staff will handle the situation and parents will be notified. Notification may come by phone call if warranted, and/or a written accident report. Signatures of the classroom teacher, the Director, and the parent are required on all accident reports. A copy of the signed accident reports is given to the parent and one is placed in the child's permanent record.

Notification of Exposure to Communicable Diseases

Parents will be notified in writing of the occurrence of any illness considered a communicable disease within 24 hours of the school becoming aware of the illness or the next working day.

Emergency Preparedness

The school has a comprehensive Emergency Preparedness Plan in place. Each year we undergo training to reinforce procedures that may need to be performed during an emergency situation. We work closely with local authorities preparing an appropriate emergency response plan. We conduct emergency drills throughout the school year so that students and staff are aware of the most effective and safe emergency responses.

Required Drills

The school is required to conduct training for staff to familiarize them with all emergency plans. Plans include guidelines for handling injuries and illnesses, fires, thunderstorms, tornadoes, flooding, winter storms, earthquakes, utility failures, bomb threats, civil

disturbances, and terroristic acts. Our emergency plan also includes provisions for communicating information on emergency procedures to students.

School-wide drills, both announced and unannounced, will be conducted by the school administration to help children learn what to do in case of an emergency

Fire drills are held each month, and tornado and lockdown drills are conducted at least twice a year. Disaster alerts are indicated by bullhorn alarm or whistle and/or Walkie Talkie announcements. Evacuation routes and tornado drill instructions are posted in every room used by our students. We work closely with state and local emergency preparedness personnel to ensure our plan is in accordance with acceptable practices on all levels.

As Early Childhood professionals, we do everything we can to make these safety measures as stress-free as possible for your child. Some young children may show signs of distress at the flashing warning lights and noise. If this happens, please let the teacher know so that we can provide additional support to your child in future drills.

Civil Disturbances/Community Crises

A lockdown occurs if there is a threat in or near the vicinity of the school. All exterior and interior doors are locked and students are confined to their classrooms.

There are two types of lockdown, hard and soft. During a hard lockdown no entry or exit of the school is allowed. A hard lockdown (Code Red) occurs if there is an immediate threat inside the school. For your safety as well as that of the children, parents will not be allowed to enter the school and may be kept away from the school until authorities determine it is safe.

A soft lockdown (Code Yellow) occurs if there is a threat outside of the school. In some cases, parents could be admitted into the school with proper identification. A sign will be posted on the entrance to the school if the school is in a lockdown.

If lockdown occurs during dismissal, children will be released one at a time if it is deemed safe by local authorities. You must have your carpool tag or proper identification. No parent will be admitted into the school, including parents of Toddler children.

Hazardous Conditions

In the event of a hazardous material spill, students will shelter in place until notification from local emergency response agencies that it is safe to dismiss.

Loss of Electrical Power, Water, or Gas Leak

If loss of electrical power or water occurs during school hours, the day will continue and be kept as normal as possible. Should the electric or water supply be interrupted for more than one day, school will be closed until the utility can be restored. In the event of a gas leak, the building will be evacuated until the gas company can complete an inspection and issue an all clear to return to the building. Your child's teacher will notify you in the event that we cannot safely return and need to dismiss for the day.

Parental Assistance

As a parent, the number one step that you can take to prepare for a school emergency is to provide us with accurate emergency contact information, and to notify us if your information changes.

If an emergency were to occur, you can be confident that we will notify you as soon as safely possible.

In the event law enforcement and emergency response agencies determine the school should be evacuated, we will notify you, and you will be directed to a specific location to reunite with your child. You will be required to show proper identification. Remember, students can only be released to their parents or an adult who is documented as an emergency contact.

Place of Refuge/Reunification Site

The school has designated Mount Zion Baptist Church Preschool as our place of refuge/reunification site. Our school staff will transport our children in private vehicles to Mount Zion Baptist Church which is located at 1525 Scenic Highway (Highway 124) Snellville, Ga. 30078, across from Sam's. Telephone: (770) 972-5014.

Discipline

It is our number one priority to offer a safe and loving environment for each child. Positive reinforcement is used to encourage and promote appropriate behavior. If an inappropriate behavior is exhibited, the teacher will handle the situation as positively as possible. Consequences for inappropriate behavior are as follows:

1. Redirection – direct the child's attention elsewhere and offer an alternative.
2. Model & problem solve – model expected behavior and offer suggestions.
3. Discuss logical consequences of actions.

4. Time Out – allow child a brief time out (1 minute per year in age) to help get feelings under control. Time out is not used as a punishment; it is used as a teachable moment.
5. Office visit – child is brought to the Director for a brief time to regain his/her composure. The Director will reiterate why the child is there and offer alternative suggestions.
6. Consult with parents.

At no time will any form of physical or verbal abuse be used. Discipline will not be associated with toileting or food.

Aggressive Behavior

Aggressive behavior includes, but is not limited to, kicking, biting, hitting, spitting, pushing, profanity, and verbal threats. If your child's behavior becomes so severe that it compromises the classroom environment for the other children, we will seek to remedy the situation with the parent's help, using the following guidelines.

- Incidents will be documented by the teacher, reported to the parents and the Director.
- If the child's aggressive behavior continues to occur, a meeting will be scheduled with the parents, the teacher, and the Director. At this time, a corrective plan will be made for the child.
- If the child's behavior does not improve, he or she will be withdrawn from school for the rest of the year.

Please be assured that dismissal would only come as a last resort, and that we will make every effort to help you with alternative placement options.

Indecent Exposure

It is important for children to know that their bodies are sacred. Exposing parts of their bodies is not appropriate behavior that will be tolerated at school. If any act of indecent exposure or lewd conduct occurs, the child will be issued up to three warnings.

- If a child removes their clothes on campus, the Director will conduct a conference with the parents of the child to discuss the inappropriateness of the child's actions.
- If it occurs a second time, the student will be suspended from the school for two days.
- If it occurs a third time, the student will be asked to leave our program.

Special Needs Policy

The school will accept children with special needs if we feel we can meet their needs. In cooperation with the parents/guardians, a mutual probationary period (up to 1 month) can be set up to ensure the proper placement of the special needs student. During that time, either party may terminate the enrollment and parents will receive a refund of any unused tuition. The school will make "readily achievable accommodations" for all children with disabilities.

Biting

Biting is a disturbing and potentially harmful behavior that parents and educators must discourage from the very first episode. The experience can also be just as frustrating for the parents of the biter, as it is for the parents of the child who was bitten.

Generally, children who bite are not doing it just to be mean. For most children, biting is a temporary problem that is brought on by experimentation, frustration, often due to lack of language abilities, or a need to control their environment. When any child exhibits biting behaviors, staff members are instructed to inform the Director. Teachers will be given support to monitor and modify the behavior appropriately. The child's parents will be asked to meet with school staff to determine the potential "cause" of the behavior. Parents are expected to work with the teacher to help keep all the children in the class safe.

In order to protect the confidentiality of the child and family, it is our policy not to divulge the child's name who did the biting. However, both sets of parents will get a copy of the biting report.

Consequences of Biting

- First Offense: Conference with parent
- Second Offense: Director calls parent to pick up child for the remainder of the day
- Third Offense: Child is removed from the program for 2 days
- Fourth Offense: Child is removed from the program for 1 week
- Fifth Offense: Child is removed from the program for the remainder of the school year

Support Services

Often children enroll at our school as their first experience in a group care and educational setting. This type of care presents many opportunities and experiences that children may not have been exposed to in smaller care environments and in their own homes. Sometimes certain behaviors, conditions, or other developmental issues present themselves that parents have not seen or noticed

before. Many of these situations are very typical. Our staff is prepared to help each individual child as they learn how to get along with others and adjust to a new environment.

Sometimes children exhibit characteristics and behaviors that are typical and require professional expertise to experience success, and to help parents and our teachers to meet the child's needs. When these situations arise, we work together with parents to find out what the child needs and at the parent's request, utilize outside resources. We welcome professionals from Babies Can't Wait Early Intervention Services for children up to three years of age and Gwinnett County Preschool Special Education Services for children three years and up. Both of these agencies provide outstanding on- and off-site services to help children thrive, as well as support families and teachers.

Please note, the school will make every possible accommodation, when deemed necessary, for all children; however, we are not equipped to provide one-on-one care for any child. If your child has special needs that require special accommodations, please meet with the Director in advance so that we may better prepare and serve your child on his/her first day of school. We welcome community agencies that provide support staff for any child receiving special services, and look forward to working with them to provide a supportive, nurturing learning environment.

Parent Involvement

As your child's first and most important teacher, you have essential knowledge of your child's skills, interest, and needs. Thus, communication with School Staff is an invaluable component to providing the best learning environment for your child. Your involvement gives your child a strong, positive message of acceptance and support.

In school year 2022-2023, parent participation is limited to TWO (2) volunteers per classroom event. Teachers will provide a signup sheet for all classroom events. Two parents may attend your child's birthday celebration. Please inform your teacher in advance if you would like to so, so that scheduling conflicts can be avoided. We have an active Parent Teacher Association where parents can volunteer.

Parent/Teacher Communication

Each day your child's teacher looks forward to your child's arrival and encourages you to share information about your child that you feel will be helpful.

Your child's teacher will keep you informed by way of a monthly newsletter and calendar. All memos will come home in your child's backpack, which should be checked daily.

In the event of an emergency or problem, please call the school office at (678) 430-6010. Office hours are from 9:00am – 2:30pm each day. If no one is available to answer, please leave a detailed message and a number where you can be reached, and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Parent/Teacher Conferences provide the opportunity to communicate valuable information that will set the stage for a great school year. Parents, your active participation is essential. Working with your child's teacher is one of the first steps in your child achieving academic success.

Conferences are scheduled twice a year, the first being in mid-to-late October. This will be an informal conference to discuss your child's social and emotional adjustment to school. You will have the opportunity to find out how your child is getting along with classmates, how they are progressing in school, and what you can do at home to build on strengths and overcome challenges. This conference may be in the form of a phone call or a written note from your child's teacher, or you may be asked to meet in person.

A second conference will be in late April or early May. At this time parents are asked to come to the school on a scheduled day and have time to sit together and share formal assessments that have been completed during the year. We will also offer suggestions of activities you can do with your child at home over the summer to help him/her get ready for school the following year. We look forward to seeing you and want these conferences to be relaxed and very productive.

Student Assessments

An assessment is the process of gathering information about children in order to make decisions about their education. Teachers obtain useful information about children's knowledge, skills, and progress by observing, documenting, and reviewing children's work over time. On-going assessments that occur in the context of classroom activities can provide an accurate, fair, and representative picture of children's abilities and progress.

Assessment involves:

- Collecting multiple instances of data on a child's development and learning
- Determining the data's significance in light of the program goals and objectives

- Incorporating this information into planning for individuals and programs
- Communicating the findings to parents

Assessments are like road maps, they show where a child is developmentally at a particular point in time. As each child is unique and will learn at his/her own pace, do not become frustrated if your child does not master simple skills right away. When they are developmentally ready, they will acquire all the basic skills necessary to succeed in school. It is important for us at home, and school, to create a safe environment where a child can progress naturally through all the stages of learning rather than being pushed.

Assessments At The Preschool Level

We assess to evaluate our curriculum and instruction to see if what is expected of children at each age interval is being taught by us and acquired by the child. We also monitor a child's progress to see if he or she is acquiring developmentally appropriate concepts and skills at each level.

How Teachers Evaluate Preschoolers

Your preschooler will not receive tests and grades, but that does not mean his/her teacher is not noticing how he or she is doing. In the midst of play dough and paint, your child is developing important skills and mental abilities. There is a whole lot going on in your little one's head these days, and baby-talk is just the tip of the cognitive iceberg!

- Motor development - Does your child run, jump, climb easily and with coordination?
- Fine Motor development - Does your child have good control using a paintbrush or crayons and working a puzzle?
- Cognitive development - Does your child understand the concepts of yesterday, today, and tomorrow?
- Number correspondence - This is different from counting. It occurs when a child understands "I have one block here. How many will I have if I add one?"
- Pre-reading - Can your child come up with a rhyme? "What sounds like cat?"
- Attention span - Can your child sit still during story time? Does he/she concentrate for short periods of time when building with blocks, or does he/she move quickly from one activity to another?
- Relationships with others - Does your child play well with other children? How does he/she respond to conflict? Can he/she take turns? Stand up for him/herself?
- Relationship with the teacher - Does he/she feel comfortable asking for help when needed?
- Emotional development - How does he/she handle transitions during the day? If he/she cries when mom or dad leaves, does he/she bounce back quickly.

Scholastic Book Club Information

Each month you will have an opportunity to order books from Firefly or Honey Bee Book Club. They offer a wide variety of books suitable for preschool children. You are encouraged to order for two important reasons.

First and foremost, research shows that a child's experiences at home during preschool years set the stage for reading success. As a parent, you are special, and your love for and understanding of your child makes you his/her most effective teacher. By taking a moment to look over monthly offerings, you are able to select books that build on your child's interest, therefore personalizing his/her learning experience.

Secondly, for every book you order for your child, the teacher earns bonus points, which enables her to receive books for the classroom free of charge, so everyone benefits. If you decide to purchase a book(s), please complete the order form and make your check payable to Scholastic Book Clubs. Your child's books will arrive at SUMC Preschool & Kindergarten within a few weeks.

Parent Evaluation

We continually assess ourselves and our program to provide a quality program for the children and families we serve. Therefore, parents are asked to participate in an annual evaluation process. Toward the end of the school year a Parent Evaluation will be sent home for you to assess us. Please take a few moments to complete this form and return it in the envelope provided. Your input will be reviewed to help us improve our program.

Parents are also encouraged to discuss any ideas or concerns they may have with their child's teacher or the Director.

School Photographs

Individual pictures are made in September or October. Christmas pictures are made in November to allow time for delivery prior to Winter Break. Individual spring and class pictures as well as cap and gown pictures of our Four-Year-Old and Kindergarten students are taken in March. Specific dates will be noted in your child's classroom newsletter.

Portrait packages are reasonably priced; if you wish to purchase your child's pictures, simply complete the package information and make your check payable to the photographer for the specified amount.

Consignment Sale

We are fortunate to have a major fundraising opportunity that does not require our parents and/or their children to go door-to-door selling products. In order to raise funds for capital improvements, such as playground equipment/inspection, mulch, computer equipment and software, and specific educational materials for the classroom, the school organizes and conducts an annual Fall and Spring Consignment Sale. This sale is well received and respected by residents of Gwinnett County as one of the area's premier children's clothing sales. If you have not had the pleasure of shopping one of our sales, you are in for a treat. You can help us several ways: you can volunteer to work a shift prior to the sale to help with set up, work during the sale or at the completion of the sale to help with sorting or breakdown. You can support our efforts by consigning toys or clothing your child has outgrown or by donating gently worn items to us. If you elect to consign with us, you will receive 70% of everything that is sold for yourself and the school will receive the remaining 30%. Sellers also get to shop our preview sale before the sale opens to the public.

Fundraising

We participate in a couple of simple and rewarding ongoing fundraising events that occur throughout the school year. The first is General Mill's Box Tops for Education program. Simply cut the coupons out for us and send them to school with your child or scan your grocery receipt using the Box Top App. We receive 10 cents per top, which adds up very quickly, and all funds are used to purchase educational materials for the children. You can find these little pink and purple rectangular coupons on hundreds of participating products from General Mills, Pillsbury, Yoplait, Betty Crocker, and many others. For a complete listing of products, log onto the Box Tops website at www.boxtops4education.com. Please start clipping and scanning these for your child's teacher. We have classroom contests during the year, and the winning class is surprised with a special party.

We also participate with Kroger's Community Rewards program in which you can link your Kroger Shoppers Card to our Preschool & Kindergarten account. Every time you shop, Kroger will donate a percentage of your total purchase to our program.

We also host two to three Spirit Nights with local restaurants each school year. These restaurants support our school by providing a percentage back "rebate" to the school based on purchases. Participation is easy. Simply stop by the restaurant on the spirit night, place an order (drive through or dine in), and enjoy the meal.

Toys

Please do not bring toys from home to school, since these items frequently create disruptions in the classroom environment. Toys from home will be placed in their backpacks for children to retrieve when they leave that day. Children in older classrooms may have designated days to bring items from home to share with their class. Please make sure the items brought are clearly labeled with first and last names. Fragile items and toy weapons (guns, knives, swords, etc.) are not permitted. Please ask a teacher or office staff member if you have any questions about appropriate items. We are not responsible for personal items that are lost or broken.

Pet/Animal Policy

Teachers will check each child's Emergency Treatment Form for allergies before permitting any animal in the classroom or allowing children to go outside to visit an animal. Animals brought in the building must be in a carrier. Large animals must be on a leash and remain outside the building. A parent bringing an animal to school should stay with the animal at all times. The visit should be brief but long enough for all children to observe and enjoy the experience.

Thank you

Thank you for reading the SUMC Preschool & Kindergarten Handbook. This is an important step in establishing a positive partnership. If you have any questions or concerns regarding any information presented in this handbook, please contact the Preschool & Kindergarten Director before your child's first day of school.