

BOONE UNITED METHODIST PRESCHOOL FAMILY HANDBOOK

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MISSION

Boone United Methodist Preschool (BUMP) offers a half-day program for preschool-aged children consistent with the highest quality of early childhood education. Our program provides the beginning foundations of schooling through a play-based learning approach which supports each child's growth and individual needs in a safe, inclusive, and nurturing environment. Our mission is to exemplify the love of Jesus while developing a variety of skills, encouraging positive social-emotional development, amplifying creativity, and empowering independence.

ENROLLMENT

Enrollment is open to children ages 1 to 5 years old. Class determination is made based on the child's age as of August 31. Our preschool operates from 8:30-12:15, Monday through Friday, with options to attend either MWF, T/Th, or all five days. Registration for the upcoming school year begins during the month of February, and is open to currently enrolled preschool families first, and then to BUMC members and the community. We follow the Watauga County Schools calendar for holidays and planned breaks. Please refer to the yearly school calendar for any additional breaks or closures.

Every child must have a physician's health form and immunization records on file within 30 days of enrollment. It is expected that children entering 3-year-old classes and up are toilet trained by the time of enrollment, unless otherwise stated on the child's individualized education program, as those classrooms are not equipped for diapering.

TUITION AND FEES

In order to hold your space, a *non-refundable fee* of \$50 and a tuition deposit for the last month of the school year is due at registration. If you withdraw your child before July 1, you will be refunded your last month's tuition. Tuition cannot be refunded after July 1.

Tuition rates are based on the child's age and days of attendance. Please review the tuition rate schedule located on the preschool website. Tuition is due on the 1st of each month. Tuition paid later than the 5th of the month will be subject to a late fee of \$10. An invoice will be sent via email on the 1st, and payments can be made by bank transfer directly through Quickbooks, or by check. Checks should be made to Boone United Methodist Preschool and placed in the tuition box by the preschool entrance. Tuition rates are subject to change yearly, and parents will be notified of any changes.

Deductions cannot be made for absences or for early withdrawal at the end of the year. During the school year, the preschool is to be notified at least 2 weeks in advance if you wish to withdraw your child. If there is no notification in advance, regular monthly tuition will be due. If, at any time, parents are unable to pay tuition due to economic constraints, they may submit a financial assistance application to the Scholarship Committee for consideration. The Committee will consider applications on a case-by-case basis. Please ask the director for an application.

CURRICULUM

At Boone United Methodist Preschool, your child will experience a balance of positive structure and flexible child-led play opportunities to target each child's needs and interests. Our curriculum is based on the developmental needs of children through a play-based learning approach. Each class utilizes weekly themes to promote engaging activities and build on life skills such as problem-solving and social-emotional development, in addition to academic and basic developmental skills.

Our curriculum at BUMP is based on National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC) criteria for curriculum and the curriculum goals of the United Methodist Church's Guidelines for Weekday Preschool Programs.

Our curriculum seeks to provide a variety of benefits, including:

- Stimulating environment where children can freely explore and learn
- Intentional focus on problem-solving, conflict resolution, social-emotional development, positive communication, and independence encouragement
- Developmentally-appropriate practices for academic growth
- Child and teacher initiated activities, including large and small group interaction
- Daily outdoor experiences, weather permitting
- Open-ended art and creative expression, sensory activities, and fine motor practice
- Incorporation of Biblical values through modeling, discussions, Bible stories, prayer, etc.
- Centers that promote pretend play, building, science, reading, art, and music
- Meaningful, flexible circle time experiences that incorporate stories, music, movement, etc.

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

We firmly believe in guiding children with positive reinforcement, redirection, and clear, consistent expectations. We focus on teaching children how to express their emotions appropriately and resolve conflicts in a respectful manner. We firmly believe that discipline should be utilized as a teaching tool, NOT as a punishment, in order to instill security, confidence, control, self-knowledge, and improve basic life skills.

In dealing with inappropriate behavior, we:

- Treat children with respect at all times
- Use positive redirection as much as possible
- Focus on connection before correction
- Provide gentle reminders and praise positive behavior
- Assist children in ways to be kind, share, and experience positive interactions with peers
- Provide a safe "cool down" space in the classroom to reset when needed
- Use clear direction and tell children what to do, rather than what not to do
- Help children understand reasons for our requests
- Convey an attitude of acceptance that all children make mistakes, and we have confidence that with help, they can learn to manage their own behavior

As an inclusive program, we acknowledge and embrace every child's unique value, and we are committed to meeting the needs of each individual child. Should a child display needs that place significant strain on teaching personnel, an additional teacher or assistant will be added to the team to provide support and more individualized attention. If a child's behavior in the classroom is consistently disruptive or problematic, parents may be asked to seek additional professional support or therapeutic services to ensure the child's success in the program. Continued participation will be based on professional advice, child's behavior, teacher input, and Director judgement.

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

The exterior doors to the preschool are **locked at all times**. The entrance door will be open for arrival from 8:30-8:40, and dismissal from 12:10-12:20.

Please ensure that your child is picked up promptly at 12:15. A late fee will be charged for any pick-up after 12:20 PM:

- \$5 for the first 10 minutes (up until 12:30)
- \$1 for every minute thereafter

The late fee should be paid at pick-up or the next day your child attends.

Children must be brought to the classroom by a parent or other designated adult and must also be picked up by a parent or other designated adult. Teachers must have written permission to release a child to anyone other than that child's parent, and a photo ID will be required to ensure that the adult is on the authorized pick-up list for that child. **We will not release children to any unauthorized person or to another child under the age of 18.**

For the safety and security of all, only families and personnel associated with the preschool are allowed in the preschool hall during operating hours. All visitors must enter through the main preschool entrance door. Additionally, parents should say good-bye to each child **at the classroom door** so the teachers can give full attention to the children in the room.

HEALTH POLICY

It is our policy that each child must be up to date on their immunizations against childhood diseases before attending school, unless a medical exemption is required. Please note that religious exemptions are not accepted. Families must submit a health certificate which must include an updated immunization record and a doctor's physical examination within 30 days of enrollment. Starting October 1, children will only be permitted to return to school after their immunizations have been verified.

To protect the health and safety of all children, **no child should come to preschool visibly ill**. *Children should be kept home if they exhibit any of the following symptoms:*

- **Fever** within the last 24 hours (without the use of a fever-reducing medication)
- **Diarrhea or vomiting** within the previous 24 hours
- Any symptoms of acute illness such as **persistent cough, runny nose, body aches, or draining eyes**
- The child is unable to play outside (as teachers cannot supervise children both inside and outside)

Additionally, if a physician or health professional has prescribed an antibiotic, **children should not return to school until 24 hours after the first dose has been taken**. Please notify your child's teacher or the Director of any communicable diseases as soon as possible so that other families can be informed of possible exposure.

For cuts, bruises, or other minor injuries, staff will clean and bandage the area and notify parents at pick-up. If a child becomes ill or is critically injured during their time at BUMP, we will make every effort to contact a parent or guardian. In an emergency situation, we will attempt to contact the individuals listed on your enrollment form. If necessary, we will utilize the emergency medical release you provided. Please note, **teachers will not administer medication to children**. However, staff are trained to administer EpiPens for severe allergic reactions; please notify your child's teacher if your child has severe allergies and carries an EpiPen.

FOOD GUIDELINES

Each class will have a community snack, and each child will be assigned a day or week (depending on the teacher's preference) to bring a snack for the entire class. Please consider a variety of foods to accommodate the needs and preferences of all children. From time to time, the teacher may ask parents to bring in only the ingredients if a cooking project is planned.

To promote health and safety, please avoid including foods that are considered a **choking hazard**, **highly processed**, or that contain **excessive added sugar or dyes**. Thank you for supporting healthy eating habits in our preschool! *Some popular snack ideas include:*

- Fresh fruit or pre-cut veggies
- Cheese sticks
- Yogurt or apple sauce pouches
- Granola or protein bars
- Pretzels or crackers

Please note that we are a **peanut-free** facility. Please inform us of any allergies your child may have, and we will ensure that all necessary precautions are taken to avoid exposure. Each class will post any food allergies that are present in that class. In some cases, parents may need to provide their own allergy-free snacks for their child.

In addition to snack time, each student should pack a lunch to bring to school every day. Please ensure that your child's lunch includes a water bottle with water or milk. Juice or sweetened beverages should not be sent to school. If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday or special occasion with a treat, you may bring cupcakes, cookies, or some other food to be served after lunchtime when coordinated with your child's teacher in advance. We kindly ask that you do not send party favors, balloons, or gifts.

TOILET TRAINING EXPECTATIONS

It is our expectation that children entering the three-year-old class or older will be fully toilet trained before they begin in the fall, as these classrooms are not equipped for diapering. This includes transitioning from diapers and disposable underwear to using the bathroom independently during the day. However, we understand that each child develops at their own pace and are committed to supporting all students. For children with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that specifies additional support, we will make exceptions and accommodations as needed to assist with the toilet training process. While many children may occasionally have accidents, our teachers are dedicated to providing gentle, frequent reminders and offering assistance as needed.

CLOTHING AND PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

We engage in hands-on learning and art projects regularly, so please dress your child in comfortable, durable clothing that is suitable for active participation in messy activities. We go outside every day when weather permits, so please dress your child accordingly. On colder days, please send a coat, hat, and mittens. For safety reasons, slick-bottomed shoes, open-toed sandals, or clog-type shoes are strongly discouraged.

Each child must have a change of clothes stored in their backpack or cubby. Please ensure that all personal items, including backpacks, water bottles, and lunch boxes are labeled with your child's name. While we do not permit toys that promote rough or violent play, comfort items such as stuffed animals, blankets, or similar toys are welcome if your child needs them for reassurance. We kindly ask that you refrain from sending any other toys, candy, gum, or money to school. For safety reasons, guns, weapons, or other toys that encourage violence are strictly prohibited.

PARENT COMMUNICATION AND INVOLVEMENT

We strive to keep parents informed and engaged in their child's preschool experience. We believe the parent-teacher relationship is essential to a child's success, and we make it a priority to provide regular updates and informal check-ins during both arrival and dismissal times. Parents are welcome to schedule a meeting with the teachers and/or Director at any point during the school year if they wish to discuss their child's progress or have any questions. An informational bulletin board can be found beside each classroom door, and additional information will be posted to the church website and our Facebook page. A monthly calendar and overview of classroom activities will also be displayed outside each classroom.

Parents are our most valuable resource, and we greatly appreciate your interest and involvement. There are numerous ways parents can contribute, including helping with special events, organizing fundraisers, chaperoning field trips, assisting with building maintenance, supporting teachers in preparing classroom materials, or even becoming a substitute teacher. Please reach out to the Director if you are interested in serving at the preschool in any of these areas.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

We make every effort to remain open throughout the winter; however, if snow or ice creates poor road conditions, the preschool will be closed to ensure the safety of our families and staff. In the event of a one-hour delay to allow staff to travel safely, we will open at 9:30 AM. We do not follow the public school schedule for all closures, but may align with their decision if significant snowfall or ice leads to a closure. Each event will be evaluated based on the specific circumstances.

We will make every effort to make a decision by 6:30 AM. If it is necessary to close the preschool, we will notify families via mass email from the Director and a group text from your child's lead teacher. Please note that tuition credits cannot be provided due to closures, as our program is a non-profit organization and our teachers rely on consistent pay, regardless of attendance.

PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR SEPARATION

Separation can be difficult for some children, especially when they are leaving their parents for the first time in a new environment. Our teachers are experienced in handling these situations and are prepared to support your child through the transition. We understand that young children may not yet realize that the separation is temporary. We reassure them with comforting reminders that while grown-ups may need to leave sometimes, they always come back because they love them.

Let the teachers know if you need assistance with the separation process. To help ensure a smoother and happier transition, it's best to keep drop-off brief and avoid lingering in or around the classroom. If your child is upset, clinging, or crying, it may be necessary to remain firm and leave after offering a hug at the door. Most children settle down within five minutes. Parents will be contacted if a child is inconsolable or continues to be upset for an extended period. Please be sure to say goodbye to your child, and reassure them that you will return.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Thank you for allowing us the privilege of teaching and supporting your child at Boone United Methodist Preschool! We look forward to working with you and your family throughout the year. If you have any questions, concerns, comments, compliments, or grievances, you may contact:

Emily Wright, Director of BUMP, (828) 264-6092 or preschool@booneumc.org

Laura Padgett, Director of Children's Ministry at BUMC, (828) 264-6090 or lpadgett@booneumc.org