

FUMC Little Blessings Preschool/Daycare Parent Handbook

"Children are God's Little Blessings."

Mission Statement

Little Blessings is a ministry of First United Methodist Church of Corinth, Mississippi. We shall provide superior quality Christian education to children ages six weeks through four years through the use of love, devotion, education, the Bible, and playful learning to prepare them for formal education and to provide a safe, secure place in which children may grow, learn, and thrive. An after-school program is provided for children pre-kindergarten through 4th grade.

Organizational Chart

The following organizational flow chart shows the lines of authority for our program. FUMC Little Blessings Preschool/Daycare is a vital children's ministry that is supported and prayed for by our congregation.

First United Methodist Church → FUMC Administrative Council → FUMC Staff Parish Relations → FUMC Senior Pastor → Church Administrator → Ministry Team → Preschool Lead Administrator → Preschool Teachers.

FUMC Little Blessings Preschool Ministry Team

The Ministry Team governs the vision and goals for Christian education for the preschool/daycare. The current members of this team include: Kate Butler, chairperson; Carrie Chappelle, secretary; Linda Jackson; Candace Marlar; Dr. Valerie Norton, Elizabeth Smith; Lakrisha South; Barbara Trapp; and Cathy Wheeler.

Little Blessings Preschool Staff

The FUMC Little Blessings Preschool/Daycare staff members are devoted to Christ and His ministry. All staff are qualified and certified for their position and participate in yearly training designed specifically for their age group. Teacher assignment lists will be distributed at the Fall Open House/Parent Orientation.

The FUMC Little Blessings Preschool/Daycare Lead Administrator is Lakrisha South, teaching all ages and working in all capacities within that daycare setting. Lakrisha is a credentialed director within the state of Mississippi.

Admission and Fees

Admission Requirements

1. A registration form must be completed and turned into the office along with the registration fee.
2. A current record of immunizations must be on file the first day the child attends. (This is not applicable to children 6-8 weeks old.) The Certificate of Immunization, or Form 121, is required by the Mississippi State Department of Health. This record must be updated as your child receives his/her immunizations.
3. The following forms must also be completed and returned to our office:
 - Permission for Emergency Health Care
 - Permission to Photograph Form
 - Field Trip Permission (if applicable and as required)

Center Hours

FUMC Little Blessings Preschool/Daycare is open from 6:30 a.m. through 6:00 p.m. However, we prefer the children in our program do not exceed 50 hours in childcare per week.

Holidays

The Little Blessings Preschool/Daycare will close for and recognize the following holidays: New Year's Day; Martin Luther King, Jr.; Good Friday; Memorial Day; Independence Day (4th of July will be taken on the Friday before if it falls on a Saturday or the Monday after if it falls on a Sunday); Labor Day; Thanksgiving Day and the day after; Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. You are responsible for these holidays in your weekly tuition fees.

Licensure

FUMC Little Blessings Preschool/Daycare is licensed by the Mississippi Department of Health, which protects and promotes the health and safety of children by requiring that minimum standards be met in childcare facilities. A copy of the regulations is available from the Lead Administrator for parents to review.

Payment of Fees

As a ministry of First United Methodist Church, this Preschool/Daycare is a non-profit organization. Policies and fees are subject to change at the discretion of the Church and Lead Team.

Fees

Registration fee (non-refundable)		\$50.00 (one-time)
Full-time Infant (A and B)	M-F	\$95.00 per week
Full-time Toddler's	M-F	\$95.00 per week
Full-time Two's	M-F	\$90.00 per week
Full-time Three's	M-F	\$85.00 per week
Afterschool per week		
When school is in session	M-F	\$45.00 per week
When school is out	M-F	\$80.00 per week

Sibling Discount (up to 3 children) of \$10.00 per week off older siblings

***Fees are to be paid for all weeks regardless of attendance as long as a child is enrolled at FUMC Little Blessings Preschool/Daycare.**

Payment Schedule

Please make all checks payable to FUMC Little Blessings Preschool/Daycare. Also please include your child's name and dates that you are paying for on the checks. FUMC Little Blessings Preschool/Daycare will accept in **advance** weekly and monthly payments.

- Weekly payments are due each Monday and considered late Wednesday after the close of business.
- Monthly payments are due in advance on the 1st of the month (or Monday is the 1st falls on the weekend) and are considered late on the 3rd of the month (or Wednesday is the 1st falls on the weekend) after the close of business.
- **A \$10.00 late fee is imposed if not paid on time.**

Note: Pre-dated checks for your child are an acceptable form of payment for your child's fees. These will be deposited on Wednesday of each week.

Since fees are determined based on enrollment, not attendance, payments are due per the above whether or not you receive a statement/invoice. Statements/invoices are provided as a courtesy.

If after 10 days an account is not paid current, childcare service will be terminated immediately. We reserve the right to exercise all legal means of collection.

*There will be a \$25.00 returned check fee assessed to your account and appropriate late fees will apply. On the 2nd returned check we require that you pay with cash or money order. (NO EXCEPTIONS!)

***The FUMC Little Blessings Preschool/Daycare offers automatic withdrawal. If you are interested, a form is available from the Lead Administrator's Office. This is not a requirement, just a service we offer. Monthly automatic withdrawals are done the 5th of each month. Weekly automatic withdrawals are done each Wednesday.**

The Department of Early Child Care Department co-payments, paid by the client, are due by the 10th of each month. Failure to maintain co-pays and any daily differences not covered by DECDD could result in your child's dismissal from this preschool/daycare and the DECDD program.

****Please note that there may be a "daily difference" that is NOT covered by DECDD because of the varied fees charged from one provider to another. As this is "Parent Choice" in selecting childcare, it is YOUR responsibility to pay the "daily difference", if any. Failure to maintain any and all fees will result in termination of our services, as well as notification to DECCD of unpaid fees.****

The Lead Administrator is available to discuss financial emergencies and possible solutions. Please make an appointment to discuss your circumstances.

Two weeks' notice or two weeks' fees are required for any child withdrawing from enrollment.

Thank you for understanding that your child has a place reserved for him/her; therefore, tuition is due as long as a child is enrolled, regardless of attendance. You are paying for the space held, not the number of hours of service.

Arrival and Departure

Absence

If you have a planned absence such as a vacation, please let us know in advance.

Adjustment

Attending the FUMC Little Blessings Preschool/Daycare Program is an exciting experience for a young child, but initially it can be difficult. Whatever the personality of your child and however eager he/she may seem to be for new experiences, there will be a moment when he/she realizes that you are going to leave. You may also feel anxious about the separation. These feelings of apprehension are normal.

After your child's first day, if he/she is having difficulty, please say goodbye and leave quickly. Young children tend to have more difficulty adjusting to the start of the school day if the parent lingers. If your child is crying when you leave, give him/her time to get settled. Children seldom continue to cry for more than a few minutes after their parent is out of sight. If your child does not adjust after a reasonable amount of time, we will contact you. However, in most cases, the interesting daily routine and the special care of the teachers will dispel all fears and bring about full adjustment. Your child is in good hands! He/she will receive much love, care, and comfort from our dedicated staff.

You are welcome to call at any time to check on your child.

Daily Drop-off

Preschoolers in the three-year-old class should be in their classroom by 8:30 a.m. so as not to miss the start of the school day.

Authorized Pick-up

Please drop off and pick up your child at the reception desk. A sign-in/out sheet will be on a clip board there. Please sign your whole name, the time you drop your child off, and the time you pick your child up. If you have several children, you must sign each child in/out individually.

The Lead Administrator must be made aware in writing of the "authorized" people who may pick up and drop off your child. Please advise the people that will be picking up your child up to have a picture ID and to present it to the Lead Administrator for verification. If there is someone who is no longer allowed to pick your child up, this must be submitted in writing with your signature and date. Please keep this list current. If you have anyone other than the authorized people picking your child up, please call ahead and let the Director and/or your child's teacher know. We will release children to authorized persons only.

Please pick up your child promptly when the school day ends or call the office (662-808-1249) if an emergency will cause you to be late.

The fee for late pick-up is \$1.00 per minute. After twenty minutes, the late charge will increase to \$2.00 per minute. (We will consider each situation if it is an honest emergency.) If your work schedule does not allow you to pick up your child promptly, please make arrangements with an authorized person to pick up your child.

If a child has not been picked up within thirty minutes, the person on duty will call someone on the authorized list to pick him/her up.

Communication

Data Privacy

The only persons permitted to see a child's records (name, address, phone, health information, emergency information, etc.) are the parent or legal guardian, childcare employees, and the state-licensing examiner. These files will be locked in a filing cabinet unless needed.

Information will not be given to others without written parental consent. As part of this policy, we also will not disclose the names of children who may have caused injuries to other children while at the program. This is a safeguard for each family's data privacy.

We will not verify a child's enrollment to anyone over the telephone without parental consent.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

You are welcome to make an appointment with your child's teachers if you want a conference about any classroom concern. The Lead Administrator will be available as needed. Please set up a time when your child will not be with you so that you can freely discuss your child's situation. Please do not "drop in" for a conference during the school day when the teachers need to devote their attention to the students. Also, be sensitive not to discuss a child in his/her presence. You may always send a written note to your child's teachers or leave a phone message.

If your child has a problem, we want to work with you as a team to better care for your child and work toward improvement. Open communication with your child's teachers will prevent misunderstandings. Please feel free to come to the Lead Administrator with any questions or concerns. We value your honesty and respect your concerns for your child.

Written Communication

Please check your child's backpack daily for class work, as well as important communication from the Lead Administrator or your child's teachers. Please remember to praise your child's work to promote good self-esteem.

Parents of infants, creepers, and toddlers will receive daily forms containing eating, sleeping, and diapering information. These are provided to help teachers and parents keep similar routines for the children.

Curriculum and Scheduling

Curriculum

FUMC Little Blessings Preschool/Daycare uses an environmental style of early childhood education. This involves making the child's world come alive and insists that every moment is a teachable moment. We will intertwine the day-to-day life experiences with preparation for kindergarten while maintaining a solid Christian foundation.

This curriculum will provide:

- A framework on which teachers can build an early childhood program that allows children to learn and grow as Jesus did—"in wisdom and stature" and "in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). The biblical version of ABC Integrity Time by Sara Williams Berry is used to teach Bible stories and Christian values.
- A range of activities that are designed to meet the needs of children at their level of development along the growth continuum.
- Guidance and activities in each unit to help the child develop language, pre-reading, and other foundational skills appropriate to his/her stage of development.

The activity areas in your child's classroom may include:

- Music Center: To learn to appreciate and respond to music, create dance movements, learn short songs by rote, distinguish high from low, fast from slow, "indoor" voice from "outdoor" voice.
- Home Living Area: To stimulate imagination and conversation. Permits child to play out family roles, experience sharing, and take responsibility for self-help and own behavior. Gives child the concept of self.
- Creative Art: Satisfies need for manipulating, releases tension, provides experience of success, provides opportunity for development of small and large muscles, stimulates interest in color.
- Block and Transportation: Stimulates imagination and conversation, gives sensory pleasure (smooth, hard, heavy, light, etc.), exposes child to shapes, sizes and colors, balance, and methods of construction. Improves small muscle coordination. Develops respect for rights of others.
- Science: Helps in understanding environment, affords opportunity for identification and verbalization, stimulates interest in nature, encourages experimental discovery, promotes care of animals and plants.
- Language Development: Increases vocabulary, concept of colors, shapes, sizes, develops self-confidence, encourages powers of observation.

Special Needs

FUMC Little Blessings Preschool/Daycare is not equipped to serve special-needs children if they require additional staff or special equipment or materials.

Religious Teachings

Our Little Blessings Preschool/Daycare is a ministry of First United Methodist Church with the mission to minister to families by providing quality care for young children in a Christian environment. We emphasize Christian education by modeling God's love and relating all of life's experiences to the presence of God in our world. A simple Bible story and prayer are shared daily, and Christian music is played and sung in each classroom. Also, an emphasis is placed on the religious aspects of Christian holidays.

Rest Time

Children will take part in a quiet, restful time as part of their daily schedule. Please provide a small blanket for your child. Blankets will be sent home at the end of the week to be laundered and returned at the beginning of the next week. During rest time, quiet music will be played.

Schedules

Each class follows a daily schedule that includes: free activity time in learning centers, group time, lunch time, outside time (weather permitting), snack time, and rest time. Each classroom follows a slightly different schedule that meets the needs of the age of the children in that room. These schedules are posted in each room.

Discipline

Appropriate Discipline Techniques

FUMC Little Blessings Preschool/Daycare's discipline goal is to establish positive guidance for each child. Because every child has unique needs, we understand that no single guidance technique or strategy will be appropriate for all children. We strive to maintain responsible, productive, and cooperative behavior that will aid in each child's development of self-confidence and self-control.

The following appropriate/ effective discipline techniques are used by our staff:

- Separating the child from the behavior. This means that the child's misbehavior is unacceptable, not the child. This technique involves assuring the child that he/she is unconditionally loved and valued.
- Redirecting the child's behavior away from inappropriate actions and substituting more appropriate activities, or completely changing the surroundings to remove the likelihood or temptation for misbehavior.
- Giving acceptable choices and, when suitable, allowing the child to come up with his/her own options to resolve the conflict.
- Focusing the child's attention on natural or logical consequences that may follow a specific behavior.
- Using positive language that prompts or cues appropriate behavior and reminds the child of the rules.
- Refusing to argue on non-negotiable issues; setting limits on certain behaviors that are clearly dangerous or unfair.
- Using limited time-outs for older preschoolers (giving them the power to decide how long to stay in time-outs) only in the following ways:
 - To provide a chance for the child to cool off.
 - To provide an opportunity for the child to go to a place where he/she can feel better, and
 - To provide a time for the child to think about changing disruptive behavior into constructive behavior.

Biting

In the Creeper to Toddler years (around 1 year up to 3 years of age), children are likely to deal with a very natural but difficult stage—the biting stage. We hope the following policy will help to give specific information on this concern and to help you understand some of the reasons children bite.

- For oral exploration.
- Because of frustration, hunger, or sleepiness.
- To gain attention.
- Because of the need for private space.
- Because they lack social skills and do not understand what it means to hurt someone.
- For needed pain relief due to teething.

The caregivers will take certain actions when biting occurs. The teacher will first care for the child that has been bitten by comforting him/her and washing the wound with soap and water. We will apply an ice pack to minimize bruising. If the skin is broken, we will apply a mild antiseptic and bandage. We will also call the parent to come and look if the skin is broken or if the bite is on the face.

The teacher will talk to the biter. She will model appropriate touches and words that he/she could use in this problem situation. She will remind the child that biting hurts and that he/she may not hurt their friends. The child will be shown to a quiet area of the room to calm down.

We will notify the parents of the children, the biter and the bitten, via an "Incident/Accident" report. Upon parent request, the caregiver or Director will call each time a bite occurs, whether it is major or minor. If a child begins to bite frequently, his/her actions will be logged to determine a certain time, such as lunch or nap time, a transition to another activity, etc. This information will be documented and given to the Director and parents in case it becomes necessary to discuss removing a child for biting. If a child bites three consecutive times in one day or bites for three consecutive days, he/she will have to take a 24-hour break. Upon his/her return if the child bites, he/she will have to take a 72-hour break. If excessive biting continues, the result will be the removal of that child from our program.

These are actions that we **WILL NOT** take concerning biting. Children who bite will NEVER be physically punished. Also note, the names of child biting and the child bitten will be kept confidential. Mississippi State Regulations prohibit us

from divulging this information. Please remember that biting is a natural behavior for very young children, and we will try our very best to minimize the possibilities of these occurrences.

Discipline vs. punishment

Although the words "discipline" and "punishment" are often used interchangeably, the staff at FUMC Little Blessings Preschool/Daycare recognize a difference between these two concepts. Here is a comparison of the two:

Discipline

Teaches children acceptable behavior
Gives children reasons behind behavior
Tells the child not only how NOT to act,
but teaches them how TO act.
Gives the child an opportunity to gain
self-control (ultimate goal)

Punishment

Gives negative consequences
Controls behavior through fear
and intimidation
Causes poor self-esteem
Does not teach acceptable
behavior or self-control

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT, TOTAL ISOLATION, OR PUNISHMENT THAT WOULD FRIGHTEN OR HUMILIATE A CHILD IS NOT ALLOWED ON FUMC PREMISES!

Disruptive Behavior

Repeated misbehavior will be documented and reported to the Lead Administrator. We will conference with you to determine possible causes and solutions. We are a team that works together to provide God's best for your child.

If violent behavior occurs, the violent child will be removed from the situation to prevent harm to other children. If a child causes physical harm to another child or creates severe disruptions that upset another child, the parents of both children will be notified in writing. After the second occurrence, parents will receive a phone call. If a child repeats the same offence several more times, a parent conference will be held and documented.

We want to protect the physical and emotional safety of each child. The staff, along with the parents, will work with the disruptive child in an attempt to diminish unacceptable behavior. If the documented efforts are unsuccessful and if the child exhibits repeated disruptive behavior (physically or psychologically harmful to himself/herself, classmates, teachers, and/or disruptive to the educational

environment) compromising learning and safety, the Lead Administrator may ask that the child not attend until a further decision can be made.

Professional guidance from a qualified doctor or counselor may be recommended.

If an acceptable solution allowing your child to remain enrolled cannot be reached, the Lead Administrator will inform you that your child must withdraw from enrollment.

Health and Safety

Child Abuse and Neglect

As required by state law, any operator or employee of a childcare facility who has suspicion or evidence of child abuse or neglect shall report it immediately to the Mississippi Department of Human Services.

Emergencies

Please complete the "In Case of Emergency" contacts on our registration forms so that you or someone you appoint can be contacted for any situation that may arise. Your information will be in the child's file, and we will carry the information on field trips as well. If you will be at a phone number other than the ones listed on your child's registration forms, please note this number on the sign in/out sheet or leave it for your child's teacher. We want to be able to reach you instantly in case of an emergency!

If a child has a minor accident, he/she will be brought to the office where first aid will be administered. An accident form will be completed and given to the parent at the end of the day.

If a major accident occurs and medical attention is required, parents will be notified immediately. First aid will be administered until you arrive. If the medical emergency is the cause of an accident, a detailed accident report form will be completed and filed.

In the case that a parent cannot be reached immediately or if the nature of the illness or injury is such that there should be no delay in getting medical treatment, we will make prompt arrangements for obtaining necessary medical treatment without specific parental instruction, such as calling 911.

PLEASE NOTE: If an emergency occurs in the building and evacuation is necessary, all children will be taken to the parking lot of the TVRHA Office. You can pick up your child there.

Fire Evacuation

The building is regularly inspected by the Corinth Fire Department, and each classroom has an evacuation route posted. The children have regular monthly fire drills during which they practice their specified route away from the building. Infants and toddlers will be seated inside an evacuation crib with wheels and rolled out of the building. If there is smoke, fire damage, gas fumes, etc., you will be notified as quickly as possible so that you can pick up your child.

Our students are familiarized with fire prevention and safety. October is "Fire Prevention Month." We encourage your family to discuss where you will go for protection from a tornado and also plan a fire evacuation route and safe meeting place for your own home.

Illness and Medication

Do NOT bring sick children to school! Symptoms requiring your child to remain at home include: fever of 100 degrees or above, severe cold, undetermined rash or spots, red and draining eyes, upset stomach, chills, earache, sore throat, yellow-green runny nose, etc. Children who have had fever **MUST** be fever-free (without fever-reducing medication) for **24 hours** before returning to school. One sick child can quickly become a classroom of sick children.

We will call you to pick up your child if he/she becomes ill at school. Sick children will stay in the Lead Administrator's office until picked up. Your child is **NOT** allowed to return to school until he/she can participate in **ALL** activities—including outdoor play. If your child has a communicable disease, please notify the Lead Administrator's office immediately so that other parents can be alerted that their child was exposed. Any child absent with a communicable disease cannot return without a doctor's release. FUMC Little Blessings Preschool/Daycare does **NOT** dispense medication. Diaper cream, gas drops and teething gel will be allowed.

Insurance

First United Methodist Church carries general liability insurance and excess medical pay through Renasant Insurance Agency in Corinth.

Nutrition and Meals

FUMC Little Blessings Preschool/Daycare provides each child (**except infants**) with a nutritional breakfast, wholesome hot lunch, and a substantial afternoon snack.

Please let us know if we need to provide your child with breakfast when they come to the center. **Do not send any food to school with your child.**

Menus are posted outside the Lead Administrator's office for the week. All meals follow the nutritional guidelines set forth by the Mississippi State Department of Health and are approved by that department.

All children are encouraged to eat a variety of nutritious foods; however, a child will NEVER be forced to eat a food, and food will NEVER be used as punishment or reward. Please notify us in WRITING of any food allergies or diet restrictions that your child may have so that we will be able to provide an acceptable substitute.

Menus are tailored to meet the needs of the individuals of each age group. Also, Creepers, Toddlers, and 2's will have "sippy" cups and light snack foods available to them throughout the day. You are welcome to provide a bib for meal times, although we will make every effort to keep your child clean at meal times.

Infants are fed based on individual needs and schedules. Please provide bottles of formula or breast milk and baby food for your child's daily needs. The Infant room has a small refrigerator to keep bottles and cold foods refrigerated and a crock-pot to heat bottles. Bottles will NOT be heated in a microwave.

FUMC Little Blessings Preschool/Daycare participates in the USDA Child Nutrition Food Program. You will be asked to fill out a form upon enrollment and yearly thereafter. You are NOT required to divulge any information you feel is intrusive.

Severe Weather

All children participate in regular tornado drills. Teachers discuss thunder, lightening, and tornadoes with their students. The students are reassured that their teachers will take care of them and tell them exactly what to do if there is a tornado warning. Teachers stress the importance of following directions so that the children will be safe. The children practice getting down on the floor with their hands over their heads in the hallway—away from large glass windows in the classrooms. The Infants, Creepers, and Toddlers will go inside the hallway restrooms. Our teachers care about the safety and comfort of your child. They

are aware of the proper procedures, and they will lovingly comfort those who are frightened.

We will hold the children in the hallway when there is a tornado warning. We have a Weather Hazard Alert Radio and are also able to listen for the weather sirens. If you are concerned about your child when there is a tornado watch in our area, you are welcome to pick your child up at any time. Please do not put yourself in danger by driving to the school. We will take good care of your precious child

FUMC Little Blessings Preschool/Daycare will always close in accordance with the Corinth School District, and we reserve the right to close for other emergencies specific to our facility. We will advertise EMERGENCY CLOSINGS on Facebook and Twitter. Parents should check the Corinth School District website www.corinth.k12.ms.us for closing notifications.

Odds and Ends

Celebrations

Because of food allergies, parents are wish to bring birthday refreshments are **required** to provide a list of ingredients with the food items. Children will not be allowed to exchange birthday gifts or favors at school. If you are sending invitations to a party outside of school, please invite each child in the classroom. If you choose not to invite each classmate, please mail invitations to the individual homes so that no one's feelings are hurt by not receiving an invitation at school. Thank you for your consideration of the children's feelings!

Parents are welcome to donate a book to the classroom in your child's name for your child's birthday. This book would be presented as a special honor for your child on his/her birthday. This will help your child experience the joy of giving as well as increase their appreciation for books. Check with the teacher or Lead Administrator before making your purchase. Parent and grandparent volunteers may help with holiday parties. Please check with your child's teacher to sign up.

Clothing

Please dress your child in comfortable play clothes! Your child will play outside everyday that the weather permits. Therefore, clothes should be suitable for

indoor and outdoor play. Tennis shoes or other rubber-soled shoes are recommended. (Pointed toe boots are discouraged.) Also, your child should wear clothes that make diapering and toilet time easy for him/her. Please mark your child's name on all removable clothing (coats, jackets, sweaters, and hats). An extra set of clothes, including socks and underwear, must be brought to school daily or left in your child's cubby. Please change out the clothes seasonally as needed.

Diapering and Potty Training

The Infant, Creeper, and 2's classrooms have changing tables that are cleaned with disinfectant after each change. Please provide your child with diapers or pull-ups as needed by them. Please communicate with your child's teachers when you feel your child is ready for potty training. Your child will make a much easier transition if you and his/her teachers have similar goals and routines.

Items Brought From Home

Please do not allow your child to bring toys from home. We will notify you if we are having "show and tell."

Photographs

Photographs of the children participating in preschool activities may be taken from time to time. You may request in writing that your child NOT be photographed or videoed.

School pictures—group and individual—will be taken in the spring and the fall. You will receive advance notice.

Services At FUMC (at a future date)

The Lead Administrator will notify parents if there is a service (funeral, etc.) at FUMC on school days. When notified, parents should use the Jackson Street entrance to the Fellowship Hall.

Thank you!