



Parent Handbook 2023-2024

Who we are



Explorer Preschool is a ministry of Christ United Methodist Church.

Our goal is to provide a quality, caring, child-centered, developmentally appropriate program for children ages 2 - 5.

In addition to our 9 month preschool, we also offer an optional summer preschool and school-age program for students ages 2 - 9. Summer camp has a different fee and tuition structure than the regular preschool year.

We strive to nurture each child's emotional, social, physical, cognitive and creative needs in a safe and loving environment. As a community, our greatest hope is that our students develop a love of learning with an insatiable curiosity, and build life-long friendships that begin in our program.

Curriculum



The curriculum is well planned and adapted to each year's group's needs. It covers a variety of subjects and themes throughout the year. We offer a play based program, which means that we believe children

learn best through play and positive interactions with their teachers and peers.

We believe that play is, and should be the main method from which children learn new skills and that they benefit from learning about the world as authentically as possible.

Children are exposed to age appropriate social skills, muscle development, environmental awareness, academic basics, and some basic Christian foundations. Some of the daily/monthly activities the children engage in include the following: singing, playing, exercise, storytelling, manners, art projects, language and literacy, motor skill practice, sensory activities, social studies, science, math, and holiday celebrations. We include daily active outdoor activities, (weather permitting), or indoor activities in the large gym. Teachers share lesson plans with parents to keep them informed of what their children are learning and working on.

Enrollment



Explorer Preschool is for children two to five years old. (Children need to be 2 by September 1st)

The program meets every week day morning from 8:45am to 12:00pm.

Enrollment options consist of 2, 3 or 5 days a week.

We strive to keep a small teacher/child ratio. Every classroom has 2 teachers.

When the class has reached the maximum limit, a waitlist will be formed.

In order to secure a spot in our program, a registration form must be submitted. The director will contact parents/guardians to inform them if there is a spot available or not. If a child is offered a spot, a one time registration and supply fee must be paid, digital paperwork must be signed and a current

immunization record must be submitted. Immunization records need to be updated as soon as new vaccinations are administered.

Explorer Preschool program will operate on a similar schedule as the local school districts. Sessions will not be scheduled during public holidays. A calendar detailing preschool breaks and events will be shared at 'Back to School' night and on our website.

Fees



New students enrolling will be required to pay a one-time non-refundable fee of \$50 per child.

New and continuing students will be required to pay a non refundable \$120 supply fee each school year.


Tuition is due by the 5th of each month. Payments are made via the Brightwheel app with debit or credit card. You can pay with cash or check directly to the director.

Please make sure you pay your tuition on time so that your child can continue to attend school. If tuition is not paid by the 5th of each month, a \$20 late fee will be added to your account. If tuition is more than one week overdue, you may be at risk of losing your child's spot in our program.

We encourage families to set up recurring payments via the Brightwheel app. Auto-payments can be stopped at any time. It is a great way to avoid forgetting to pay and subsequently getting a late fee.

Please note: you are paying for your child's place in the class, not the actual days your child attends. This means that occasional sick or missed days will not be taken off of your tuition. Tuition is averaged out for the school year, so tuition rates will remain the same, regardless of holiday closures. Please see our Covid-19 section in this handbook for more information related to pandemic closures and illnesses.

Withdrawal/Schedule Change



We require you to provide us with a 30 day withdrawal notice. If you withdraw from the preschool in the middle of a month for any reason, you are responsible for the entire month's tuition. In lieu of 30 days' notice, we require one month's payment.

Parent-Teacher Communication



Parent teacher communication is very important to us.

Teachers will upload lesson plans to the Brightwheel app on a weekly or monthly basis. The plan will cover the activities the children will be doing in the classroom. Teachers will occasionally send out letters to parents with specific information about their class. Those will be placed in your child's cubby.

If you would like more time to speak to a teacher about your child, other than a quick update at drop off or pick up time, please reach out to your child's teachers to schedule a time to meet with them.

Feel free to communicate with your child's teacher directly via the Brightwheel app with any questions or concerns. The best time to reach our teachers is either before school starts or after class ends up until 1:00 PM on school days. Any other hours our teachers are 'off the clock' and will not be checking their messages until the next school morning.

If you need to contact the preschool director with questions, concerns, absence notices, illness reports or anything else, you can send a direct message to 'Admin' via the Brightwheel app.

However, if we don't respond in the communication app and it's urgent, please call the preschool at (801)483-2715 and leave a voicemail. Voicemails are delivered to our email and if it's an urgent notification, we will contact you ASAP. Send emails to: explorerpreschool@christumcutah.org.

The director will send out important reminders, newsletters and other information on a regular basis via the Brightwheel app. More information will be emailed to parents on how to download the app and connect to our school once your child is enrolled and the school year approaches.

Drop off & Pick up



All children must be accompanied to the classroom by a parent/guardian.

Preschool drop off is from 8:45 - 9:00AM.

Pick up is from 11:45 - 12:00 PM.

*Please call the preschool if you will be more than 5 minutes late picking your child up.

If you are late to pick your child up, a fee of \$5 per 10 minutes will be added to your account. This policy will be enforced as late pick-ups cause our teachers to be late clocking out and getting their own children home or getting to another job or appointment.

Please do not park in the spots directly in front of the East Preschool doors. It presents a safety hazard as people back up and children exit the school from this area.

Please park in the larger east parking area or in the northwest parking lot.

Please drive slowly in our parking lot; we love our children.

Sign In / Sign Out



Every child has to be checked in AND out every day via our Brightwheel app.

We ask that you scan the QR code for checking in and out at the outdoor entrances already. There are QR codes located on all the classroom doors. These codes are NOT specific for each classroom, so you may scan any code around the school. This is a safety precaution we take for your peace of mind, and for Child Care Licensing.

Please ask your child's teacher to check them in or out if you forgot your phone.

Child Guidance



At Explorer Preschool, we have basic rules for the health and safety of the children. Definite guidelines for behavior are established so children know what is expected of them. This helps them to feel secure. We tailor our expectations to fit the developmental levels of the children to minimize frustrations and inappropriate behavior. We arrange the environment and offer a wide variety of age appropriate activities based on the interests of the children. Our goal in guiding children's behavior is to ensure their safety and to assist them in developing self-confidence, self-esteem, self-control, self-discipline and sensitivity in their interactions with others. In helping to direct the child, the following guidance techniques are used:

- modeling positive behavior
- redirection consistent with the child's needs
- stating clear limits and involving children in setting those limits
- having appropriate expectations for children according to their development
- teaching children to express their feelings in appropriate ways
- teaching children problem-solving and conflict resolution skills and encouraging them to use those skills with their peers
- respecting and reflecting children's feelings

- allowing children to experience natural and logical consequences to their behavior
- if needed, and only to be used sparingly, a child may be removed from the situation to calm down.

This time shall be no longer than one minute per year of age.

If a child has persistent behavioral problems, staff will use a variety of guidance strategies, depending on the individual needs of the child. These strategies may include a behavior management program. Families will be consulted if a child has persistent behavioral problems in the center that require a consistent systematic approach. We rely heavily on the expert advice and guidance of the Children's Center. After observation from a professional, a detailed plan will be set into place. In circumstances where your child poses a threat to other students it will lead to an expulsion.

Health and Safety



All students will wash their hands upon arriving at the preschool. and throughout the day

Cleaning procedures include washing and sanitizing all used toys daily, sanitizing all surfaces in the classroom daily.

Explorer Preschool follows the recommendations taken from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the CDC and the Utah Department of Health. For your child's protection and consideration of the teachers and other children, please follow these recommendations. Please be alert to your child's physical condition before bringing him/her to preschool. A child should not be brought to class when any of the following symptoms exist:

1. Fever or chills
2. Vomiting and/or diarrhea

3. Common cold (until symptoms are improving for 72 hours)
4. Sore throat
5. Cough
6. Body or muscle aches
7. Congestion or runny nose
8. Fatigue
9. Any unexplained rash
10. Pink eye and other eye infections

We require that your child be free from any of the symptoms listed above for at least 48 hours before he/she is brought back to class.

You will be called if your child becomes ill while attending preschool. Any child who is sick and awaiting parent pickup will be separated immediately from their classroom and placed in a designated sick area until a parent can pick them up.

Please notify the director if your child becomes ill and receives a positive covid-19 test or another contagious disease so parents of the other children can be notified. We will never release the name of any child in this situation, but we must alert parents if their child may have been exposed to a contagious illness.

The director reserves the right to cancel class due to inclement weather or a significant health event, such as a large-scale covid outbreak or multiple confirmed covid cases within the school. You will be notified by a Brightwheel message and/or email if this is necessary.

Protocols for Covid-19 illnesses and exposures are fluid and may be subject to change.

Please notify the director or your child's teacher of an expected absence as soon as you know the child will not be attending. We realize that you may not know until the morning of preschool that your child is

sick, but please call the preschool number or message us on the app so that we are aware of which children to expect each day.

If there are any significant changes in your life that may affect your child's behavior (i/e new baby, death in the family, move to a new house, divorce, etc....) or if your child has any physical or emotional concerns, please let your child's teacher know. You may also talk to the director regarding any concerns you may have.

COVID-19 Considerations



As per CDC guidelines:

If you test positive for Covid 19: (Isolate)

Everyone, regardless of vaccination status stay home for 5 days.

If you have no symptoms or your symptoms are resolving after 5 days, you can leave your house. Continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days. If you have a fever, continue to stay home until your fever resolves.

If You Were Exposed to Someone with COVID-19 (Quarantine)

If you:

Have been boosted OR Completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine within the last 6 months OR Completed the primary series of J&J vaccine within the last 2 months. Wear a mask around others for 10 days. Test on day 5, if possible. If you develop symptoms, get a test and stay home.

If you:

Completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine over 6 months ago and are not boosted OR Completed the primary series of J&J over 2 months ago and are not boosted OR Are unvaccinated stay home for 5 days. After that continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days.

If you can't quarantine you must wear a mask for 10 days. Test on day 5 if possible. If you develop symptoms get a test and stay home

Protocols for Covid-19 illnesses and exposures are fluid and may be subject to change.

Covid-19 Pandemic Tuition Policy



In the event of a large covid outbreak we will follow recommendations from the Utah Department of Health as well as church leadership on how we will move forward with the safety and health of our students, teachers and families as the highest priority. In order to continue paying our expenses, we will not be offering refunds or discounts if our preschool or a class in the preschool is shut down for two weeks or less. If we have to do a long-term closure, we will devise a plan to refund or credit tuition if the situation calls for it.

Emergency and Non-Emergency Medical Procedures



In case of minor accident or injury:

Staff will administer first aid to the child. The child's parents will be called, if necessary. If any treatment is administered, an injury report will be filled out by the teacher and signed by the parent. One copy will

be placed in the child's file, and the other will go home with the parent.

In case of serious illness or accident:

The staff will immediately call 911. Emergency First Aid will be administered by a staff member if necessary. All permanent staff are required to be first aid/CPR certified and recertified every two years. The parent will be called by another staff member once 911 is called. If unreachable we will call emergency contacts listed on the child's record. The incident will be documented in writing and placed in the child's Brightwheel profile.

Emergency Preparedness



In the event of a natural disaster, fire, or other emergency situation requiring a need to evacuate the preschool, the following steps will be followed:

- Children will be escorted out the nearest doors to the farthest part of the parking lot by teachers.
- Attendance will be taken by the teacher(s) with the group of children.
- Teachers will bring cell phones in order to contact parents and emergency personnel as necessary.
- If deemed necessary, a shelter-in-place protocol will go into effect until the situation is declared safe by authorities.
- Staff will practice emergency plans on a regular basis to ensure preparedness in the event of an actual emergency.

Items Your Child Needs to Bring to Explorer Preschool



Once off:

Two complete changes of clothing (including socks) for ALL ages in a Ziplock bag.

For non-potty trained children, a sleeve of diapers and a container of wipes.

Every day:

A labeled backpack.

A labeled water bottle.

A snack.

Dress your child in clothing appropriate for play. (We do lots of messy activities).

During winter months wear warm shoes and a coat. We will inform parents if we intend to go outside to play in the snow, in which case, please send snow outfits.

If possible, please leave personal toys at home. This will eliminate lost toys or disputes among the other children.

Each child will have a cubby to put their personal belongings in. Please check their cubbies regularly.

Snacks, Celebrations and Special Occasions



Parents are to supply a small snack. We ask that parents send a snack consisting of crackers and/or fruit and/or cheese. Please make sure your child has a nutritious breakfast at home to help keep them

sustained until they can get home for lunch.

Children may wish to share the excitement of their birthday by bringing a special prize/treat for the class to enjoy. If you'd like to provide a small treat/snack for your child's birthday celebration, please make sure you run it by your child's teacher in advance and make sure it is store bought and nut free.

If families would like to bring something non-edible for their child to celebrate with, we recommend a little goodie or goodie bag with item/items such as pencils, stickers, bubbles, etc. Please consider choking hazards when making decisions.

Holidays and birthdays are very special at Explorer Preschool. We understand the importance of celebrations and want to ensure our students experience an exciting preschool event. We celebrate Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, Mothers day/Father's Day/Special Person's day, and Easter. We encourage all families to share their cultures and traditions if they so choose. We love learning about differences and celebrating them.

Moving Up



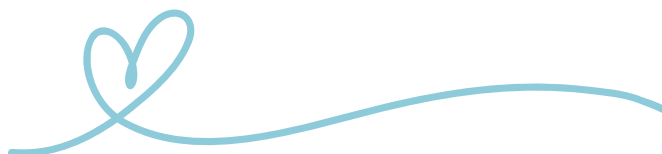
As a rule, we move children to the next age group/classroom at the beginning of the new school year each September. There are many important cognitive, social, and emotional milestones that take place during the early childhood years, and we strive to keep children in a setting that is most appropriate to their individual development. Because we have small classes, each child receives a great deal of individual attention, so you can rest assured that the teachers are making sure that their needs are being met. It is our highest priority at Explorer Preschool to encourage growth and development for each child to make sure he or she reaches his or her highest potential.

In some instances, children might benefit from moving up earlier, skipping a class or being held back. If this is the case with your child, the director will contact you directly, explain the reasoning behind the suggested change, and confirm that this is in line with the wishes of the parent/guardian. Such a decision will never be made without consulting parents/guardians.

Welcome to Explorer Preschool.



Contact us:



Cornel Faith | Director

explorerpreschool@christumcutah.org

801.486.5473 ext. 120

www.christumcutah.org/explorerpreschool

