

First Methodist Preschool

Philosophy and Goal

We strive to provide optimum care for each child in a group setting while recognizing individuality. Staff provides your child with a nurturing Christian environment where the children learn, develop, and grow. We believe that children are natural explorers, and they learn best by doing. Children are active participants in the learning process using their minds, bodies, and feelings as teachers guide children balanced with directives.

Mission Statement

- *Emphasis on Christian Education

- *Each child to grow in understanding and love for themselves, their families, and others in the world

- *Each child grows in awareness that God loves them, and Jesus is a special friend

- *Each child grows in the ability to think, solve problems, and develop language skills

- *Each child enjoys creative expression in music, art, and play

Curriculum Your child will be taught a developmentally appropriate curriculum based on the individual child's abilities, interests, and learning style. Each teacher in all age groups is responsible for lesson plans to ensure the child will grow and develop. Plans cover all domains: social, emotional, cognitive, physical, language, and communication. Play is part of learning and as children play, they learn new skills.

First Methodist Preschool accepts children ages 4 weeks to 5 years old and we accept children for care without regard to race, color, creed or national origin of the child or the child's parents. (School Age Programs and age groups will be scheduled according to need each summer)

FIRST METHODIST PRESCHOOL IS LOCATED IN A GANG FREE ZONE WHICH MEANS CRIMINAL OFFENSES ARE SUBJECT TO A HARsher PENALTY WITH 1,000 FEET OF SCHOOL.

TEXAS RISING STAR STATUS

First Methodist Preschool is a Texas Rising 4 Star Center which means we have an agreement to serve Texas Workforce Commission subsidized children and we voluntarily meet requirements that exceed the State's Minimum Child Care Licensing Standards. Rising Star is a voluntary, quality- based childcare rating system that includes Training, Positive interactions, Play based interactions, support for self-regulation, and lesson planning and curriculum. (Texasrisingstar.org)

CCS Eligibility

CCG (Child Care Group) provides services to clients referred to our program by several community agencies. The family's eligibility for childcare service is determined by the agency making the referral.

Enrollment Process

Our enrollment process requires parents to complete several forms and furnish information on their child and themselves. (Admission form, medical information, etc.)

We will maintain confidentiality of this information. Please update information whenever there is a change. Sign acknowledgement that you have received the parent handbook. We will update you with any changes.

Procare Solutions Software and Parent Communication

Procare is a Child Care Management software, Parent engagement, and automated billing program which is used at FMP. Upon enrollment you will be sent an invitation e mail to join the parent portal to participate in the benefits of using this software. This will also be used as YOU sign your child in and out. Parents may also use this software to update contact information at any time without staff assistance. We still need a paper copy of your immunization record. Also the Procare software app will allow you to message your child's teacher and to receive pictures, information, and messages from that teacher.

Schedules

Hours of Operation: 7 am to 5:30 pm year-round (holidays are listed)

Holidays:	New Year's Day		Martin Luther King Day
	Good Friday		Memorial Day
	Juneteenth	July 4	Labor Day
	Thanksgiving (Thurs & Fri)		Christmas (announced each year)

If any of the above closures fall on Sat or Sun, the school will be closed on the appropriate Monday or Friday in line with other community businesses.

INCLEMENT WEATHER: In the event of inclement weather, First Methodist Preschool will follow the same calendar as Mexia ISD. If Mexia ISD closes schools, Preschool will also be closed. Families should be aware of local news postings of school closures. Text messages will also be sent to our families.

There is always the possibility of reduced hours or closure in the event of Pandemic situation. This will be announced in advance.

Daily Schedules

Daily schedules and activity plans will be posted. These include opportunities for art, music, library, manipulatives, housekeeping, science, blocks, indoor play, outdoor play, chapel, and puppetry.

Screen Time

Media equipment is not permitted for use by children under 24 months of age. Any age-appropriate media is used sparingly and in accordance with the relationship with the lesson plan. Screen time is never used during meal or snack time and not within 1 hour of nap time. Older children's screen time will not exceed a total of 60 minutes in a day.

Promotion of Indoor and Outdoor Physical Activity

We believe in and support the need for physical activity each day.

When children participate in physical activity, multiple health benefits accrue such as: builds healthy bones and muscles, improves muscular strength and endurance, reduces the risk of developing chronic disease risk factors, improves self-esteem, and reduces stress and anxiety. In addition, cognitive skills and motor skills develop which also affect the brain's physiology.

*Infants will be given opportunities for physical activity, including supervised tummy time.

*Toddlers will participate in a minimum of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

*Preschoolers and School ages who attend full days will participate in a minimum of 90 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

FMP will promote all children's active play every day. Children will have ample opportunity to do moderate to vigorous activities, such as running, climbing, dancing, skipping, and jumping, to the extent of their abilities.

All children will participate each day in:

*Two occasions of active play outdoors when weather permits

*Two or more structured or teacher led activities or games that promote movement over the course of the day.

*Continuous opportunities to develop and practice age-appropriate gross motor and movement skills

Physical activity may take place in the classroom or on the playground when the weather permits. During the outside time (if inclement weather) teachers will plan activities for movement and exercise inside the building.

When participating in physical activity, children's clothing should protect them from sun exposure and permit easy movement. Footwear should provide support for running and climbing. Closed back shoes are preferred.

If provided by parents, FMP will apply insect repellent and or sunscreen as instructed by parents. This must be provided by parents and labeled with the child's name.

Water Play

We will have limited water play as an indoor and outdoor activity. Water play will consist of: Sprinklers, Mistlers, Standing sensory tables, and other slow flow water equipment. Outside sprinkler days are normally once time per year in the summer. Permission slip is attached to enrollment form.

Drop off and Pick Up Procedures

Drop off deadline.

All students must arrive before 9:30 a.m. daily. There are many reasons for this, the main reason being that late arrivals disrupt the classroom routine, and the late arriver misses valuable curriculum time in the classroom. Late arrivers struggle with naptime, which prevents other children who are ready to nap from resting. The 9:30 deadline is best for all children at FMP. We do make exceptions for medical appointments with a doctor's note; however, we hope that parents can plan for afternoon appointments so that children's daily schedules are not disrupted. We know that this is not always possible, and we are understanding in those cases.

Drop off/Pick up

All children arrive at the door under the covered walkway and are walked to their classroom by parents. All children must be released from a guardian to a teacher in their classroom. Children must never be left in the hall or at the stairs.

Children are only released to those authorized by parents on enrollment form. Those that pick up must be 18 years or older with ID. Anytime there is a need to ask for photo ID to verify identity of an individual picking up a child, FMP IS REQUIRED TO KEEP A COPY OF THE ID ON FILE. For your child to benefit from our program, it is important that they arrive before morning group time and activities. Please pick up promptly before closing time. Late fees (\$4.00 per minute) will be assessed after 5:30 pm.

TUITION POLICIES

REGISTRATION FEE

When a child registers for the first time at FMP (or re-registers after being withdrawn) there is a Non-refundable registration fee of \$100.00. This fee is paid in order to hold the spot for the child who will be enrolling.

MONTHLY TUITION

During the Mexia ISD public school year, only full-time children will be registered at First Methodist Preschool. Part time is only available during the summer term and is determined from space available and should be arranged with the director in advance.

Tuition is paid in advance. Parents may pay monthly OR twice a month as long as tuition is paid in advance. The Monthly fees are as follows:

*0-17 Months	\$850.00
*18-35 Months	\$750.00
*36 Months and Up	\$650.00

Monthly tuition is determined by the age of the child on the first day of the month when the tuition is billed. Invoices are e-mailed and may be seen on Pro care portal.

Any tuition refunds are considered by the director on an individual basis keeping in mind all circumstances.

Absences

There is no provision for absent time such as vacation time or illness credit for any child enrolled.

Tuition late charge

There will be a late charge of \$50.00 added to accounts not paid on time. There will be a 5-day grace period. Accounts that are habitually paid late are subject to additional action. Text reminders will be sent about late tuition.

Late pick up charges for after 5:30 pick up

Children should be picked up promptly by 5:30 pm. There will be a late charge of \$4.00 per minute the parent is late. Repeated tardiness may result in a request to withdraw the child.

Ill Child Pick Up

All children who are being sent home due to illness must be picked up within 30 minutes of notification. Our school is not approved or staffed for "Ill Child Care". This is also important to lessen the time sick children are in the building and help lessen the spread of communicable diseases. A late fee of \$4 per min will be assessed for any pickup of an ill child outside of the 30 min window.

To return after being sent home:

Must be 24 hours free of symptoms and fever without medication and bring a Dr. note.

ILLNESS POLICY

The goal of FMP is to provide a safe and healthy environment for all children and staff. In order to accomplish this, we use the following guidelines from the minimum standards for Child Care Centers: Children are not admitted to Preschool if one or more of the following exists:

1. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities including outdoor play.
2. The illness results in a greater need for care than caregivers can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children in care.
3. The child has one of the following:
 - a. Temperature of 100.4 or greater
 - b. Signs or symptoms including lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea*(definition of this depends on child and age)
 - c. Two or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, unexplained rash or other signs that the child may be ill.
4. The child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease and does not have medical documentation to indicate that he is no longer contagious.
5. A child returning after communicable disease must be free of fever and all symptoms for at least 24 hours without medication.

FMP uses guidelines from TDH and the CDC. We use our best judgement as to when to send children home and allow them to return. The above policies will be followed to the best of our ability. However, in many cases this is a judgement call, and our decision is the final authority. We do not administer any oral medication.

INFANT ROOM POLICIES

Pacifiers cannot have any attachments such as a clip or stuffed animal, etc.

Please label all items related to feedings before bringing to Preschool. Teething bead necklaces or bracelets of all kinds are prohibited.

Safe sleep for infants 12 months old or younger must be consistent with the rules in subchapter H of minimum standards. (A Safe Sleep document should be signed by the parent upon enrollment) This includes no bedding, blankets, pillows, stuffed animals, etc. Pacifiers will be used for calming as needed, but hopefully as soon as the child is calm the pacifier will be placed in the cubby or bed.

Quiet space is provided for breastfeeding, breathing treatments, medication, or any other reason a parent needs time with their own child. Infant Care instructions should be completed and updated any time needed (at least monthly). Parents can find more information about breastfeeding and local resources in the designated parent resource area.

FAMILY / PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parent involvement is extremely important at FMP. By seeing this involvement children can build confidence through parent awareness. We encourage you to learn about the development of children and how we apply it to our daily operations. As families become involved the collaboration and effort placed into your child is well rounded. Conferences may be requested anytime and should be arranged through the director. Information on child growth and development is available in the Parent Resource Area.

Parent in person participation is limited under current guidelines limiting visitors inside the facility. We always attempt to provide photos, videos, and verbal descriptions of any activities. Your child needs your permission and approval to participate in any field trips. You will be notified in advance. Younger children are never taken on field trips.

We e mail and distribute monthly “newsletters” that outline important dates at school. We also regularly send Parent Letters from the Frog Street Curriculum.

If you wish to send cupcakes, cake, etc. on your child’s birthday, please make arrangements to do so. After school hours parties – we will pass out invitations as long as the entire class is invited.

Challenging Behavior and Discipline

Children attending FMP will not be subject to harsh and/or cruel punishment, including spankings. Children will not be humiliated or subjected to abusive or profane language. No punishment is associated with food, napping, or toilet training. Discipline and guidance will be consistent and based upon an understanding of the individual child's needs and used to help teach the child acceptable behavior. Teachers shall seek to redirect aggressive behavior and or assist in finding a replacement behavior for all mishaps. You will be asked to sign the Discipline policy as assigned by the state of Texas.

We will inform parents regularly of any challenging behavior using phone, email, etc. when behaviors are repeated with consistency and cause delay in the productivity of the classroom. If needed, we will schedule a conference with family to discuss what is in the best interest of the child as well as the center and other children. The conference may include an action plan and weekly progress until the issues have been resolved. If issues cannot be resolved and agreed upon by the parents and the school, additional actions may be taken including the termination of attendance.

If any accommodations are needed, we will support families and children and keep families informed. (Include assist in finding therapies, providing supporting documentation, provide materials and resources, and provide opportunities for inclusiveness)

SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT

Screening and assessment are an important part of early care and education.

- *To learn about development of each child
- *to detect early signs of delay
- *To improve curriculum practices as needed
- *to communicate with parents about needs

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Weekly Menus

The children will be furnished a well-balanced lunch each day with a variety of foods, color, textures to include grain, fresh fruit, vegetables, and foods that meet dietary guidelines for Americans established by the USDA. We will always ensure drinking water is available and will not serve beverages with added sugars. We serve whole milk to children aged 2 and up. We serve 2% to older than 2. Following the recommendation of American Academy of Pediatrics, children under age 12 months will not be served juice.

Each class has a designated breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack schedule. If your child is arriving too late to participate at this time, please serve them before arriving. Please do not send food with your child unless you are providing for the whole class.

All staff preparing food have food handler certificates on file. If your child has a food allergy, we will need authorization from the physician to serve any special diet different from the posted menu. There is a required form to confirm any food allergy to be included in your child's file. Article and guidelines attached.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

For the protection of your child as well as the other children, your child must have all vaccinations required by the Texas Department of Health. You must provide an immunization record upon enrollment and provide updates on going. For more information, please visit the website at www.tdh.state.tx.us/immunize. Staff members are encouraged but not required to receive available vaccines annually. See the website for requirements if a family is opposed to immunizations.

FIRST METHODIST PRESCHOOL DOES NOT DISTRIBUTE MEDICATIONS OF ANY KIND.

WE WILL ONLY USE TOPICAL OINTMENTS PROVIDED BY THE PARENTS.

VISION AND HEARING SCREENINGS

State law requires vision and hearing screenings for 4-year-old children. As a convenience to our parents, we offer these screenings every spring. We plan for qualified professionals to perform these screenings and you will be notified if the screenings indicate a need for further testing.

TRANSPORTATION

The Preschool bus will only be used for Field Trips for Pre-K age children. Seat belts are required, and the bus is equipped with fire extinguishers and first aid kits. Staff in charge will carry cell phones so the center can be contacted in case of any situation. Emergency numbers and other important information will be carried for each child. Permission slips are also required.

PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING A MEDICAL EMERGENCY

Every child enrollment form includes authorization for medical emergency treatment. Our teachers and administrators are trained in Pediatric First aid and CPR. Minor First Aid needs are handled here in the office. If additional care is needed, parents are contacted immediately so they can come to FMP and make decisions about that care. If it is an urgent need, our administration uses the MOST IMMEDIATELY ACCESSIBLE MEDICAL FACILITY – Parkview Regional Hospital in Mexia – to secure medical attention as needed.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

First Methodist Preschool's first responsibility is the event of an emergency is the safety and security of the children in our care. Emergency plans are in place and will be practiced and followed in the event of an emergency.

Fire: Fire drills practiced Monthly.

All teachers are trained monthly in the fire evacuation plan, and each classroom has a posted fire evacuation plan. In the event of the need for a fire evacuation, children will be evacuated from the building and will gather in the back parking lot away from the building. We will then wait for further instructions from the local Fire Department. We will move to Relocation protocol as needed.

Severe Weather:

In the event of emergency weather situation, Preschool will follow our weather drill protocol and relocate children to our main interior hallway. We will monitor and take advice from our local city officials as to when it is safe to return to our normal schedules. **Severe weather drills are practiced quarterly.**

Shelter in Place

In the event of an outside threat to our center or a threat in the area we will initiate our Shelter in Place plan. All outside doors to the center will be locked as usual and there will be no entering or exiting the building during the Shelter in Place, until we receive the "all clear" from local law enforcement. **This drill practiced by staff Quarterly.**

Lock-Down

In the event of an immediate threat to our school, or in our building we will have a lock-down. We will **not only** have exterior doors locked as usual, but all classes will remain in their classrooms. We will turn off lights and keep children quiet and out of visibility to doors and windows. Teachers will review this process regularly.

Relocation:

In the event our school needs to relocate students from our building, the following places will be used. Our first approved site is the First Baptist Church CLC (500 E. Carthage Street, Mexia) which is nearby. Our second site (if more distance is required) is the gym of the old Mexia Junior High (new Administration Building 616 North Red River).

PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF CHILDREN

Every FMP teacher receives pre-employment and also annual training on this subject. Per Texas law we are required to report suspected child abuse and neglect to the proper authorities. Employees are required to document all suspected issues. We understand we are the gatekeepers at FMP and must be trained to understand, recognize, and prevent issues and respond accordingly.

NAPTIME BELONGINGS

We ask that children bring a small blanket labeled with the child's name (no pillow) to be used at nap time. We will provide cots, mats, sheets, etc. as needed. We ask that blankets be taken home every Friday to be washed and returned. We will wash the sheets here at FMP.

HOLIDAY PARTIES AND PROGRAMS

Special activities will be available to children enrolled at various times throughout the year. Annual events include: Valentines Party Easter Egg Hunt Halloween Party Christmas Party and Others to be announced.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Parents are encouraged to voice concerns, comments, complaints, etc. so that these can be handled as soon as possible. We feel that by hearing from parents we have opportunities to make changes and improvements to benefit all children enrolled. By hearing parent concerns, we have opportunity to investigate and communicate so that the best interests of the children are always served. Parent feedback and input is always welcome, and we encourage parents to utilize the suggestion box located in the parent resource area.

We ask that concerns be brought to the Director for handling since teachers are normally responsible for children and are not at liberty to discuss items while children are present. The director will talk to the teachers involved and follow up with concerned parents. Conferences may be arranged at any time.

If further help is needed, the director will notify the Pastor or Board member to contact the parent as needed.

POLICY CHANGE PROCESS

If policy changes are necessary, parents will be notified in writing. Also, this notification must be documented with date and signature to ensure all parents are informed and understand any changes that must be made.

ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNICATION

The parents may review a copy of the minimum standards and the center's most recent licensing inspection report located in the office. The parent may contact the local Licensing office at 800-772-2269, the P R S child abuse hotline at 800-352-5400 and the P R S website at www.dfps.state.tx.us.

The Preschool is regulated by the Department of Family and Protective Services. You can find out more about the regulation of childcare facilities by visiting their website at www.txchildcaresearch.org.

What Are Major Food Allergens?

While more than 160 foods can cause allergic reactions in people with food allergies, the law identifies the eight most common allergenic foods. These foods account for 90 percent of food allergic reactions and are the food sources from which many other ingredients are derived.

The eight foods identified by the law are:

1. **Milk** (whey)
2. **Eggs**
3. **Fish** (e.g., bass, flounder, cod)
4. **Crustacean shellfish** (e.g., crab, lobster, shrimp)
5. **Tree nuts** (e.g., almonds, walnuts, pecans)
6. **Peanuts**
7. **Wheat**
8. **Soybeans** (lecithin)

These eight foods, and any ingredient that contains protein derived from one or more of them, are designated as "major food allergens" by FALCPA.

Know the Symptoms

Symptoms of food allergies typically appear from within a few minutes to two hours after a person has eaten the food to which he or she is allergic.

Allergic reactions can include:

- Hives
- Flushed skin or rash.
- Tingling or itchy sensation in the mouth
- Face, tongue, or lip swelling

- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Abdominal cramps
- Coughing or wheezing
- Dizziness and/or lightheadedness
- Swelling of the throat and vocal cords
- Difficulty breathing
- Loss of consciousness

About Other Allergens

Persons may still be allergic to - and have serious reactions to - foods *other* than the eight foods identified by the law. So, always be sure to read the food label's ingredient list carefully to avoid the food allergens in question.

Reference

<http://www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm079311.htm>

Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

Breastfeeding Promotion and Support in WIC

Last Published: 04/22/2016

Research has shown that there is no better food than breast milk for a baby's first year of life. Breastfeeding provides many health, nutritional, economical, and emotional benefits to mother and baby. Since a major goal of the WIC Program is to improve the nutritional status of infants, WIC mothers are encouraged to breastfeed their infants. WIC has historically promoted breastfeeding to all pregnant women as the optimal infant feeding choice, unless medically contraindicated.

- WIC mothers choosing to breastfeed are provided information through counseling and breastfeeding educational materials.
- Breastfeeding mothers receive follow-up support through peer counselors.
- Breastfeeding mothers are eligible to participate in WIC longer than non-breastfeeding mothers.
- Mothers who exclusively breastfeed their infants receive an enhanced food package.
- Breastfeeding mothers can receive breast pumps, breast shells or nursing supplements to help support the initiation and continuation of breastfeeding.

Local WIC Office
403 N. Bailey St.
Mexia, TX 76667

254-562-0923

Reference:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/breastfeeding-promotion-and-support-wic>

Developmental Milestones

Ages & Stages Website

<https://agesandstages.com/>

<https://agesandstages.com/free-resources/asq-calculator/>

<https://agesandstages.com/asq-parent-conference-forms/>



Act Early Texas

<https://actearlytexas.org/>



Klara's Children's Center ECI

<https://www.kcceci.org/>



CDC Website & Tracking App

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/screening.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones-app.html>

Parent/Guardian Education Signature Page

(Depending on current circumstances, some of these orientation processes for parents may have to be performed virtually)

Tour of the Facility

Introduction to teaching staff

Visit with classroom teacher.

Opportunity is available upon request for an extended visit to the classroom by both parent and child for a period of time to allow both to be comfortable.

Overview of Parent Handbook

Policy for arrival, late arrival, and departure

Explanation of Texas Rising Star Quality Certification

Encouragement to share elements of my CCS enrollment so that the provider may assist, if applicable.

Overview of Family support services and resources in the community

Child development and developmental milestones provided.

CLI Developmental Checklists (Children’s Learning Institute) – this is the tool used to assess children twice a year/ beginning and end to have information to share with parents. (October or November and April or May. This tool is also used as needed in between those times.

Statement about limiting technology use on site to improve communication (limit cell phone use) In order to facilitate better communication between parent and teacher and also between parent and child- it is best if there is no distraction from electronic devices at the school.

Statement reflecting the role and influence of families.

The components of Family Orientation have been performed, and I have read the parent handbook and I have been given the opportunity to ask questions.

Child’s Name

Date

Parent Signature

Director Signature