

## **Philosophy**

The purpose of the FUMC Learning Center is to minister to children through quality early childhood education while nurturing Christian values; and equipping children with skills for social, emotional, intellectual, physical, and spiritual development. The FUMC Learning Center is a Christian oriented by not denominationally sectarian program.

Under the leadership of qualified teachers, our classes include a balance of guided play activities, creative art work, music outdoor play, conversation, story time, dramatic play, and other developmentally appropriate activities.

It is the task of the director, teachers, and other helping adults to interact, observe and develop ways of managing and structuring the nurturing environment so that each child can construct his changing image of himself and the world around him.

## **Program Goals**

Provide for children's social development by:

1. Helping children learn to get along with adults and children.
2. Encouraging habits of courtesy and respect.
3. Providing equipment and materials which encourage children to play together.

Provide for children's emotional development by:

1. Accepting children and their feelings.
2. Offering opportunities for children to make choices.
3. Helping children see themselves as persons of worth.
4. Showing them how to release feelings in an acceptable way.

Provide for children's intellectual development by:

1. Enriching the child's background and cultural activities.
2. Creating basic readiness for school experiences through varied learning activities.
3. Offering developmentally appropriate field trips.

Provide for children's physical development by:

1. Providing a nutritious lunch and snacks.
2. Planning for rest and quiet time.
3. Protecting their health and safety.
4. Providing indoor and outdoor activities that encourage movement and large muscle development.

Provide for children's spiritual development by:

1. Teaching that each person is a child of God therefore worthy of love, acceptance and support.
2. Modeling Christian attitudes and behavior.
3. Fostering an environment of love and appreciation.
4. Having a short once per week chapel time for children 18 months and older.

## **Policy for Operation**

### **Hours and Days of Operation**

The holidays that the FUMC Learning Center is closed are but not limited to: New Year's Day, MLK Day, Good Friday, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Parents will be notified by the Director of other closing dates.

The FUMC Learning Center is a full-time twelve month program. Hours of operation for the Learning Center are 7:20 a.m.-5:40 p.m. year round. Children arriving in the program should be taken to their classroom or activity area where he/she will be greeted by a staff member. If you have a message concerning your child, write a note with the teacher's name on it and give it to a staff member, or tell the staff member in person.

### **Ages Accommodated**

The Learning Center serves ages six weeks through five years of age in our full-time year long program and offers after school care and offers after school care and full-time summer care for school-age children kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

### **Alternate Pickup Arrangements**

If the child is to be picked up by someone other than the parent, please advise the staff either by phone or in person and give details such as name of person, relationship to child, etc. the school will require photo identification from this person. No child will be released to anyone other than a parent unless specific arrangements have been made with the school.

### **Snow Days**

On the days the Jonesboro School system is closed to inclement weather, FUMC Learning Center will also be closed. If schools open "late", FUMC Learning Center will also open late. If schools are in session (but dismissed early due to weather), it is the parent's responsibility to pick their children up from their public school. Van routes will not run and the learning center will close shortly after the dismissal of Jonesboro School.

### **Clothing**

Please make sure that all clothing worn by your children is washable play clothes. All articles should have your child's name printed somewhere on the garment, i.e., the neck of the jacket.

Children six weeks to five years old should have a change of clothing on site in case of accidents. If your child is not toilet trained, please make sure that you leave adequate amounts of diapers and sanitary wipes for proper changing.

### **Fire and Tornado Provisions**

Monthly fire drills are held. Tornado drills are also held where children are gathered in central halls and windowless rooms of the building. These rooms are located at the back of the church in rooms 101 and 103. In the event of an emergency, we will try to contact you. A staff member will stay at the church until all children are safely accounted for and picked up by the parents.

### **Rest Periods**

The Arkansas Minimum Licensing Requirements for Child Care Centers state that all children in a day-care or preschool environment must have one hour rest period if they are in school for more than five hours. All children will have this rest period. The teacher will have this included in her daily schedule.

### **Room Transition**

Transition from one room to another is often more difficult for mom and dad than for the child. We at the FUMC Learning Center endeavor to make this experience one of a natural transition that is developmentally appropriate. The age of the child is of course a factor, but developmental abilities are also considered.

### **Communication**

The FUMC learning Center program welcomes your visits at anytime. Conferences may be scheduled with your child's teacher if the need arises. If at anytime you have a concern, it is your responsibility to contact the director or teacher in an effort to resolve the challenge. If you have any questions regarding any of the policies listed in this handbook, please feel free to speak to a director.

### **Snack and Meal Time**

The children are served nutritious snacks consisting fresh or canned fruit and/or juices, vegetables, meats, and grain products. Your child will be encouraged to sample all foods served, but he/she will not be forced to participate. Please advise your child's teacher of any food allergies, etc., so these foods may be avoided. Any special foods your child requires should be supplied by you, the parent. Although students are allowed to bring their own lunch, he/she will be provided with a hot lunch from our menu.

Parents of children under one year of age must provide a statement that we may feed their child from our regular menu. The parent must preview menus and confer with the caregivers regarding which foods are acceptable. Infants and toddlers not eating table foods must have their food prepared by parents and delivered in marked containers.

### **Accident Policy**

Although the center is not liable or responsible for injuries and resulting medical expenses sustained while your child is in our care, a detailed record of accidents and injuries is kept on file regarding each incident. We strongly encourage parents to provide medical insurance for you children. For more information, please contact a Director.

### **Special Class Activities**

#### **Field Trips**

All field trip plans will be made well in advance with the utmost consideration for the child's safety, as well as enjoyment. Permission slips will be sent out for each individual field trip with an explanation of the trip and request of parent assistance on these excursions. The church van or mini bus will be used for all field trips, and if needed, parents will be asked to furnish additional transportation. If the permission slip is not returned, the child will be unable to participate.

Any child who is less than 6 years old and weighs less than 60 pounds shall be restrained in a child passenger safety seat. Any child who is at least 6 years and weighs at least 60 pounds must be restrained by a safety belt.

### **Birthday and Holiday Parties**

Parties are fun for everyone and we will be glad for you to have a birthday party for your child at school. You will need to let the teacher know in advance so she can arrange her day to fit the party. Parties can be held at the morning or afternoon session.

Since we have children who are highly allergic to nut products, it is our policy that we serve nothing that contains nuts, or oils from nuts. Therefore, we ask that when parents bring food into the center that they be diligent in bringing only foods that contain no nut products.

### **Yearly Registration**

In May, of each year, a nonrefundable registration fee equal to the child's current tuition will accompany the registration form to ensure the child's place in the program for the coming year.

Children currently enrolled in the program will have a two week priority enrollment period beginning the day the packets are issued. In the event that registration is not paid within the two week period, the child will be released from the center.

New students in the program are charged a prorated registration fee based on the month entering the program, except new summer school age students who are charged a registration fee equal to tuition upon entering in summer.

### **Waiting List Procedure**

Priority of placement is give to siblings of children currently enrolled in the program, church members, and church or program employees. The director will notify the perspective enrollee and give the family two weeks to accept or deny placement. At the end of the two week period the parent will, upon acceptance, pay a registration fee equal to the tuition required in the placement class along with the first week tuition.

In the event the family denies placement, but would like to continue on the waiting list, the family's waiting list application would be moved to the end of the list. After the family has dined placement twice, they will be removed from the list.

### **Finance Policy**

#### **Fees**

All fees for the program are due on the first school day of the current week or monthly on a date arranged with the director. Fees will be collected in the Director's office either by handing it to the director in person, or dropping your check in the slot of the office door.

Fees should not be given to your child's caregiver or left in cubbies, backpacks, or in the rooms. Your check should note the week or time period being paid. Any fee becoming 30 days delinquent will necessitate removal of the child/children from the program.

Credit will not be given for any absence from school. No credit will be issued for closure due to inclement weather. You are obligated to pay fro all the days your child is registered to attend each month regardless of whether or not your child attends. All students will pay for the days that they are enrolled, including holidays and the days that surround holidays that FUMC is closed. Parents will be informed of these closings throughout the year.

### **Fee Schedule**

Infants through Mobile Infants	\$110
Toddler 1 through Pre-K	\$95
School Age After school	\$50
School Age Holiday	\$10 per day extra
School Age Summer (field trips extra)	\$85

### **Late Fees**

A \$5 late fee will be added to tuition not paid by Wednesday at 5:40 p.m. of the current week. These fees are due with payment that week. Special payment arrangements may be made with the director dependent upon your pay schedule.

### **Late Pickups/Early Drop Offs**

Any child picked up after the ending time of the programs will be charged a late pickup fee. It is \$5 for every 15 minute period. This fee is due with the following week's tuition.

### **Health and Illness**

#### **Immunization**

A current immunization record will be required on each enrolled child of the program. Although immunization may be hindered by illness, the Arkansas Minimum Licensing Requirements for Child Care Centers mandates that an authorized record of up-to-date immunization must be on file. Therefore, upon notification from the director of a need for an immunization update, patients will be given two weeks to meet requirements. In the event that requirements are not met within that time frame, the child will be discharged from the program until requirements are met. The weekly fees will continue to be charged in the child's absence.

#### **Illness**

Per the Arkansas Minimum Licensing Requirements for Child Care Centers no child shall be admitted who has a contagious or infectious disease. Any child who becomes ill and unable to participate in daily activities shall be separated from other children, supervised, and parents shall be called to pick up the child if the child exhibits any of the symptoms listed below.

- a. Fever: A body temperature of 100 or greater taken under the arm.
- b. Diarrhea: Three or more watery stools in a 24 hour period.
- c. Vomiting: Vomiting on two or more occasions within the last 24 hour period.

- d. Rash: Body rashes, not obviously associated with diapering, heat or allergic reactions to medication or immunizations.
- e. Sore throat: Only if associated with fever or swollen glands.
- f. Severe Coughing: Episodes of coughing which may lead to repeated gagging, vomiting or difficulty.
- g. Pink Eye: Pink or red eye(s) which may be swollen with white or yellow discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- h. Untreated Scabies, Head Lice or the presence of Nits: May return after treatment and removal of nits.
- i. Multiple sores inside the mouth with drooling: unless health care provider determines the condition is non-infectious.
- j. Ring worm, a fungal infection of the scalp or skin: may return after evaluation and under treatment by a health care provider.
- k. Impetigo: may return 24 hours after treatment is initiated.

Any child sent home from the program displaying any one of the above-listed symptoms may not reenter the program for 24 hours without a doctor's excuse stating the child is not contagious (e.g., your child is sent home at 10:00 am on Monday after having three watery stools, he/she may not enter the program until 10:00 am Tuesday, unless you present a doctor's excuse stating there is no contagion.)

We are required by the State Board of Health to have a doctor's certificate declaring a child free of contagion before readmitting him/her following an illness with contagious disease. Doctor's certificates are preferred, however if one cannot be obtained a call to the director from the doctor's office will suffice.

One of our responsibilities to our children is to protect their health. Following the above illness policies and respecting the health of others will ensure this and will help to hinder the spread of communicable illnesses. We will appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

**Please respect the rights and health of the others. Do not send your child to a program when he/she is not well enough to participate in classroom and outdoor activities or has displayed symptoms of contagion at home.**

### Sunscreen

Children shall be protected from overexposure to the sun. Sunscreen shall be used as directed by the parent. Suntan lotions and/or sunscreens used for infant/toddlers and preschool children shall be administered with written parental permission.

### **Emergency Contacts**

Information sheets are kept on file for each child that contains names and phone numbers of those persons to contact in case of an emergency or illness. An alternate plan of action should be on file in the office in the event a parent cannot be reached. A space on your information sheet has been provided for this needed information. In the event a person not listed on the sheet must pick up your child, you must call or leave a written note with the director stating the person's name. The center will then return your call to double check the validity of the request. The person will be asked to show proper identification upon arrival.

### **Medicine**

We encourage parents to administer medicines at home. We realize that this is not always possible, especially if the medication must be given with food, given a specific time, or given more than two times per day. If you must bring medicine to be dispensed at school, please leave the medicine in the locked box in room 126. Prescription or over-the-counter medicines may not be left in the room with caregivers, in cubbies or diaper bags.

Prescriptions shall be given only with signed parental permission which includes date, type, drug name, time and dosage, and last time dose was given. The form will be near the med box. The prescription shall be in the original container, with a current pharmacy label containing the child's name, dosage, and physician's name.

You must bring any over-the-counter, as we do not keep it, and cannot administer it to your child unless you advise us to do so. All over-the-counter medicines shall have the correct corresponding dosage applicable to your child's age or weight, or that medication will not be given. A doctor's prescription stating the correct dosage applicable for your child may be kept on file. Over-the-counter medicine will not be given more than 7 days without a note from the doctor. All medicines must be taken home each day. Please do not put any medicine in bottles or sippy cups.

### **General Discipline Policy**

First United Methodist church Learning Center is committed to an approach of directing children toward positive acceptable behavior in a well-planned, interesting learning environment. Acceptable or desired behavior will be reinforced with praise.

Teachers will provide reasonable rules with logical consequences for breaking those rules. Discipline shall be consistent and appropriate to the child's level of understanding.

Should repeated unacceptable behavior occur, the child will spend an appropriate period away from the group while properly supervised. If a child shows destructive or harmful

behavior on a regular basis, a call or conference will be held with the child's parents, teachers, and director.

Corporal punishment will not be administered in the program. Instead, we will use the following six step discipline plan:

1. A verbal reprimand should be used in cases where a child needs to be reminded of the rules and limits. The reprimand should include an explanation of why he/she is being disciplined.
2. If the teacher determines that a child understands, but chooses to ignore verbal reprimands, then that teacher will remove the child from an activity for a period equal to that child's age in minutes. The child should be removed from the group to a safe, supervised area.
3. In some severe cases, a child may exhibit harmful or destructive behavior frequently enough that effective discipline cannot be handled in the classroom. In the event a teacher feels that a child's parent(s) should become involved with the management of behavior challenge, that teacher should document the behavior on Anecdotal Record.
4. If, after a reasonable period of time (at least one week), the strategies implemented have not improved the child's behavior, the Director may then suspend the child from the program. This suspension may not last more than one week and tuition will be forfeited by the program for the week.
5. The parents, teachers, and director will then implement an alternate behavioral management plan and the child will return to the program for a period of one week. If satisfactory improvement is then not evidenced, the director may ask for permanent removal of the child from the program.

### **Discipline for Children under Two**

Since time out is inappropriate for children under two years of age, exhibited behavior that will harm other children such as biting, must be addressed on an individual basis. In the instance of biting, the teacher will consistently:

- a. Separate the children involved
- b. Comfort the child injured
- c. Firmly tell the biter that we do not bite, that it hurts
- d. Redirect and separated the children to a favored activity.

If a child bites three times in one day, the parent will be called so that the child may be removed from the center for the remainder of the day. This practice will continue throughout all disciplinary steps.

If biting or negative behavior continues the director will critically review the incidences for a period of one week to determine patterns, etc. The parent(s), teachers, and director will then conference before the child comes back to the center and develop a behavior modification plan.

In the event that the modification plan does not evidence a positive change, the director may then implement steps four and five of the General Discipline Policy.

### **Discipline for School Age Children**

School age children are expected to respect others not only on site, but also while in transport. The general disciplinary rules apply with the following additions regarding transportation:

- a. The van drivers will announce and post the transportation rules when the children board the vans.
- b. A disregard for the rules will result in one warning, followed by a written reprimand. Three written reprimands regarding the same rule violation will necessitate a conference with the child's parent(s), the driver, and the director
- c. General Discipline Policy 3-5 will then be implemented.

### **Child Dismissal/Acceptance Policy**

Dismissal and acceptance of any child, at any time is at the direct discretion of the directors and pastoral staff.

### **Parent Grievance Policy**

The FUMC Learning Center provides an avenue for parents to appeal disciplinary actions or decisions regarding policy implementation through the Parent Grievance Procedure. The following steps are designed to allow parents the opportunity to work with the program to resolve satisfactorily any matter a parent feels has been handled unfairly.

Step 1: In the event you feel your child has been treated unfairly or you have concerns or suggestions, you may consult with the director. The director will respond to you grievance, concern or suggestion within five school days.

Step 2: If the parent is not satisfied with the director's reply, he/she can request a meeting with the director and pastor.

Step 3: The pastor's ruling of the issue is final and binding to all concerned.

### **Licensing**

The FUMC Learning Center will maintain and surpass standards necessary to be licensed as a child care institution in the state of Arkansas. We assume the responsibility of maintaining healthy, safe, and developmentally appropriate conditions for children during the time they spend in our care. Licensing is a form of consumer protection for children and their parents. If you would like a copy of the child care licensing booklet, please write to:

Department of Human Services  
Children and Family Services Division  
2920 McClellan Drive  
Jonesboro, AR 72401