**FAMILY HANDBOOK**

**2017-2018**

Revised (August 25, 2017)

**2626 Arizona St. NE**

**Albuquerque, NM 87110**

**(505) 883-0496**

[**www.preschoolplus-abq.org**](http://www.preschoolplus-abq.org)

WELCOME TO ST. JOHN'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

**PRESCHOOL PLUS**

The staff and members of St. John's United Methodist Church welcome you to St. John's Preschool Plus (SJPP). The preschool is one of the many church ministries that serve children and their families.

Children from age one through age five are accepted into the Preschool program. Preschool is held Monday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. during the public school year. Families may choose to enroll children for two-day, three-day, or five-day programs. Extended care is available before and after school for those children enrolled in the Preschool. Extended-care hours for children two and older are from 7:30 - 9:30 a.m. and from 1:00 - 5:30 p.m. Toddler hours are from 8:30 – 9:30 a.m. and from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. Reservations for occasional extended care are also accepted on a space-available basis.

The staff is comprised of trained and qualified teachers and a site Director. Teachers are carefully selected to provide an excellent preschool experience for children. During the year each staff member must complete twenty-four hours of professional education, including CPR and first aid training.

Other ministries for children at St. John's UMC include three separate Sunday school sessions each Sunday, music activities for children, Vacation Bible School, summer camps, and Advent Festival. Please inquire in the church office for information about each of these fine programs. Worship services each Sunday include a special children's emphasis as part of the service. Worship services and Sunday school are held at 8:15 a.m., 9:30 a.m., and 11:00 a.m. each Sunday.

**Mission Statement**

To nurture and support children and families, and to provide a high-quality preschool experience in a Christian environment.

**Philosophy Statement**

St. John's United Methodist Church Preschool Plus is a weekday ministry of the church to provide a safe and loving Christian atmosphere for young children. Here children (and parents) may grow and develop as they learn about themselves and others as God's children.

Preschool Plus strives to promote the healthy development of each child. In keeping with the principles of excellent early education, St. John's Preschool uses the *New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines: Birth through Kindergarten* as a framework to support our curriculum. We promote a stimulating environment filled with age-appropriate activities designed to motivate learning through interactive play. We offer children a variety of experiences geared to match individual differences in age and ability. Our caring and skilled teachers provide hands-on activities that challenge children's imaginations and encourage development of essential skills for success in school and throughout life. We strive to support and assist families to provide the very best nurturing and caring environment for each child's growth and security.

The Preschool helps children understand that God created each one of them. The Bible is presented as the very important book that tells us about God's love. The students learn to follow the example of Jesus as portrayed in appropriate Bible stories. They will know that God loves them and that prayer is a means of communication with God. Love for others will be evident as they seek to serve and cooperate with one another.

The families at St. John's United Methodist Preschool Plus will gain an understanding of children at various stages of development through their participation in parent/teacher conferences. Parents will be invited to support classroom learning through simple home activities, such as bringing an apple to school to expand children's understanding of an "autumn" thematic unit.

**Notice of Nondiscriminatory Policy as to Students**

St. John's UMC Preschool Plus admits students of any race, color, national, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational and admissions policies.

**Statement of Faith**

We believe in the triune God-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

(Matthew 28:19)

We believe in Jesus of Nazareth as God's incarnation on earth. We believe in His sinless life, His miracles, and His atoning death and resurrection. We believe that Christ desires to have a personal relationship with all persons.

(John 2:11; John 11:25; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

We believe that the presence of the Holy Spirit resides in every believer and enables us to share the love of Christ and live a godly life.

(1 Corinthians 3:16)

We affirm the Bible as the source of all that is necessary and sufficient for salvation and life eternal. Through Scripture the living Christ meets us in the experience of redeeming grace.

(John 3:16-19, John 5:24, 2 Timothy 3:16-17)

We believe that the Church provides a faithful witness to God's grace through the fellowship of believers. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we use Scripture, Tradition, Experience, and Reason to strive toward God's purpose.

(Romans 12:48)

We intend that our Statement of Faith is consistent with *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church (2004).* Adopted in October 2008

With a desire to imitate God's love for all persons, St. John's United Methodist Preschool Plus serves all families and all children whose needs can be met by our staff and facilities.

**Discipline Policy**

The objective of all is to encourage self-control. All discipline during preschool sessions is designed to guide children toward making wise choices and moving toward their self-discipline.

Teachers will discuss health and safety rules and the expectations for good behavior with the children in language that is understandable to the children.

Before a new activity begins, teachers will explain appropriate behavior for that activity. Children who demonstrate appropriate behavior will be praised. Good manners and consideration for others will be a part of each day. Positive reinforcement of appropriate behavior and redirection to appropriate activities are a part of classroom management.

If a child chooses to behave in an inappropriate manner, he or she will be asked to stop. The teacher will restate the expectations for appropriate behavior. If the child persists, he or she will be asked to consider a better way to behave. The child and teacher will talk together about appropriate behavior. The child will rejoin the group as a member of the class in good standing.

If a child has a pattern of persistent unacceptable behavior or behaves in a way that might be dangerous or harmful to other children, the teacher or Director will notify the parents. Then the family, teacher, other professionals, and Director will work together as a team to develop and implement an individualized appropriate plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.

At St. John's UMC Preschool Plus physical punishment, abusive or profane language, belittling words, and any form of humiliation will not be used as disciplinary measures. Threats and unsupervised isolation of a child will not be used. Withdrawal of food, rest, or bathroom opportunities will not practiced at St. John's UMC Preschool Plus. Any type of punishment that is hazardous to the physical, emotional, or mental state of a child will not be used. All children are God's creations, and they are good; they will never be told that they are bad. Children will be told that their behavior is unacceptable. The children at St. John's UMC Preschool Plus will be treated with respect and love.

Each day's activities are full of interesting learning experiences and children want to be a part of the fun; for this reason, there are few behavioral problems at St. John's UMC Preschool Plus.

**2017-2018**

**School Calendar**

August 7-10 Staff Development and Teacher Preparation

August 11 Open House from 11:00-1:00 p.m.

August 14 First Day of School

September 4 Labor Day (school closed)

October 12 Parent/Teacher Conferences (school closed)

October 13 Fall Break (school closed)

November 10 Staff Development (school closed)

November 22-24 Thanksgiving Break (school closed)

December 18-January 1 Christmas Break (school closed)

January 2 Staff Development (school closed)

**January 3 First day of second semester**

January 15 Martin Luther King Jr. Day (school closed)

February 19 Presidents’ Day (school closed)

March 9 Parent/Teacher Conferences (school closed)

March 26-29 Spring Break (school closed)

March 30 Good Friday (school closed)

May 23 Last day of Preschool

St. John’s Preschool’s school calendar, typically parallels the traditional Albuquerque Public School (APS) calendar for breaks and holidays.

Snow Days: If APS closes school, then Preschool Plus will be closed. If APS has a delay, Preschool Plus will **not** offer early morning extended care, but will open for Preschool at the normal time.

**Administration**

St. John's UMC Preschool Plus is governed by the Preschool Ministry Team, a Board of Directors, which decides policy and direction for the school. The Preschool reports to the Church Council and Charge Conference of the church. It cooperates with the Board of Trustees of the church and works in cooperation with other ministries of the church. The Staff-Parish Relations Committee handles personnel matters. The curriculum is selected by the Preschool Director in consultation with the Preschool teachers and other professionals. Representatives of the City of Albuquerque and New Mexico's Children, Youth, and Families Department inspect the Preschool regularly. The Preschool complies with all state and city regulations regarding preschool children.

The Preschool has a site Director and the church has a Director of Children's Ministries.

Preschool Director: Carmen Vargas

Preschool Phone Number: 883-0496

Director of Children's Ministries: Brandie Spletzer

St. John's UMC Phone Number: 883-9717

SJUMC Senior Pastor: Craig Cockrell

Executive Pastor: John Schwarting

Preschool Board Chair: Sarah Camp

Preschool Board Vice Chair: Susan Perry

Preschool Office Hours (883-0496)

The Preschool office is open from 7:30 a.m. until the last child leaves the extended-care program. The nature of the Director's responsibilities demands that she circulate among the preschool's rooms. Please leave a message if you do not receive an immediate answer when you call. The Director will return your call as soon as possible.

St. John's United Methodist Church Office Hours (883-9717)

The church office is open from 8:30 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. The church receptionist can accept calls during those hours.

**Core Values and Goals**

* To display the love of Jesus to children and families
* To promote academic growth through age-appropriate activities and play
* To offer opportunities to develop positive social skills and kind interactions with adults and with other children
* To encourage healthy physical activities and good nutrition
* To encourage family growth and community improvements

**Curriculum and Classroom Environment**

St. John's United Methodist Preschool Plus promotes "best practice" in early childhood education. The curriculum is organized around thematic units or activities within a meaningful context. The curriculum, which teachers develop based on resource materials such as the *New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines*, is flexible and individualized. Our goal is to offer our students enjoyable, age-appropriate learning experiences that will give them a desire to learn and grow.

**Curriculum Goals:**

Families and teachers collaborate together to achieve short- and long-term goals for the individual child in all domains:

* cognitive
* emergent literacy
* social-emotional development
* health
* physical (fine and gross motor skills)
* behavioraland self-help skills

**Curriculum process**

The curriculum is designed for children to work at different levels on different activities based upon what each child already knows and is able to do. This method allows the teacher to spend individual time with each child, whether to assist with an activity or to observe the child's personal learning development. Puzzles, blocks, and tabletop manipulatives offer practice with fine-motor skills.

* The curriculum engages children actively in the learning process with many opportunities to make choices, to reason, and to solve problems. Materials, equipment, and activities reflect ethnic, cultural, and gender diversity. Daily outdoor play gives children an opportunity to ride bikes and develop large motor skills on the playground. The gym is available for large muscle activities, if needed, on snowy or rainy days, or if air conditions cause problems.
* Classrooms offer an inviting atmosphere with the interest centers that encourage students to explore and learn in their environment. Teachers rotate materials in the centers to support the monthly themes. For example, when the theme focuses on the season of autumn, then leaves, twigs, and pinecones are displayed in the science area for the classroom friends to investigate. The library area will then have books about autumn, harvest, seasonal changes, pumpkins, and scarecrows. The home living area will include clothing for cooler weather. The teacher may take the children on a nature walk to offer a related outdoor experience, to talk about God's beautiful creation, and to collect items that reflect signs of fall.
* Preschool Plus offers music class each week. The children are introduced to basic music concepts, such as rote singing, echo improvisation, tempo, steady beat, music-directed motion, expression through music, and dramatic play. They use Orff instruments, which are designed to support the participatory Orff approach to music education. Students enjoy the opportunity to sing and dance for their families twice a year during Christmas and spring family programs.
* A center-wide chapel session is included each week to reinforce concepts introduced in each classroom. The children look forward to worshipping God through songs, prayer, and Bible stories that are appropriate to their stage of development. A monthly age-appropriate memory verse that corresponds to the chapel theme is offered. For example, last school year the theme "Friendship" was accompanied by the verse, "A friend loves at all times." (Proverbs 17:17)
* St. John's Preschool Plus has a partnership with Zuni Elementary School, across Phoenix Street, just north of the St. John's UMC complex. This connection allows the students in the oldest preschool class to visit the school library and check out a book once a week, on the day the librarian designates at the beginning of the school year. The librarian reads books, shares poems, and introduces riddles to our children. The pre-kindergarten students also have the option of spending one day in a kindergarten class with their guardian or teacher at the end of our school year, which facilitates the transition to kindergarten.

 **Child to Staff Ratio**

Ratio is an important aspect of the St. John's UMC Preschool culture. The child to staff ratio at St. John's UMC Preschool Plus meets and exceeds the state minimum standards in every class. The number of children that can be accommodated in each Preschool classroom is based upon room measurements.

* Toddler Room – 4:1
* Twos – 6:1 with maximum of 12 students
* Threes – 8:1
* Fours – 8:1

**The Toddler Class**

Teachers of our youngest children encourage them to develop a love of learning through their enjoyment of the preschool and its activities. Our students learn to put squares and circles into puzzles, and to identify themselves in a mirror or picture. They enjoy moving and listening to music, using art materials, and engaging in play for extended periods of time. Vocabulary and literacy development through books and games is an important part of the day. This age group is always exploring their surroundings, and the St. John's Preschool staff offers a variety of age-appropriate fun activities that promote learning at every turn. With the 4:1 child-staff ratio, our toddler friends receive the support they need to learn to trust adults who are not members of their immediate families. They transition to a two-year-old class with ease.

**The Two-Year-Old Class**

These active children continue to develop as individuals. Students learn manner words such as "thank you" and "please." The children move from parallel play to interactive play as they mature. They demonstrate age-level, self-help skills, such as going to the toilet and washing their hands carefully before eating their nutritious snacks. They develop an understanding of what it means to share, to take turns, and to be a kind friend. As attention spans increase, the students will be able to attend to a story or a class activity for longer periods of time. Vocabulary expands to include comparative and descriptive words, and art activities promote creativity. The children will be ready to enter a three-year-old class with assurance and excitement.

**The Three-Year-Old Class**

Enriched classroom activities encourage these children to continue to exhibit their love of learning. Literacy development includes songs, letters, and books to share. Numeracy skills include shape and numeral recognition, as well as comparative language and counting. Scissors are added to the art materials so that simple cutting will take place. The children display social skills that they will use for the rest of their lives, such as taking turns, working together, and being a good friend. Our students are always eager and prepared to enter into a pre-k classroom.

**The Four-Year-Old Class**

A rich pre-kindergarten curriculum is available for the children in this class. Students continue to develop literacy and numeracy skills, and they enjoy enhanced music and art activities. They exhibit confidence in acquiring new skills and in their ability to make wise choices. As students become more independent, they also display a greater level of social interaction with their friends and with the adults at the preschool. Our students are prepared to enter a kindergarten setting with confidence.

**Curriculum Resources**

The Bible

*A Collaboration Effort of the New Mexico Children, Youth, and Families Department, Department of Health & Public Education Department New Mexico*

*New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines: Birth through Kindergarten*. Revised August 2011.

Copple, Carol, and Bredekamp, Sue. *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs (Third Edition).* Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2009.

Cryer, Debbie, Harms, Thelma, and Riley, Cathy. *All About the ITERS-R and All About the ECERS-R.* Lewisville, NC: K Press Publishing, 2004. ("ITERS-R" is the Infant and Toddler Environmental Rating Scale-Revised; "ECERS-R" is the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Revised).

Gray, Cynthia. *Wonder-filled Weekdays: Lesson Plans for Christian Preschool Ministries.* Nashville, TN: Abington Press, 1989.

*Mailbox* *Magazine* and books (sources for classroom ideas and activities)

Schiller, Pam and Hastings, Kay. *The Complete Resource Book: An Early Childhood Curriculum.* Beltsville, MD: Gryphon House, 1998.

Turner, Polly, et al. *A Guide to Best Practices: Essential Elements of Quality.* Santa Fe, NM: New Mexico's Children, Youth, and Families Department, 1999.

**Assessment**

St. John's Preschool Plus has implemented a written plan for assessment that describes assessment purposes, procedures, and uses of the results. Our qualified teaching staff assesses the children in their classroom throughout the preschool day: during circle time, one-on-one time, and during group activities. Assessment takes place at all times within the preschool environment in both indoor and outdoor areas.

All assessment tools are regularly reviewed and include observation, child individualized assessment forms, checklists, and milestones charts. These tools, as well as Parent/Teacher Conferences that take place twice a year, allow for both families and teachers to work together and discuss concerns or questions that focus on the best interest of each child, including which assessment tool should be used. Families are encouraged to schedule conferences with the teacher or Director as the need arises. If your child's teacher has a concern about your child, they will set up a meeting within three months of when your child begins preschool.

St. John's Preschool Plus does not use norm-referenced and standardized tests to assess children. When a child from our program is referred by our staff, these types of assessments, screenings, and services are given by trained individuals in the public school system or other outside agency. If a family shares the results of these types of assessments, then the information is combined with our informal methods.

At the beginning of each school year the families receive a Get Acquainted Form as well as a Family History Questionnaire. These forms help identify children's language, experiences, fears, interests, family culture, abilities, as well as disabilities to help the teachers intentionally plan a curriculum based on the students in the classroom.

St. John's teachers use the "Ages and Stages Questionnaire" along with the

"New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines" as a basis for curriculum planning and assessment of children's developmental progress. The "Ages and Stages Questionnaire" is the standardized screening tool used as a valid instrument recommended by CYFD. The ASQ is given to families twice a year, upon enrollment and then again in the spring, and returned to teachers for further evaluation.

Assessments are in place to support each individual child's learning, including cognitive, language, social-emotional development, health, physical (fine and gross motor skills), behavioral, and self-help skills. Assessment tools assist and give teachers a framework to scaffold and support students with age-appropriate materials and the foundation necessary to reach the desired goals and outcomes that both families and teachers have put in place.

St. John's is an inclusive school and does not make enrollment decisions based on the presence of development or health concerns. Information is used for staffing and safety purposes only. Student records are placed in a locked, confidential file.

**The NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment is the standard for the ethical and professional conduct regarding confidentiality and communication. There is a hard copy of this document available for your viewing in the preschool office or online at http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/PSETH05.pdf.**

##### Open-Door Policy

Parents are always welcome to visit in their child's classroom. Please make sure to stop in the preschool office and sign in the visitor's notebook first. During the first month of school the children are adjusting to their new environment, friends, and teachers. It is important that the children and teachers have an opportunity to begin and build a trusting relationship. In order for this to happen, we ask that families stay for only a short period of time when dropping off your child.

##### Parent Involvement

We welcome your participation! We encourage as many connections between families and school as possible. Please check with your child's teacher and see what you can do to help. Let us know of any special interests, talents, or abilities you can share with us.

**Parent Survey/Evaluation**

Families are asked to evaluate the program once a year. Your feedback is important and is helpful in knowing how we are doing and to see how we can improve and make the program a better place for our students and their families.

**Family-Teacher Communication**

St. John's Preschool will provide translation services upon request.

* **Newsletters** - You will receive a monthly newsletter from the Director as well as your child's teacher to keep you informed of both classroom and preschool news.
* **Week at a Glance** - This is a weekly outline of each classroom's curriculum. It will be posted right outside your child's class to keep you informed of the day-to-day activities every week.
* **Conferences** - Teachers schedule family conferences twice a year to set goals and discuss your child's progress and assessments. However, families are encouraged to schedule conferences with the teacher or Director as the need arises. Written information about your child's development will be provided two other times in the school year.
* **Assessment –** St. John's Preschool has an assessment plan in place which is individually tailored to each child's needs. (Please see page 12 for detailed information on assessment procedures).
* **Daily Contact** - If your child participates in extended care, teachers will assume responsibility for conveying necessary information via email, with a telephone call, or a note in your child's back pack or cubby. Please check cubbies daily.
* **Daily Reports** - The toddler families will receive a daily report of their child's day.

**School Year 2017-2018 Tuition & Fees**

**Annual Registration Fees**

An annual registration fee is required each school year, prorated to the remaining number of months in the school year at enrollment. The registration fee is non-refundable.

August $175.00 Full year

September $160.00 9 months

October $145.00 8 months

November $130.00 7 months

December $115.00 6 months

January $100.00 5 months

February $85.00 4 months

March $70.00 3 months

April $55.00 2 months

May $40.00 1 month

**Monthly Tuition**

Tuition rates apply to both fall/spring and summer terms. Tuition is prorated for August to account for the number of classroom weeks.

Monday-Friday $475.00

Monday/Wednesday/Friday $300.00

Tuesday/Thursday $200.00

Tuition shall be paid each month. Each monthly payment is due by the tenth of the month. The full payment is required regardless of absences due to illness, vacation, or school closure.

**Summer Day Camp Program**

St. John’s Preschool offers summer sessions in June and July, approximately seven weeks in duration. Most camps are $130 a week. Included in the $130 is a $25 non-refundable deposit fee. Each weekly payment is due on Friday. If payment is not received on the Friday of the week your child attended camp, you will incur a late fee of $5.00.

Summer camp extended care hours are from 8:00 – 9:30 a.m. and 1:00 - 4:30 p.m.

**Sibling Discounts**

First child pays full tuition and fees.

Registration Siblings $100.00

Monthly tuition Siblings pay 90%

Extended care No discount

Summer programs Siblings pay 90%

When a family has more than one child attending the program, the discount will apply to the child with the lowest tuition fee.

**Advanced Payment**

St. John’s Preschool does not offer a discount for any prepayment. However, families are still welcomed to make advance payments by the semester or school year.

**Withdrawals**

A two-week written notice is required prior to withdrawing a child from school. If a two-week notice is not given, the legal guardian agrees to pay two additional weeks of tuition.

If a child withdraws in the middle of a month, tuition for the rest of the month is not refunded, but tuition paid in advance for the remainder of the semester will be refunded.

**Payment Penalties**

Payments not made by the 10th of each month are subject to a $20 penalty. A $25 fee is charged for return checks. Payments not made in a timely manner may result in disenrollment. Additional fees may be charged for picking up children late.

**Extended Care**

Extended care is offered 7:30 – 9:30 a.m. and 1:00 – 5:30 p.m. on either a contract or non-contract basis. Toddler hours are from 8:30 – 9:30 a.m. and from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. Children may only use extended care on the days they are enrolled in school.

Hourly rates for extended care:

Contract - $4.75

Reservation - $5.25

**Procare/Accounting**

As you check your child in and out, you will notice an accounting icon. If you touch this icon, you can check your balance. St. John's Preschool will continue to accept checks, money orders, cash, and credit card tuition payments. Procare gives a five-minute grace period for late pick up per day. Please be sure to clock your child out before you pick them up from class to avoid late fees.

##### Admission and Enrollment

A child must register for the August-May program, for summer sessions, and for the extended-care program. A child will be admitted after the following items are received:

* Enrollment Contract
* Admission Form
* Child Pick-Up Authorization Form
* Copy of current immunization record or waiver
* Release of Information Form
* Child Health Information Record
* Signed Verification Form indicating that you have read and understand the Family Handbook which includes the following: Statement of Faith, Discipline Policy, and Permission to photograph your child.

**Referral Program**

Any family of a currently enrolled student can refer their neighbors, friends, or family to St. John's Preschool Plus and receive an incentive of $25 for each referral. There are no limitations on the number of students you may refer; however, only one $25 credit per family can be used if multiple students of the same family enroll. The newly enrolled students who are accepted into the program must register and pay the enrollment fee for the school year in order to qualify. The completed referral form must be turned in at the time of registration. Only one referral name or form per new student (or their family) will be accepted. Pick up Referral Program Forms in the preschool office.

**Placement, Transitions, Tuition, and Fees**

The Preschool Director is solely responsible for placing children in classes and for creating new classes. Although families may share specific and relevant information about their children to assist in the best placement, classroom or teacher requests are not accepted. The Director determines placement for all children at St. John's UMC Preschool Plus.

Children must be enrolled in writing by the family by completing enrollment forms and submitting them to the Director. There are no verbal agreements for placement in rooms or on waiting lists for classes.

There is an annual **non-refundable** registration and materials fee, which is set by the Preschool Board. This fee is payable at the time of registration. The Preschool Board also sets tuition fees for the school year (August through May). Tuition may be paid in advance, or according to the established fee payment schedule. Tuition is due by the tenth of each month, with the exception of August. Accounts not paid by the tenth of each month will incur a $20 late fee. Failure to make timely payments of tuition or fees, including late payment charges, will result in disenrollment unless special written arrangements have been made in advance with the Director. A $20 fee will be assessed for any check returned for insufficient funds.

**Immunizations**

In order to comply with state law, SJPP must have on file an up-to-date copy of your child's immunization record. When a child is overdue for any immunizations or routine health services you must have documentation for reasons of delays, waivers, or proof of a pending doctor appointment on file provided by a health care provider. Please be aware that under-immunized children will be excluded from the preschool promptly if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program.

**Medication**

SJPP cannot administer any medication such as vitamins, cough drops, over the counter drugs, and/or sunscreen without a written permission from a licensed health provider. Prescription medications brought to us must be in the original container. Request For Administration of Medication forms are available in the office. Medications are kept in a locked cabinet in the preschool office. The office refrigerator shall be used to store medication which requires refrigeration. For the safety of all the children, please do not place any medication in your child's backpack, lunch box, or cubby.

Medications will be dispensed by the office assistant or Director. Parents must sign the form each day the preschool is requested to administer the medication and acknowledge that the proper dosage was given. We suggest that families apply sunscreen on their children prior to bringing them to preschool.

**What to Bring to Preschool**

Pack a nutritious lunch and drink that do not require refrigeration or heating. Please include items that the child likes and are easy for the child to eat by themselves.

Bring disposable diapers and wipes if your child does not use the toilet.

Always provide a change of clothes for your child, even if he or she is toilet trained.

Label all lunch boxes, water bottles, cups, diaper bags, blankets, coats, backpacks, clothing, and comfort toys with your child's name.

**Preschool Attire**

Although St. John's Preschool does not have a formal dress code, we ask that you send the children to school with comfortable and appropriate clothing for a full day of preschool activities. We ask that no flip flops be worn to preschool.

**Toilet Training**

The preschool staff desires to work with families when they believe their child is ready to come to school in underwear. This important stage of development takes place in our two-year-old classroom. To avoid any contamination, soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag and securely tied for families to take home at the end of the day. Every child should have at least two changes of clothing to be kept in their cubby. While children are in diapers, staff members are only permitted to use commercially available disposable diapers or pull-ups unless the child has a medical reason that does not permit their use. In such cases, a note from the medical provider is required.

**Toys**

We ask that any personal toys not be brought to class unless prearrangements are made with the child's teacher for show-and-tell or other special occasion.

### Birthdays

At St. John's Preschool Plus we believe birthdays are very special to the children. If your child invites others to a birthday party outside regular Preschool hours, unless **all** children are invited, please **do not** place invitations inside cubbies or hand them out during Preschool hours. This prevents any hurt feelings as some children may feel excluded. Thanks for your cooperation in this matter.

**Peanut–Free Policy**

St. John's Preschool has a peanut-free policy. For the safety of the students who have a severe nut allergy we ask that you do not bring any nut‑based products to school, including peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Sunflower seed butter is a safe alternative to other nut butters. We understand that it is nearly impossible for children with allergies to peanuts to avoid triggering a reaction if peanut products remnants are in the environment. While St. John's Preschool is unable to guarantee a peanut-free or allergen-free program setting, we have procedures in place to assist our students with severe allergies to peanuts and will make every attempt not to expose them during school hours.

**Snacks**

Periodically each family will provide a nutritious snack for their child's class. Per state-mandated guidelines the snacks must be commercially pre-packaged. When it is your child's snack day, please be sure to include components from two different food groups and drinks for all the children in the classroom. It is your responsibility to provide cups, napkins, and any utensils needed for their snack. Your child's teacher will let you know the appropriate amount of snacks and beverages to bring. If your child is absent the day he or she is assigned to bring the classroom snack, please send the snack the next time the child-comes to school to replenish our afternoon extended-care snack supply. Please notify your child's teacher of any allergies.

**Suggested Snack List (prepackaged)**

All fresh fruits and vegetables are acceptable. Please bring them unprepared (not cut or sliced).

* Fruit: grapes\*, apple slices, melons, orange slices, etc.
* Vegetables:edamame, carrots\*, bell peppers, etc.
* Jarred or individually-packaged apple sauce (no sugar added)
* Dried fruit such as raisins, craisins, apricots, etc.
* Goldfish crackers
* Graham crackers
* Muffins
* Mini whole wheat bagels
* Dry cereal
* Cereal bars or granola bars
* Cottage cheese
* Hummus
* Crackers
* Yogurt
* Cheese sticks
* Water bottles
* Milk (whole milk only for toddlers)
* 100% juice (water or milk is preferred to juice whenever possible)

\*St. John's Preschool does not serve hot dogs, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, chunks of raw carrots, or chucks of meat to children younger than four (nothing larger than a piece that can be swallowed whole). Food must be no bigger than 1/2-inch square for toddlers/twos. Grapes will be cut by teacher if brought for snack. Please precut grapes for lunches. We will only serve children no more than 4 ounces of juice a day. If children are still thirsty we will provide water.

**Lunch**

It is the parents' responsibility to provide a wholesome, tasty lunch for their child. Keep in mind when packing lunch that preschool staff is unable to refrigerate or microwave food for our students.

**Outside Foods**

Per state regulations all outside food that comes from home for sharing among the children must either be whole fruits/vegetables or commercially- prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers.

This means that any homemade food should not be brought in to share with other children. Cupcakes, cookies, and other special desserts to share must be store bought. Teachers will send home any homemade items that are brought to school. As always, children are able to bring in homemade foods in their lunch boxes, as long as they do not contain nuts.

**Hand Washing**

Under best practice guidelines we ask that parents take their child to the restroom and help them wash their hands before entering the classroom every morning.

**Security Door**

Each family will receive the four-digit code to enter the Preschool area provided by the Preschool Director. The code will be changed once a year and the Director will notify the families prior to the change. Should you need to enter the preschool at anytime, you will need to use your code.

**Pets**

Per state regulations and accreditation requirements families must sign a permission slip each time that their child will be exposed to an animal at school. Therefore, we ask that you do not bring in any animals to the program without clearance and permission from the preschool office. If and when teachers bring in a classroom pet, families will be notified and are required to sign a permission slip.

**Pest Control**

The church sprays for pests monthly following the requirements set forth by the State of New Mexico. This takes place on Saturday when preschool is closed.

**Smoke Free**

St. John's Preschool is a smoke-free facility. The use of tobacco, tobacco products, E-cigarettes (electronic) and E-cigarette products are prohibited on site.

**Signing Children In and Out**

As per state mandate a parent or guardian is required to sign their children in and out of the center each day. The sign-up sheets are located outside of each classroom.

The registration materials include emergency contact information. **It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to keep this information updated.** Be certain the designated emergency contact is informed that he or she is listed. The preschool will not release a child to a person who is not listed in the Child Pick-Up Authorization Form or listed as the emergency contact. An approved person may be requested to present photo identification.

If an emergency arises and an unlisted person is sent to pick up a child, the parentsshall notify the school in writing, if possible, giving identifying information. The individual must be at least 18 years of age and have a driver's license or another form of identification on hand.

Doors to classrooms open at 9:30 a.m. Teachers will be in their classrooms to receive their students. Please do not ask the teacher to take the children before 9:30 a.m., as teachers are in the room preparing for the day's activities.

School is dismissed at 1:00 p.m. Children not picked up by 1:05 and who do not have an extended-care reservation will be included in our extended-care program, and a late fee will be charged.

**Daily Arrival and Pick-Up Times**

During drop-off and pick-up times we ask that you park only in a designated, marked parking spaces. Please leave handicap and loading zones available for those who use them. Do not leave children unattended in vehicles under any circumstances for any length of time. Do not leave valuables in plain sight. Do not leave your vehicles running. For the safety of everyone, please drive very slowly in the parking lots.

### Absences

Please inform the school when your child will be absent. If your child has any health problem that will affect other children, please notify the Director immediately so that other families may be alerted to look for physical changes in their children. Make-up days are not possible for days a child is absent.

### Late Pick-Up Policy

If a child is left at the school after 1:05 p.m. following the Preschool session, there will be a late charge imposed for each half-hour or any part thereof. The child will be included in extended-care program activities, and parents will be charged additional extended-care program fees.

If a child is left at the school after 5:30 p.m., a $15 late fee will be charged for each half hour or any portion thereof, per child. If parents or guardians cannot be reached after every reasonable and possible attempt has been made, then as a last resort the Albuquerque Police Department will be called.

##### Extended-Care Guidelines

A child's participation in extended care is contingent upon enrollment in the preschool program and completion and receipt of the signed contract and registration fee. The Director has the right to deny extended care to any family not keeping their account current. Reservations must be made twenty-four hours in advance if you are not using extended care on a contract basis. For reservations, the hourly reservation fee will be charged.

The parent or guardian who signed the registration forms may pick up the child. That parent may list the other parent and any other people who have permission to pick up the child. These **names and current phone numbers must be on file**. Identification of the person picking up the child will be required before the child may leave the building.

Extended-care hours for children two and older are from 7:30 - 9:30 a.m. and from 1:00 - 5:30 p.m. Toddler hours are from 8:30 – 9:30 a.m. and from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. Parents will be charged $15 per child, per half-hour, or any portion thereof for care past 5:30 p.m.

All children enrolled for p.m. extended care are provided a mat for rest time. Each family is asked to supply a small blanket and comfy toy which must be placed in a small tote bag or Ziploc bag per state hygiene policy. The blankets and toys should be taken home and laundered weekly or more frequently when soiled. Please label all belongings with your child's name. Mats are placed at least three feet apart when in use.

**Ill Children**

St. John's Preschool is a well-child care facility. For the well-being of your children and the other children in the program, we ask that you **do not** bring your child to school when he or she is sick. Parents will be notified of any communicable diseases among the children.

If a child that attends the program is under-immunized because of a medical condition (documented by a licensed health care professional) or the family's belief, and a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program, St. John's Preschool office staff members will remove the child promptly.

Your child should stay home if he or she has any of the following symptoms:

* A fever of 100.4°F or the need to control the fever with medication
* A runny nose with yellow or green mucus
* Eye drainage
* A red throat or earache
* Unexplained rash or skin eruption
* Swollen neck glands
* Flu symptoms
* Communicable disease

The Director will notify parents or designated persons when children have a fever of 100.4°F, are too sick to remain in the program, or who become ill or injured at the school site. Parents will be expected to pick up their sick child as soon as possible. St. John's Preschool is not equipped to care for ill children at school. The child will be kept comfortable in the preschool office until an authorized guardian arrives.

Any child that has been prescribed antibiotics must be on the medication for at least 24 hours before returning back to school. Any child who has been diagnosed with conjunctivitis (pink eye) may not return to the preschool until 24 hours after beginning medication and the symptoms have cleared.

**Inclement Weather/Snow Policy**

Weather conditions occasionally require that the Albuquerque Public School system modify its schedule. Preschool Plus will modify its schedule based upon how APS makes its decision**.** If APS closes school, Preschool Plus will close also. The day will not be made up, and there will be no tuition adjustment for the day. If APS has a delay, Preschool Plus will not offer early morning extended care, but will open for Preschool at the normal time.

**Disenrollment/Expulsion**

St. John's UMC Preschool Plus is a private Christian school. Preschool Plus endeavors to minister to the needs of all enrolled children, but the needs of the majority of enrolled children must take precedence over special attention demanded by one child or their parents or guardians which may interfere with the quality of services offered to the other children. While Preschool Plus is open to children regardless of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, or disabling conditions, it must reserve the right to limit its services to those whom its Director and staff believe can best benefit from its curriculum and classes.

A child may be denied admission and enrollment or may be disenrolled if after consultation with the child's parents or guardians the Preschool staff concludes that:

1. The child is not likely to benefit from thePreschool Plus program.
2. The child habitually disrupts the services offered to other enrolled children.
3. The child's parents or guardians are not receptive to the instruction offered to the child through the curriculum and through the child's classes.
4. The child demands excessive time and attention from the staff or Director to the detriment of other children.
5. The parents or guardians of the child unduly interfere with the effortsof their child's teacher to teach, unduly interfere with the administration of the school, or are unable to accept the Preschool Plus policies and procedures.
6. The parents or guardians have not paid the applicable tuition, fees, and late payment charges within thirty days from the due date.
7. The child has or is suspected of having an untreated contagious disease.

The Director has full discretion as to how much, if any, advance notice of disenrollment to provide. Upon disenrollment by the Preschool, the school will refund to the paying party any unused portion of advance tuition paid, prorated to the date of disenrollment. The child may also be disenrolled by his or her parent or guardian. No refund of tuition will be made.

### Special Needs

St. John's UMC Preschool Plus will make every effort to provide reasonable accommodations for any child with special needs. Families should notify the Director if their child has special needs. When our program cannot accommodate a particular child, we will refer the family to a program that will better meet the child's needs.

#### Summer Programs

Preschool Plus also offers fun-filled summer programs for preschool children three through five years old. The specific schedule and information, including fees, are available in early spring. Early and extended care is available, which include different hours than the normal school year.

#### Resources

#### St. John's Preschool offers a list of special services of community, parental, health, social, mental health, and a variety of other resources and agencies available for your family's needs. The list is available in the preschool office.

#### Samaritan Counseling Center

St. John's United Methodist Church recommends Samaritan Counseling Center for children and families in need of counseling. A team of highly trained psychologists is available for appointments with individuals and groups by calling the program at 842-5300. A Christian perspective is maintained in all Samaritan Counseling sessions and seminars.

## Accidents and Emergencies

Preschool teachers must receive a certificate in Red Cross First Aid Training, CPR, and Safe Sanctuary Training regularly. If an accident occurs, the teacher administers first aid immediately. First aid kits are available in the preschool office and in each classroom. The classroom teacher or Director will report accidents to the parents.

An accident form will be completed, and a copy will be kept on file with the Preschool. If the accident is serious, 911 will be called. The medical records of the child will be reviewed, and parents will be notified. Appropriate measures will be taken to get the child any medical treatment necessary and recommended by the medical personnel. All accidents are recorded in an accident report file. If an accident requires the use of emergency medical personnel, the state licensing authority will be notified.

**Missing Child Policy**

Teachers count the children in their classes before and after each activity. Children are taught to stay with their groups. Children are never left unsupervised during a session. Whole classes take bathroom breaks together so that no child goes to the restroom alone. Older children are accompanied for emergency bathroom breaks as well. If a teacher needs to be out of the room, the Director or another teacher will stay with the class.

If a child becomes lost, beginning with the areas closest to the vicinity where the child was last seen, staff will search those areas in an orderly, calm manner. Areas of high interest to the individual child will be searched next. If the child is not found in the building or on the playground after a thorough search, the parents or guardians and proper authorities will be notified.

All missing child incidents will be documented in the child's preschool records and reported to proper authorities.

## Communication and Grievances

Guardians are encouraged to communicate directly with their child's teacher if they wish to convey any concerns, joys, or successes. If you still feel the outcome is unacceptable, please contact the Director. If further action is required, then the Preschool Board Chairperson should be contacted. Translation services are available upon request.

**Maintenance Work**

If the church or preschool will be doing any maintenance work throughout the facility, we will inform you of what is taking place and the timeline of when the work will be completed. The safety of the children is our first priority.

## Child Abuse or Neglect Policy

Any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect will be reported to the appropriate authorities in Santa Fe in compliance with New Mexico law. Teachers will discuss suspected abuse or neglect cases with the preschool Director. The senior pastor will be notified of substantiated concerns. Appropriate forms and reporting procedures will be completed if necessary.

Employees of the church and preschool who work with the children have been screened by the state authorities with a fingerprint check. Their backgrounds have been researched. The employees of the preschool and church who work with children have no criminal record of child abuse. State officials inspect the preschool regularly. The Director visits each classroom daily. Every year the preschool staff is required to attend a Safe Sanctuary training. Many precautions are taken to protect children at St. John's UMC.

 **Emergency Evacuation Procedures**

**Fire Drills**– St. John’s Preschool holds monthly fire drills. Staff members understand their roles and responsibilities during the procedure. Children in each classroom receive instruction in fire safety throughout the school year. The students are taught to listen to the teachers’ instructions as they go about each drill so that they are prepared for a real emergency. Escape route maps are posted in each classroom. The fire-drill signal is distinct and consistent. The floater will assist the class with any children that are disabled or may need help. The director signals classes inside after a drill.

**Evacuation/Relocation Procedures** – In the unlikely event that St. John’s Preschool would face a disaster situation in which the children and staff members are forced to leave the school, such as a gas leak, water leak or suspicious package, students and staff members would exit the building and walk to the end of the east parking lot, a maximum distance from the building, and wait for further instructions. The second evacuation plan is meeting at Zuni Elementary School located across the street at 6300 Claremont Ave. Our third meeting place is Quigley Park located on the corner of San Pedro and Claremont Ave.

**Lock-Down Drill** – Twice a year a practice lock-down drill will take place. This drill takes about twenty-minutes. Teachers will lock classroom doors, close blinds/curtains, turn off lights, and immediately head to the designated safe area of each classroom. Students and teachers will remain in the classroom and stay quiet. All doors will be locked and no one will be allowed into the preschool wing. Staff members will wait for the all-clear code word to be given.

**Shelter-in-Place** – Shelter-in-place is similar to a lock down, except students and staff are allowed to move around inside their classroom. No one is allowed in or out of the building. This would take place when the threat is outdoors, such as a gas/chemical release or natural hazard.

* The director or floater will assist with the toddler group, or with children who have a disability, chronic medical condition or who may need help.
* Teachers will have their emergency bags on hand and will account for each student.
* If needed, preschool staff will contact parents/guardians via cell phone as to where to pick up their child.
* If appropriate, a staff member will remain at or near the school to assist arriving parents.

St. John’s UMC Preschool does not have plans for continuity of operations. If we were to have a disaster at the program, we would close the school down until the facility is safe for students and staff to return.


## Enjoy Your Child!!!

Each child is a unique gift from God to his or her family. Take time to know and enjoy your child. Find out what interests and talents he or she has and encourage their development. Read, talk, pray, and play together.

Thank you for sharing your child with us. We consider it a privileged to serve your family.

**"Children are a gift from the Lord. They are a real blessing."
Psalm 127:3**

**St. John's UMC Preschool Plus**

**Acknowledgement of Parent Handbook**

Please initial items below:

\_\_\_\_\_ Anytime there is change in information on the registration packet forms (address or phone numbers, child release information, physician, etc), I will inform the office.

\_\_\_\_\_ It is my responsibility to provide the school with current immunization records and current health forms signed by my child's physician.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that Registration Fees are due of time of registration and are non-refundable.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that tuition is due by the tenth of each month, with the exception of August. Accounts not paid by the due date will incur a $20.00 late fee.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that I will receive a copy of the monthly school newsletter electronically each month as a means of keeping up-to-date on important school news and events. Please send to the following email addresses. Print clearly and visibly. 1.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I prefer to receive a hard copy of the newsletter in the classroom. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that St. John's Preschool is an inclusion program and that therapists from Alta Mira Specialized Services and/or APS Child Find may be in the classroom and involved in activities with the class.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that information with regard to my child's progress, development, or other issues will not be released to outside authorities other than as required by law without written permission.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have read the Discipline Policy of St. John's Preschool which is printed in the Family Handbook. I understand that this policy on guiding children's behavior is implemented in the daily activities of the preschool.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have read the Statement of Faith and understand the statement of inclusiveness are principles that guide the Preschool's curriculum and daily operation.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand and agree that photographs or video recording, which may include my child, may be made at St. John's Preschool and that these photographs or video recordings may be used for educational purposes or otherwise displayed or reproduced in the course of business of St. John's Preschool including posting on our website.

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ , acknowledge that I have received and read the Family Handbook and discussed any questions that I may have the Director or Assistant Director of St. John's Preschool.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_