

Garner United Methodist Church
Preschool
Parent Handbook

Telephone: 919-779-7563

Email: gumpreschool@gmail.com

Director: Debbie Gresens

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Our Mission

Garner United Methodist Church Preschool is a ministry to children based on the Christian faith that provides all children an opportunity to grow spiritually, emotionally, socially, intellectually and physically. We provide an environment that is nurturing and child centered and utilizes a developmentally appropriate curriculum.

Our Curriculum

Garner United Methodist Church Preschool follows guidelines from the Letterland Curriculum as well as the Christian curriculum, Wee Learn. Children grow in predictable stages and our staff allows children to work and play at their own level. A wide variety of activities are offered in the areas of creative art, tactile play, music and movement, large motor, practical life, dramatic play, fine motor and manipulatives.

Tuition Policies

Tuition-Tuition is due by the first day of each month. Checks should be made payable to Garner United Methodist Preschool (GUMP). Tuitions paid after the 5th of the month will be charged \$5.00 for every day late after the 5th unless prior arrangements have been made with the Director.

The tuition for:

2-day classes is \$135.00/month

3-day classes are \$165.00/month

5-day classes are \$240.00/month

This is a monthly average and is the same each month regardless of holidays or days absent.

Insufficient Funds- If a check is returned due to insufficient funds, immediate payment is required to keep that child's account up to date. A fee of \$25.00 will be charged for each returned check. For the remainder of the year, future payments must be made in cash, money order or certified check.

Cancellations- If a child is withdrawn from Preschool, a 30 day notice in writing must be given to the Director.

Refunds- Non-attendance does not entitle a family a refund. No refunds or adjustments are granted for illness, vacation or if GUMP must close due to inclement weather.

Hours of Operation- Hours of operation are 9:20 am to 1:15 pm daily with carpool beginning at 1:00 pm an ending at 1:15. Please pick up your child promptly by 1:15 pm. **If your child is not picked up on time, a \$10 late fee will be charged and \$5 for each additional five minutes late.** This is to be given to the staff members that must stay with your child.

Program Policies

Inclement Weather- Programs are not available when school is closed due to inclement weather. GUMP follows the Wake County School System for school closings. Follow WRAL for a list of closings. If Wake County has a 3 hour delay we will be closed for the day. **We are not required to make these days up.**

American Red Cross Shelter- Garner United Methodist Church serves as an American Red Cross Shelter. If asked to act as a shelter, the Preschool will make a decision to operate or close because of safety concerns for the children (too many people with access to the Preschool).

Dress Code- It is GUMP's policy to take the children outside each day except for days that is raining or because of extreme heat or cold. We ask that you choose your child's clothing and shoes with care. Closed toed shoes are best for fun and safety on the playground. Skirts are nice but must have shorts or tights underneath. Please make sure your child has a coat in winter. Your child's well being and safety are our concern. Please provide a change of clothing appropriate for the season which can be kept in the office in the event their clothes need to be changed while at school.

School Bag- Please have your child bring a backpack with him/her to school daily. Please have a change of clothes in their bag in case of any accidents.

Personal Belongings- Please insure any personal belongings your child brings to school are labeled with their name. We ask that no toys be brought to Preschool unless the child is participating in their class "share day." GUMP is not responsible for any personal items lost or stolen at our program.

Bathroom Policy: Our 2 year olds do not need to be potty trained. We will work on this throughout the school year. The 3 & 4 year olds do need to be potty trained. Due to our Safe Sanctuary Policy, if there are any accidents you will be called to come change your child.

Door Policy- We would like to help your child become independent and self-sufficient, so we ask that parents stop at the classroom door to say good bye. During the first week of school we encourage parents to walk their child to their classroom, but we ask that you limit the time spent with your child to 5 minutes. After the first week, please drop your child off in carpool. One of our staff members will ensure your child reaches their classroom safely.

Carpool- GUMP uses a carpool line for rides in and out of the preschool. Carpool children will only be unloaded on the passenger side of the car. **Do not let your child get out of the car until a staff member is there to help them.** If your child gets out on the driver's side of the car, we ask that you get your child out of the car and walk to a staff member on the sidewalk with your child. We want to do what is safe of the children and the staff. **Please pull around the building to buckle your child in their seat.** There are lots of spaces to stop. Because of their young age, we are asking that parents of children in our 2 year old class to walk their child to class each morning and to pick them up in their class by 1:15. Please do not park in the spaces directly in front of the preschool as this is our carpool line. **For the safety of the children and staff, please do not use your cell phone while in the carpool line.** For the safety of our children, the Preschool door will be locked at 9:40 am and will remain locked until the end of the school day. If you need to enter the Preschool after the door is locked you may use the doorbell.

Social Networking- The GUMP maintains a Facebook page for the purpose of communicating events and special messages to its' families. If you choose not to participate in this form of social networking but would be willing to have these messages emailed to you, please share your address with the Director. GUMP respects the privacy of its families and has adopted the policy that personal information including photographs will not be posted on our Preschool website or Facebook page. We ask that our Preschool families share our concern for the children's safety and use good judgment when using such sites to post pictures or share events of children in our program. It is also recommended that Preschool families refrain from asking our staff members to be Facebook friends.

Safety/Security-Garner United Methodist Church and the Preschool Program follow Safe Sanctuary policies. Safe Sanctuary is in place to protect the children in the care of any adult working or volunteering for GUMC or GUMP from any kind of child abuse. Staff members employed by the Preschool have received a Background Check and received training which outlines the guidelines for care of children. The specific guidelines are available for review on the church website at www.garnerumc.org. If you have any questions or concerns about this policy, please contact the Director or Pastor.

Emergency Preparedness-The Preschool staff are trained on the proper procedures for reacting to any emergency that may arise. Each classroom has an evacuation plan and "backpack" which is used in the event of an emergency requiring evacuation. The Preschool Director and staff will conduct regular fire drills and practice evacuation procedures to insure safety preparedness with the children.

Pick up by Person(s) other than designated Pick up Person(s)-Children will not be released to anyone other than the parent or guardian or persons listed on the Authorization Release Form unless GUMP has received permission from the parent. This is for the maximum safety of your child. If a person other than the designated pick-up person arrives to take the child home, they will not be able to take the child unless:

*There is a written note from the parent/guardian

*His/Her name is on the Authorization Release Form

*Phone call from parent stating name of designated person(s)

*Pick-up person(s) verifies photo proof of identity

In the event of custody issues, a copy of the Court order is requested to be on file at GUMP.

Procedure for Reporting Child Abuse and/or Neglect

As childcare providers we are required by law to report any and all suspicions of child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services.

Parent Participation- Parents may serve as volunteers for special occasions and class events when needed. Teachers may request help in the classroom from time to time. We will provide a participation sign- up sheet for these times. Parents are asked to wait at least one month after the start of the new school year to allow children time to adjust to the program. Field trips are only taken with parents' help. Each parent is responsible for transporting their child to the location and is responsible for their child during the trip.

Refreshments and Lunch- Snack will be served each day. If your child has any food allergies, please let us know. Do not allow your child to bring snacks, gum, etc. unless he brings enough for everyone in the classroom. Please send a healthy finger food lunch for your child. If you are sending a lunchable that needs to have several things unwrapped and put together, please do this before sending it. Example: hot dog or pizza lunchable. We don't mind lunchables but they take a lot of time to open and we have a lot of children. We are also not equipped to heat things in your child's lunch. Please send juice rather than soda for your child's lunch and provide everything that your child will need to go with their lunch, i.e. spoons, forks, etc. We like to promote healthy lunches. If you forget to send a drink, we will supply water. As always, if you have any questions, please ask your child's teacher or any of our staff. Please label everything. We invite you to come and have lunch with your child anytime, but please do not bring fast food for you or your child. If you would like to provide a Birthday party for your child, please let us know. Please check with your child's teacher for the number you need to prepare for and children with food allergies. We ask that you do not provide lunch as part of the Birthday party.

Health and Hygiene

It is the goal of the Garner United Methodist Preschool to provide a safe and healthy environment for your child. Even though we pride ourselves in adhering to proper hand washing and sanitizing procedures, germs are still spread. With the help of parents keeping their sick children at home, we can help prevent the spread of even more germs and illnesses in our Preschool. Your child is considered too sick to attend school if they are displaying one of the following symptoms:

- *Fever within the last 24 hours
- *Red eyes with discharge
- *Head Lice
- *Vomiting
- *Diarrhea
- *Undiagnosed rash
- *Continuous cough, hacking cough
- *Nose with colored discharge requiring constant wiping
- *Cannot participate in daily activities

For a child that has had a fever, vomiting or diarrhea, we ask that the child be symptom free for at least 24 hours or has been on antibiotics for the appropriate time. If the child's doctor says they can return before the 24 hours, please provide a note from the doctor.

If your child comes to school with any of these symptoms he/she will not be permitted to stay. If a child develops symptoms while at school, we will call you immediately to pick up your child. If a child gets sick at school we will:

1. Remove the child from the classroom
2. The child will be taken to the Director's office
3. The Director will call the parent or guardian
4. If the parent cannot be reached, a person from the emergency contact list will be contacted

Medications- GUMP does not dispense medication except in the case with a special situation such as asthma or a severe food or other allergy which requires immediate action. Parents of children in this type situation need to inform the Director so the staff is informed of the potential need for emergency medications. Sunscreens should be applied before the child arrives at Preschool.

Discipline Policy

Discipline is an intervention, and is most useful when applied in a manner that allows children to learn something about the situation they are involved in and to gain some understanding about themselves and their decision making process. Discipline provides an opportunity for the child to learn.

Children in preschool are in very formative years of development. An important part of any child's education includes training in getting along with others, respect for authority and encouraging a child to willingly participate and follow reasonable rules designed for his/her safety. Teachers often review these rules in such a manner that the child can easily understand them. This interaction should be positive and help the child learn to make good choices. Over time a child will understand what is acceptable and internalize this understanding through positive interaction with the adults that they come in contact with everyday. Children are wonderful observers and learn through seeing as well. In the event a child chooses not to cooperate, the following steps are taken:

1. The child is verbally reminded about the rule and redirected with a suggestion for correcting their behavior. The teacher points out that a specific behavior is unacceptable and an acceptable alternative is suggested. If the child chooses the correct behavior, the teacher encourages the child in a positive way. In most instances, this is very effective and the child learns what behaviors are acceptable at school.
2. A second offense will cause the child to be placed in a time-away area where they have an opportunity to calm down and gain self-control. Teachers encourage the child to "Stop, Take a Breath, and Relax." Taking a moment away from the group to gain composure is usually used when a child does not listen to the teacher, is disruptive in the class, prevents others from learning or is physically aggressive towards himself or another child. This time away is supervised by an adult. Many times several minutes taken to regain composure is all that is needed for a preschooler, but occasionally the step must be repeated by the child several times a day.
3. If the child is having difficulty respecting the teachers, other children or following the school rules, the parents will be contacted and informed of the incident(s).
4. In the event that a child is not able to remain at school or has become a danger to himself/herself or others, the child will need to be sent home. An example of behaviors that could result in removal from the program by suspension include biting (age 3 and up), striking a child with an object such as a block or toy, scratching, clawing, kicking or bruising another child, destruction of school property or any action deemed harmful to others.

5. In the event of suspension from the program, a parent conference will be required before the child can return to preschool.
6. If repeated instances of inappropriate behavior continue, alternative help may be recommended such as outside intervention such as a pediatrician, psychologist or family counselor.
7. At a very last resort, termination of enrollment may be recommended if a child is consistently abusive to himself/herself, other children, teachers or school property. Every effort will be made to correct a problematic situation before a final decision is reached. We strongly believe that all children have the right to learn and grow in an environment that is safe and secure.

All parents are required to sign the “Parent Release form” acknowledging that they have read our Discipline Policy and the entire handbook.

Parent Communication

At Garner United Methodist Preschool, we recognize the importance of parent involvement in their child’s growth and development. It is understood that the term parent means parent or guardian. Our parents are the most important people in a child’s life. Our open door policy allows you to chat briefly and spontaneously with the Director about any concerns you may have concerning your child at school. Some of our parents like to touch base with their child’s teacher at the end of the day. This is a great way to stay in touch and hear what your child has been learning. For longer parent/teacher /Director conferences, we ask that you schedule an appointment to insure that the appropriate staff member(s) are available to meet with you.

Your child may bring home a weekly note highlighting something that happened during their day that their teacher would like to share.

If a parent has a concern, he/she should follow these steps:

1. Go directly to the included parties. For example, if a problem exists with the classroom teacher the parent should go directly to the teacher. Concerns with the overall Preschool or program should be taken to the Director. Teachers should document any conversations with a parent for the child’s file and inform the Director.
2. If the problem is not resolved, the parent should contact the Director to set up a meeting with the parent, teacher and the Director.
3. When an issue cannot be resolved with the teacher and/or the Director, a parent should contact the GUMC office to arrange a meeting with a Preschool Board member. The GUMC Preschool Board is always available to hear any concern with the Preschool Program or staff. They can be reached thru the church secretary at (919) 772-2042.
4. Please speak to your child’s teacher in the afternoon rather than in the morning when they are greeting children and starting the day.