

First Presbyterian Church Day School



1000 Penn Street
Fort Worth, TX 76102
817-335-1231, X256
Director-Kathy Jauch

Parent Handbook

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Mission Statement

The mission of the First Presbyterian Day School is to offer a developmentally appropriate educational experience for toddlers and early childhood aged children in a weekday church school setting. Learning activities will be provided in a nurturing Christian atmosphere that encourages the spiritual, physical, mental, social and emotional development of the child.

The School will strive to be available to church families and the community at large, and to provide enrichment for those families and their children. The School provides a professional staff under the auspices of the appropriate governing bodies of First Presbyterian Church of Fort Worth.

Program Description

Because children learn most effectively through a concrete, play-oriented approach, our children are offered a variety of activities to help them explore, discover and experiment. Our program is process oriented rather than product oriented and therefore, is an active, noisy environment.

The classrooms are arranged in a variety of learning centers including blocks, home living, art, science, library, sensory and manipulative. The daily schedule allows for a balance of indoor/outdoor, quiet/active, large muscle/small muscle activities, individual/group experiences and child initiated/staff initiated activities. Our staff strives to create an environment in which each child's self-esteem is fostered and there is a mutual understanding and appreciation for people whose backgrounds, customs and values are different.

Our teachers plan for daily experiences using their knowledge of child development to identify a range of appropriate activities, behaviors and materials for each specific class. The curriculum is organized into learning units or themes that provide planned learning activities to encourage fine motor, gross motor, social and cognitive skills. We work to broaden experiences, to foster curiosity and creativity, to develop abilities to cope with new situations and solve problems and to cultivate a desire to explore and learn. Our goal is to make learning exciting and fun.

Governance

The Day School Director is responsible for day-to-day operations of the Day School. The Director reports to Children's Nurture Committee which is made up of members who are appointed by the Church's Nominating Committee.

The Children's Nurture Committee meets once per month and reports on Day School matters to the Session (governing body) of the Church.

If you have concerns about the Day School or any aspect of its program, please discuss them with the Day School Director. If you still have concerns after speaking with the Day School Director, please contact the Associate Pastor of Programming.

Discipline and Guidance

Discipline and guidance shall be consistent, shall be based on an understanding of the child's needs and development and shall promote self-discipline and acceptable behavior.

Staff shall use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, anticipation of and elimination of potential problems and positive reinforcement as well as encouragement rather than competition, comparison or criticism. Consistent, clear rules are to be explained to the

children. There will be no cruel, harsh, humiliating or frightening punishment, and no child shall ever receive corporal punishment. Punishment shall not be associated with food or toilet training. Parents will be notified if there is a consistent behavior problem. It is important that the child know that we are working with you and that you approve of and support our guidance at school. We will document any discipline problems.

The Day School reserves the unconditional right to deny participation in Day School activities to any student exhibiting behavior which endangers him/her or other students or is otherwise inappropriate. A decision to suspend a student's participation in the Day School is at the discretion of the Day School Director and requires no prior notice.

Minimum Standards/Licensing Inspection Report

A copy of the "Minimum Standard Rules for Licensed Child Care Centers" and the most recent Licensing Inspection Report are in the Day School Office. They are available for you to read at any time. In addition, the numbers for the local Child Care Licensing office and the Child Abuse Hotline are located in the Day School office.

Licensing/Accreditation

The Day School is licensed by the Texas Department of Human Services and adheres to the Minimum Standards set by the State of Texas.

The Day School is accredited by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, which is a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). This accreditation designates high quality group programs for young children as defined by the

early childhood profession. A brochure prepared by the NAEYC is available in the Day School Office. It explains the characteristics of accredited programs.

Enrollment and Pre-Registration

The Day School does not discriminate on the basis of religion, race, sex or national origin. Children with special needs will be admitted on a case-by-case basis. It is expected that these children will greatly benefit from their life in a regular classroom and that all students and staff will grow in experience and love because of the presence of these children.

The Day School has both a closed in-house pre-registration followed by an open pre-registration for the general community. The in-house registration, usually in late February, is for:

1. Children of First Presbyterian Church members
2. Students currently enrolled
3. Siblings of current students
4. Siblings of former students

In the event of lack of space in any class, children will be accepted and placed in classes according to the above list. (Children of Day School staff will receive first priority). A waiting list is maintained to fill any openings that become available. In order to participate in pre-registration, families must be current in their financial obligations to the Day School.

Children will be assigned to a class within their age group according to class days, sex, age and teacher recommendations. Parent requests will only be considered if not in conflict with these guidelines and if received by the Director in writing prior to class assignments.

Financial Support

First Presbyterian Day School actively seeks scholarship applicants and sponsors for scholarships throughout the community. Scholarships are awarded based on need.

Hours of Operation

School hours are from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Monday – Friday for Toddler (20 Months) through 4 years old. Pre-K / Bridge class is 9:30-2:00 p.m. Monday – Friday. In order to allow teachers maximum class planning and preparation we are not able to accept children in the class before 9:30 a.m. **Please be prompt in arriving and picking up your child.**

Children should not be allowed to go to or leave the classrooms unattended.

If, in emergencies, you will not be on time, please have a relative or a trusted friend, whose name appears on file in the office, pick up your child. **Any child who is not picked up on time will be sent to the Day School office and parents will be notified.** The office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday - Friday. When the Director is out of the office, the telephone answering machine will be on. Please leave a message and your call will be returned as soon as possible.

Calendar

First Presbyterian Church Day School follows its own calendar. The Day School will automatically follow any closings for inclement weather that the Fort Worth School District follows. If Fort Worth ISD delays opening for 2 hours, the Day School will be closed. Please listen to local radio or television for this information. There will be no tuition or schedule adjustment due to bad weather.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition is due on the 1st of each month. A late fee of \$25.00 will be posted to your account on the 2nd of each month if payment has not been received. Your child will be unable to return to Day School or Childcare if your account remains unpaid by the 1st of the following month. Please drop your tuition payment in the box located outside the Day School office, or mail your payment to First Presbyterian Church, 1000 Penn Street, Fort Worth, Texas 76102. For your protection, please do not put cash in the tuition box. You may also pay by the semester or by the year.

Monthly Tuition

	<u>Church Member</u>	<u>Non Member</u>
Registration (non-refundable)	\$90.00	\$90.00
2 Day	135.00	150.00
3 Day	202.00	225.00
4 Day	270.00	300.00
Pre-K	450.00	500.00

A supply fee of one month's tuition will be assessed, 1/2 due on September 1st, 2010 and 1/2 on January 1st, 2011.

Health

A current Health Form with a physician's signature **must be on file at the school before any child is allowed to attend class.** Health examinations are required by the City Health Department and each child must be immunized for diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, HIB Hepatitis B and rubella. Texas regulatory agencies also require that all

children ages 4 and older have a vision and hearing screening by a qualified examiner and the results be on file at the school. Please bring in updated immunization forms each time your child receives additional immunizations.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that parents keep their child at home if any of the following exist:

- **Fever, currently or within the past 24 hours**
- **Diarrhea or vomiting**
- **Yellow or green runny nose**
- **Any symptom of childhood disease such as chicken pox or fifth disease**
- **Sore throat/croupy cough**
- **Any unexplained or contagious rash or pink eye, has sore and discharging eyes**
- **Lice**
- **Gives evidence of a fresh cold**
- **Has had an upset stomach (vomiting or diarrhea) within the last 24 hours.**

All communicable diseases, including chicken pox, measles, mumps, pink eye, hepatitis, head lice, etc., must be reported to the teacher and/or Director so other parents and the Health Department can be notified.

If your child is not well enough to play outdoors, he/she should be kept at home. Outdoor play is an integral part of the day's program and we are not staffed to have an alternate place for a child away from the class.

Children who develop symptoms of illness will be sent home. In case of critical illness or injury, if the parent is not available, the child's physician will be called.

*** The Texas Department of Health requires that any child with a fever of 100.4 or greater be excluded from care until they are fever free for a period of 24 hours. If your child**

experiences a fever while at school you will be contacted for a pick-up. Additionally the Health department requires that changes in address, telephone number or work location should be reported promptly in writing to the Day School office. Emergency telephone numbers and shot records should also be kept current.

Medication

If you have given your child any medication before coming to school, please inform your child's teacher. **The Day School will not administer medication to a child.** If your child requires an epi-pen to be onsite, you must have your health-care professional sign a medication authorization which allows us to use the pen, including the symptoms for which to watch.

Clothing

Children should be dressed comfortably for play in washable clothing that can be easily manipulated for toileting. Please remember that learning is active and often quite messy. Teachers do their best to protect your child's clothing, but we ask for your understanding if an accident occurs while painting, cooking or playing outdoors. **Enclosed, rubber-soled shoes are best for active young children. Open-toed shoes, sandals, crocks, thongs or flip flops are hazardous and are discouraged. Cowboy boots are dangerous and not allowed.**

Outdoor play is important for good physical development. Texas weather can sometimes be unpredictable and change suddenly. Children enjoy outdoor play on a daily basis. Please ensure that they have the necessary attire for comfortable physical activity. **All articles of removable clothing (jackets, sweaters, hats, etc.) should be labeled with your child's name.**

For reasons of safety, we recommend that you remove any drawstrings from your children's clothing.

Diapers/Toilet Training

Children who wear diapers must bring ample disposable diapers for each day. The Day School will request wet wipes to be sent periodically throughout the year. Teachers will work with you when your child seems ready to learn to use the toilet. Toilet accidents will be dealt with in a calm and pleasant manner.

Lunches

Parents need to send a lunch and beverage with their children each day. Each part of your child's lunch kit must be labeled. Please prepare a simple, well-balanced, nutritious lunch with foods that your child can easily eat. Some favorite foods may include sandwiches, finger foods, cheese, crackers, bread sticks, fresh vegetable sticks, fresh fruits, juices and raisins. A simple dessert (fresh fruit, cookie, etc.) is desirable.

- Food is to be brought in containers.
- No breakable containers are to be used.
- We cannot add water and cook items such as dry soups.
- Food such as oranges and apples must be peeled and cut up.
- If you use juice boxes, freeze one overnight and place it in your child's lunch box. This will keep other items cold and will be thawed out in time for lunch.
- Ready-to-eat puddings and Jello may be left in the lunch box.
- No Gogurt in classes younger than 4. (They have trouble handling the tubes without squeezing it out all over themselves.)

Candy, gum, and carbonated beverages should not be included in lunches.

All children will be encouraged to eat, but not forced to eat. The children are encouraged to be as self-sufficient as possible at lunchtime. Please help them by making sure that their food is cut in child-size portions and placed in containers they can open themselves.

As noted on the daily schedule, children enrolled in the Toddler and Two's programs will have morning snacks. Food and drinks needed for snacks are furnished by the school.

Peanut-Free Rooms

If your child's classroom has been designated a "peanut free room," you may not send food in your child's lunch which contains peanuts, peanut oil or peanut butter. In addition, care must be taken to avoid bringing party treats which contain these ingredients. Please check the labels carefully before bringing any food to these classrooms. Peanut allergies can be life-threatening! **Children who are allergic to peanuts can experience symptoms by simply being in the same room as peanut products.**

Birthdays and Holidays

Special activities are planned for holiday celebrations. Each parent is asked to donate time and/or items when needed. Ample notice will be given prior to such days, in order to give parents time to prepare. Parents are encouraged to opt for the most nutritious and healthy snack possible. While holidays are important family events, we try to keep them simple for the children at school.

Parents who wish to have their child's birthday party during the school day may bring a birthday cake, cupcakes or a special snack to share with the class.

All party treats should only include store bought food items that contain a label with the ingredients posted on the package.

Please do not bring balloons. They are a choking and safety hazard.

Transportation

Each family will be provided with a Day School directory that will include a list of addresses and phone numbers of all of the children enrolled. Email addresses for each family will also be included. This will enable you to arrange carpools with other families in your area. **If a person unfamiliar to the teacher is picking up the child or if the child is going home with another child, please notify the teacher in advance in writing or send an email to the Director in the morning. The director will then ensure all necessary parties are correctly informed of the pick up arrangements. The children will be released only to those people named on each child's enrollment form. The staff will ask for proper identification from anyone (including parent) who does not normally drop off or pick up a child.**

Special attention should be given to protecting children in the parking lots and while crossing the street. Children should not be unsupervised while on church property. In addition to traffic concerns, there are window wells, ledges, and other areas of the church property that are not appropriate areas for children to play. Additionally, our landscaping is fragile and interlaced with sprinkling systems not designed to support a child's weight. We appreciate your careful supervision of your children on the property as we all seek to respect and protect our landscaping.

Children are not allowed to play behind the bushes, on the window wells, or on the stairs in front of the church!

The Day School is not responsible for personal belongings left in vehicles. It is **strongly recommended** that parents bring their wallets, purses, cellular phones, etc. with them into the building.

Personal Items from Home ("JUST SAY NO TO CONTRABAND")

Personal toys and items should be left at home. They cause too many problems in the classrooms. Young children can seldom share or keep up with their personal toys and items easily. In addition, no toy guns or weapons, gum or money are allowed at any time. If, however, you and your child have a special book or other item to share with the class, contact the teacher first so that plans can be made for it to be a part of the day's activities.

Animals

We do not allow animals to be brought into the day school. While animals seem to be a good learning experience, TDFPS regulations are very stringent about documentation of health care, vaccinations, and parent notifications. In addition, certain animals are strictly prohibited because of the high risk of contracting and spreading salmonellosis (chickens, ducks, reptiles such as snakes, turtles, lizards, iguanas, and amphibians, such as frogs and toads).

Assessing Progress

Throughout the year, the staff takes weekly anecdotal notes and observations of the classroom activities. In addition, each child will be assessed at least twice during the school year.

Toddlers, 2's and 3's will be assessed at the beginning of school and again in the spring. Parent Teacher conferences for this age group will be held in the spring.

Fours and Bridge students will be assessed in the fall and again in the spring. Parent teacher conferences for 4's and Bridge students will be held in the fall and written evaluations will be sent to the parents in the spring.

Special time off will be allotted for students during their conference times so that parents and teachers will have an opportunity to sit down together. Children should not accompany parents to the conferences. If needed, children may stay in Childcare while parents attend their parent/teacher conference.

Parent-Teacher Communications

Our goal is to maintain open, informative and timely communication with our Day School families. To accomplish this, we utilize a variety of methods.

- Message boards are located outside of each classroom. Please check them daily for the most up-to-date messages and announcements.
- Each child has a mailbox located outside the Day School office. These should be checked daily for handouts, announcements and newsletters.
- Information and reminders are often communicated via email. The Director's email address is kjauch@fpcf.org. Please add it to your contact list so that mass mailings will be accepted.
- A monthly newsletter, "Tot Talk," is issued the first week of every month. It contains information on individual class themes, class emphases, and special events for the coming month. Also included are parenting information, community events and other information relevant to our Day School families.

- Community events and opportunities will be posted on the Community bulletin board located outside the Day School office.

Parents are welcomed visitors to the Day School at all times to observe, eat lunch with their child, or to share a special talent with the children. All visitors are to check in to the Day School Office before going to the classrooms.

Parents are always welcome and encouraged to schedule a time to meet with the teacher to discuss any issues raised in evaluations or any other concerns.

It is important that you communicate to the teacher any significant changes in your child's life or the life of the family. It will better enable the teacher to understand any behavioral changes and then work with you to help your child cope. These might include illness or death of a family member or pet, changes in family structure (separation, divorce, etc.), an impending move, etc. Please be assured that whatever information you relay will be confidential.

Field Trips

To enhance and enrich the educational experience of the children in our Day School program, Day School staff will be permitted to plan and carry out class field trips as long as the following guidelines are met:

1. All field trips shall be within a fifty (50) mile radius of the school
2. Each child must have a signed and dated parental permission slip/medical release form on file for each trip.
3. Only children enrolled in our 4 year old program and Bridge classes will be allowed to attend off-campus field trips.

4. Staff to child ratio will be lowered on all field trips. Approved subs and volunteers will be utilized. The staff to child ratio will be 6:1

Separation Anxiety

Separation anxiety is a real fear for some children. There are many reasons that children are afraid to leave the parent or to have the parent leave them. And there are many degrees of anxiety...from simple clinging to tears to temper tantrums to screams of fear. Children will react to the first day of school in their own unique way. Tears are very normal and your child's teacher knows how to handle tearful separations. Be assured that those tears are brief. Give your child several weeks to adjust to the new environment.

Most important, all parents and caregivers MUST say “goodbye” to their children. While it may be easier to sneak away while your child is happily engaged, this method can have tremendously negative implications. It is important for a child to know what to expect, and to expect that the adults in his or her world are going to be clear about their comings and goings. Being honest about leaving will lend more credibility to the assurances you make to your child about returning.

Parent Involvement

We love to have parents involved in our school and classrooms and provide many ways to do so:

- ***Join the Parent’s Auxiliary!***
- Be a Party Parent for your child’s class
- Sign up to help at one of our family events (Halloween Parade, Stone Soup, Chuck Wagon Lunch, Earth Day Planting, Field Day, etc.)
- Sign up to read a story to your child’s class

- Share a special talent with your child's class
- Share information about your family's culture or history with your child's class
- Participate in our Parent Advisory Group which assists in the evaluation and continued improvement of our program
- Participate in "Cut and Paste" helping teachers get teaching materials prepared

We are always open to new ideas for parent involvement. We look forward to our partnership in your child's early education and development.

Confidentiality

All enrollment forms, records, observations, notes and conference forms are kept confidential. These records are kept locked in the Director's office. They are not given to anyone or any institution without written consent from a parent. Parents may access them at any time.

Emergency Messages

If you have an emergency message for the Day School and the Director is in a parent conference or observing in the classroom, please ask for Jayne McFarland, Ministry Assistant, at extension #224.

If you have questions or concerns about these policies, you may review and discuss them with the Director at any time. Changes in policies will be given to parents in writing and must be signed and dated by a member of each family with a copy remaining in each child's file.