



Druid Hills
United Methodist Preschool

We grow hand in hand

Parent Handbook
2011 - 2012

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www.dhump.org

SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

The Druid Hills United Methodist Preschool Enrichment Program is concerned with the development of the whole child...physically, socially, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. The context of the learning environment as a church sponsored preschool is one where each child is celebrated as a unique creation of God. Therefore, we attempt to individualize instructions according to the needs and skills of each child.

Recognizing the curiosity and intellectual potential of children, we aim to build the foundation needed in school. We do this in an atmosphere of love and understanding rather than in a climate that pressures children to perform. We also endeavor to help parents strengthen the family by providing support, information and concern.

Druid Hills United Methodist Preschool is a community of students and faculty from a variety of socioeconomic, ethnic, national, and religious backgrounds. This diversity provides a rich culture for growing the mind and heart of each student and provides for life-long learning in a diverse and interdependent world. We incorporate into our curriculum the ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity in which we live.

RELIGION

We welcome children and teachers of all faiths. In an on-going effort to recognize our Methodist foundation without making any child or family feel excluded or different, the following two affirmations serve as our religious foundation:

1. God created this beautiful, wonderful world and wants us to take care of it.
2. God loves each one of us and wants us to love each other.

CURRICULUM STATEMENT

It is our goal to encourage learning in ways that respect the individual interests and strengths of children. We strive to serve the needs of all children by offering a variety of exciting materials, open-ended activities and interesting projects.

The program changes to accommodate the skills and interests of each developmental level. Teachers individualize instruction; plan activities and present new materials based on the current interests and developmental level of the children in any given group. This is accomplished through planned daily activities including art, music, creative movement, storytelling, cooking, reading, and plenty of time on the playground. Children are introduced to language arts, science, math, and social studies through fun and challenging hand-on activities and by capitalizing on the “teachable moment”. Play is at the heart of the children’s day, and activities are child directed and executed with respect to the importance of play.

PRESCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors governs the preschool. The voting members of the Board are comprised of four members of Druid Hills United Methodist Church and three parents elected by the preschool PTC membership. Non-voting members of the Board include the pastors of the church, the Director(s) of the Preschool, the PTC president(s), and a representative of the preschool teachers. Board meetings are open to anyone who would like to attend. The dates are posted on the school web-calendar.

The Board sets the budget for the Preschool, oversees the Preschool Directors and sets policy for the operations of the Preschool programs. The Board uses committees to accomplish much of its work and has standing committees on Finance, Personnel, Public Relations and Long Range Planning.

PARENT TEACHER CONNECTION

We are proud to have a very active PTC to establish a foundation of family involvement in your child's education beginning with his or her earliest school experience. The purpose of PTC is two-fold. First, to promote school fellowship, and second, to raise funds to provide additional programs like cultural arts events, playground and building improvements, classroom supplies and equipment. The PTC extends a warm welcome to all parents to join in these fun (and important) efforts on behalf of our children.

Why join? Preschool is the beginning of your child's adventure in education; your participation in their school life enriches everyone's experience – you, your child, your teacher, and his/her young friends. You don't have to do everything; it's a busy world we live in. Pay your annual dues; bring one dish to the potluck; sign up for one volunteer rotation at Fall Fling; bring a hammer to one workday; come to a PTC meeting. A few hours here and there can make a big difference to all of us.

Need more reasons? It's fun, really it is! It's a great way to meet other parents. You can help in your child's classroom by painting the room or building new shelving at an indoor workday. Join the PTC and enjoy the good feeling that you will most definitely have after sharing your time and talent with your child's school.

Just like our children, we adults each have unique and worthy talents, creative energy, and spirited minds that can make a contribution to our preschool in some way. Find yours and join us in PTC!

CALENDAR AND SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

A year round calendar is maintained on our website, www.dhump.org/calendar. The calendar is subscribable, just click on subscribe.

FEES AND DEADLINES

Below is the fee schedule as it appears on your child's registration form:

Payment Schedule 2011 - 2012	
February	Registration Fee due with registration form
May 2, 2011	Tuition deposit due
Aug 1, 2011	Activity fee due
September 2011- April 2012	Monthly Tuition Amount Due the 1st of each month. Late after the 5th. Applicable late fees will be applied.

One month's tuition will be collected in advance. This payment is due **Monday, May 2, 2011** and will serve as your child's last month's tuition for the school year (May 2012). Should you withdraw prior to the end of the school year, 45 days **written notice** is required to receive refund of this deposit.

TUITION IS DUE ON THE 1st OF EACH MONTH

2 days per week	\$245 per month
3 days per week	\$330 per month
5 days per week	\$420 per month
Pre-K	\$430 per month
Kindergarten	\$460 per month

Tuition payments are due on 1st of each month and are late after the fifth. A \$10.00 late fee will be charged for all late payments and is deposited into the scholarship fund. Please remember that we are non-profit and dependent upon prompt payment of fees to pay our teachers each month. Therefore, after 30 days all unpaid accounts will be charged an additional \$15 late fee and after 60 days unpaid accounts will be charged an additional \$25. Summary of late fees:

After the 5 th	\$10.00
30 days	\$25.00
60 days	\$50.00

Accounts more than 60 days in arrears are subject to disenrollment.

If for some reason you are unable to make tuition payments on a timely basis, please speak to the preschool administrators to make acceptable pay arrangements.

REGISTRATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Registration will be held in February for the following school year. Preference in enrollment is given to church members and to children of families already enrolled in the program. **The registration fee is non-refundable.** 45 days notice is required to receive a refund of the last month's (May) tuition deposit.

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

We offer a Scholarship Fund, which began through the generosity of an anonymous church member. It's continued availability is dependent upon donations from parents, church members, alumni, and school fund-raisers. You may add scholarship donations when paying your child's tuition (round-up for scholarship). The scholarship program provides financial assistance to preschool families and is administered by the Preschool Board Scholarship committee. Applications for scholarship are available in the preschool office.

SCHOOL HOURS

Preschool hours are 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Kindergarten hours are 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Teachers arrive early to set up their classrooms and make preparations for the school day. **If you arrive before class time, please be considerate of your child's teacher and her time and wait with your child until class time. You can consider a visit to the playground or the fish tanks in the hallway.**

Your child's teachers are always happy to talk with you about your child. However, arrival and dismissal are not good times to have conferences with the teachers. The teachers' attention needs to be focused on the children during these transition times. Please keep conversations brief during transitions and feel free to schedule a time for lengthier conversations. Arrival and dismissal are important transitions for your child. It can be distressing to arrive after the class is involved in activities and also to be left after all others have gone home. **Please do your best to adhere to the arrival and departure times.**

SIGN OUT

A child will not be dismissed to any person other than a parent or official guardian without written consent. If a parent or guardian who is not known to your child's teacher or the director needs to pick up your child you must let us know in advance and that individual must be prepared to show identification. **No child will be dismissed to any person other than parents or official guardian without written consent.** Should you receive a written notice asking you to release a child to someone you do not know you must ask for identification. It is our policy in custody disputes where one parent is legally barred from seeing a child that we have court documentation on file in the event the police must be contacted.

You must "sign-out" with your child's teacher at pick up time. After you have signed out your child, you are welcome to enjoy the playground with your child and other preschool families. This is a wonderful opportunity for all involved. Please help us maintain a secure playground by closing and latching the gate after entering or exiting. Your cooperation is essential in keeping our playground safe!

LATE PICK UP

A late fee of \$1.00 per child will be assessed for every minute past 1:35 p.m. your child has not been picked up. If your child's teacher has left for the day you will need to pick your child up from the preschool office. The late fee will be billed to your account.

Specific details about what to bring, lunch, snacks, daily schedules, etc are provided by the classroom teachers.

LOST AND FOUND

A lost and found box will be maintained in the Preschool Hallway. Periodically the contents of the lost and found box that have not been claimed will be donated to a charitable organization.

LUNCH TIPS

- Label lunch box and containers
- Send a drink
- Send food your child likes and have it ready to eat, i.e. sliced, peeled, etc.

Please remember that your child's teacher is helping eight to sixteen children eat at the same time. Anything you can do to make this easier is truly appreciated by the teachers and your child!

SNACKS

PLEASE DO NOT BRING SNACKS CONTAINING PEANUT PRODUCTS!!! Due to the prevalence of serious peanut allergies in young children we have opted to become a peanut free preschool. If you have a child with an allergy please be aware that while we have created this no peanuts policy, we cannot guarantee a peanut free environment.

Most classrooms have snack time every day. Your classroom teacher will let you know when to bring snacks for your child's class. Some snack suggestions:

pretzels	applesauce
cheese	raisins/ dried fruits
granola bars	bagels and cream cheese
cut veggies and dip	sandwich halves
cut fruits	popcorns for older classes
yogurt	cereal and milk (a favorite!)
crackers (all the shapes and flavors)	

. There is no need to be fancy every day or to go overboard – a box of graham crackers is often the most appreciated by children. Please provide a choice when bringing snacks.

FOOD ALLERGIES

Managing food allergies in a classroom is a collaborative effort. Proper documentation, clear communication, and careful planning for day-to-day situations as well as emergencies, will work toward creating a safe environment. If your child has food allergies you should provide documentation from your child's pediatrician, providing instructions that need to be taken for avoiding the allergic foods and supply any doctor ordered medications such as an EpiPen or other instructions to be followed in the event of an accidental exposure.

BIRTHDAYS

These are important days in the year for young children. We will emphasize the birthday child's uniqueness and growth at school. Feel free to bring cupcakes or something special to share for your child's birthday celebration. However, please do not send or bring individual party bags for children. Please do not send birthday party invitations through school lunch boxes or place them in cubbies as this often results in hurt feelings.

INCIDENT PROCEDURES

With the philosophy of our school in mind, we have set forth procedures to handle significant incidents and inappropriate behavior. These guidelines are detailed completely and approved by the board. These procedures ensure the physical and emotional safety of our children. The following are the basic guidelines for handling inappropriate behavior:

1. Remove the child from the situation.
2. Explain inappropriate behavior and offer more appropriate responses in terms the child can understand.
3. A child over the age of 2 may be brought to the office to provide a calmer atmosphere.
4. No corporal punishment or verbal humiliation will ever be used

A more detailed guideline is available in the teacher handbook.

BITING

Please remember that while biting is very upsetting for parents and teachers, it is a normal way for your child to express frustration and does not indicate anything unusual about the child. Please trust us to do everything possible to safeguard the emotional and physical well being of all the children at our preschool. Always feel free to discuss any concerns with us.

DISENROLLMENT

Children who are hurting themselves or others and/or are chronically disruptive to the extent that they are not benefiting from the preschool program may be disenrolled from the program. Families will be given assistance in obtaining resources to help the child benefit from

the program including assessment referral and treatment options. Disenrollment of a child is the last step taken after all other attempts to help the child within the program have been exhausted.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The teachers and staff of DHUMP are obligated to report any evidence of child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities.

MEDICAL AND HEALTH INFORMATION

Sick Child Policy

The staff will make every effort possible to protect the health and safety of each child. Your cooperation is necessary to prevent the spread of contagious diseases. If your child develops a contagious disease, please let the Director or the teachers know so that other parents may be notified of the possible exposure of their children.

You should keep your child at home if he or she has any of these symptoms:

- Skin rash
- Fever
- Coughing and “unclear” runny nose
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Sore throat

CHILDREN MUST BE SYMPTOM FREE FOR 24 HOURS BEFORE RETURNING TO SCHOOL.

If your child should experience a non-emergency illness during school hours, we will contact you and then provide a comfortable, secure place for your child to wait for your arrival. Generally that will be the office, especially if we suspect that the child may be contagious.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

All children must have a Medical Emergency sheet on file in the preschool office. These sheets contain all the necessary information to contact you or a relative or friend in case of sickness or emergency. It also gives us permission to seek medical attention in an emergency. **It is imperative that you have emergency information sheets for each child and that you keep this information up to date.**

IMMUNIZATION RECORDS

We require that a current “Day Care and Early Childhood Certificate of Immunization” be on file at our school. If you choose not to immunize your child please provide us with a notarized “Exemption from Vaccinations” form. A link to an exemption form is provided on the News page of our website – dhump.org. The required Certificate of Immunization is available from your pediatrician or local health care provider.

WEATHER AND OUTDOOR PLAY

We believe children are healthier, happier, and smarter when they have plenty of outside play. Unless the weather is truly intolerable or dangerous we WILL go to the playground. These are the guidelines we follow in limiting outside play time.

- When the air temperature is between 20 and 32 degrees (wind chill above 13 degrees) outside time will be limited to no more than 30 minutes. Children should be dressed appropriately.
- When the air temperature drops below 20 degrees (wind chill below 13 degrees) there will be no outside time.
- When the air temperature is 90 degrees or higher outside time will be limited to short exposures and plenty of water will be made available.
- When the heat index is over 100 degrees and/ or the air quality advisory cautions against children being outdoors there will be no outside time.

BAD WEATHER POLICY

We will follow school closings in both Atlanta City and Dekalb County school systems. If both school systems are closed, Druid Hills UM Preschool will be closed as well. If, however, only one school system closes, we will make a decision about preschool closings based on the conditions at the Druid Hills UM Preschool. As always, you must make a personal choice based on travel conditions from your home to the preschool.

SAFETY

DHUMP is an in-town, socially responsible preschool and church located at a busy intersection. We work hard to make the building safe for children and we encourage everyone to help with this effort. Please do not allow children to roam in the school, the parking lots or the areas between the playgrounds and the building unattended by an adult. Make every effort to get acquainted with each other and do not hesitate to introduce yourself to someone if you have questions about their presence in the preschool. After 10:00 a.m. all entrance doors to the preschool will be locked and you will need to enter through the preschool office.