

2023-2024
PARENT HANDBOOK



From Small Beginnings Mighty Things Will Come

Lake Travis United Methodist Church Preschool
1502 Ranch Road 620 North
Austin, TX 78734
(512) 266-2250
www.ltumcpreschool.org

Receipt Acknowledgement

Our state license requires that all parents are made aware of the information contained in this Parent Handbook. The Texas Health and Human Services Commission has instituted several changes this year which you will find reflected in the handbook. LTUMC Preschool has also made changes in some policies and procedures which you will find reflected in the handbook.

All parents must read our handbook so that you are aware of the changes. All parents must share this handbook with any individuals who will be responsible for dropping off or picking up their child. We ask that you print off this first "Receipt Acknowledgement" page, sign the statement below, and bring it or email it to the preschool, so we are in receipt of it prior to the first day of school, August 29, 2023.

I hereby acknowledge receiving the 2023-2024 LTUMC Preschool Parent Handbook. I will also share it with individuals I authorize to drop off or pickup my child. I have read it in its entirety and agree to abide by all policies contained herein.

Parent Signature

Child's Name (please print)

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Mission Statement

The mission for LTUMC Preschool: *To value all children as gifts from God and to help them grow in "wisdom, stature, and favor". Luke 2:52*

Structure

The Lake Travis United Methodist Church Preschool is an outreach ministry of the church.

The preschool is administered by the Preschool Director who reports to the Sr. Pastor.

The Preschool Advisory Board, which is made up of individuals who are members of, or actively participating in, LTUMC, a preschool parent, and 2 preschool teachers, will serve as an advisory body to the Preschool Director.

Office Staff and Teachers report directly to the Preschool Director.

Assistant Teachers report directly to their classroom Teacher.

Parent Committee

Parent Committee serves the preschool by:

- Planning and conducting fundraising events
- Volunteering for special school wide events
- Volunteering as room parent or photography parent
- Supporting staff by volunteering their time and talents
- Organizing staff appreciation activities
- Supporting the welfare of the preschool as needed

Curriculum

Our teachers follow the Pre-K Guidelines outlined by the Texas Education Agency. Our teachers post their lesson plans daily.

All 4-year-old teachers will follow the four-year-old Kindergarten Preparedness Curriculum Guidelines that have been reviewed by the Lake Travis Independent School District as being age appropriate and meeting the needs of a child heading off to kindergarten.

Our teachers also use a Kindness Curriculum supporting Respect (of oneself, others, and materials), Responsibility (doing a job well, and owning one's actions) and Caring (caring for others and God's world).

Our teachers also use the Calma Curriculum. The Calma curriculum cultivates present moment awareness, self-regulation, focused attention and social skills such as gratitude and empathy.

Preschool Activities

*These Preschool Activities will be noted on the daily lesson plans posted by the child's teacher outside the classroom.

Story Time: Teachers will read to the class daily emphasizing a love of books and reading.

Outdoor Play: We will spend time outside daily, weather permitting. We usually spend 30 minutes of unstructured play outside. Active time outside allows for socialization, release of energy, and enhances large muscle development. Our playground is well equipped and shaded. Since it is not attached to our building, all children are well supervised to and from the playground area. In the event of extreme weather, our preschool office staff will evaluate the circumstances with the local weather station/weather app and adjust playground times accordingly. If the weather is not permitting, we will do 30 minutes of unstructured play indoors at either PRC, Room 11/12, or MAC Hall. Preschoolers are ensured a MINIMUM of 30 minutes each of structured and unstructured play each day.

Chapel: Chapel will consist of a simple worship service, which includes songs, prayer and a Christian value lesson.

Music: CD players and Alexa dots are available in all classrooms for playing a variety of music throughout the day. The children will have opportunities to sing songs pertaining to their daily routines, play musical instruments, and learn new songs and finger plays.

Art: With children's art, the process is more important than the end product. Daily art activities will allow each child to experiment, create, and express his/her individuality.

Dramatic Play: Utilizing props, songs, and various activities, children will be encouraged to be creative, role play and use their imagination.

Centers: During opening centers, which usually takes place first thing in the morning, the children will have structured play for 30 minutes. The centers will be set up in a way that guides them on how to play.

Enrollment and Tuition

Registration Fee: There is an annual preschool registration fee, per student, of \$150.00. This fee is due at the time of registration and is non-refundable. An annual \$150 supply fee will be due as follows: First \$75 supply fee due with your September 2023 tuition payment and second \$75 supply fee will be due with your January 2024 tuition payment.

Tuition: The preschool's tuition is reviewed annually by the Preschool Advisory Board and Church Finance Team and an annual tuition rate is set. The annual amount is then divided into nine equal payments payable on May 1, September 1, October 1, November 1, December 1, January 1, February 1, March 1, and April 1. The full monthly tuition is due on the 1st of each month, regardless of the number of days your child attends. No adjustments are made for illness or vacations. Missed days cannot be exchanged or made up. If you have any questions regarding your tuition payments or direct deposits, please contact our Church Treasurer, Amy Williams at 512-266-9877 (ext 27) or via email at Amy.Williams@ltumc.org. Her office is in the Kids' Center (Room 10).

Leaving/Refunds: If you choose to withdraw your child, please note the following:

1. If you withdraw PRIOR to the school year we will offer a refund based on the following criteria:
If you notify us in writing no less than 2 weeks prior to the start of school
If you are current on all payments, and
If the classroom spot is filled
We will offer you a full tuition refund minus a \$25.00 administrative fee.
2. If you withdraw AFTER the school year has begun, we will offer a refund based on the following criteria:
If you give us one month's notice in writing

If you are current on all payments, and

The classroom spot is filled

We will offer you a prorated refund (based on the number of days school has been in session versus the number of days your tuition payments have paid for) minus a \$25.00 administrative fee.

Late Payments: Tuition payments are due on the 1st of each month and will be considered late after 2 PM on the 10th of the month. If the 10th of the month falls on the weekend, your payment is due the preceding Friday prior to 2pm. A \$10.00 late penalty will automatically be charged to all late payments. We will not carry a late payment past thirty (30) days without previous arrangements. Please contact the preschool office prior to the 10th of the month if special arrangements need to be made.

Scholarships and Discounts: Partial scholarships (not to exceed 50%) may be available for those who cannot afford the monthly tuition. If you would like to be considered for a scholarship, please obtain a Scholarship Application form from the Preschool Office. Families enrolling more than one child will receive a \$10 discount off the monthly tuition of the oldest child in the preschool program.

Brightwheel: We have added Brightwheel to our preschool this year. It is a software program for childcare centers. Our goal is to have a place where families and staff can communicate, do attendance, billing, and so much more. Once you enroll in our preschool program, you will be invited to join Brightwheel to set up your child's account and set up billing as well.

Policies

Parents will be notified of school policies through the Parent Handbook. If any policy changes are made during the school year, parents will be notified in writing.

Arrival and Departure

Children should enter and leave the building under direct adult supervision. Children will be stopped at the front doors if not accompanied by a parent. **All children are to be within arm's length of their parents while in our building and on our church property.**

Arrival: When you arrive at school, please use the designated parking areas. **Please do not leave younger siblings in the car while dropping off a student.** For the safety of your child, know that our doors will be locked at 9:10am. If you need to arrive later, please ring the doorbell and someone from the office will let you in. Please do not leave purses or other objects of value in your car. At 9:00 AM, please accompany your child to his/her classroom and sign your child in via Brightwheel app. When you drop off your child, please make eye contact with his/her teacher and verbally notify our staff that your child is now in their care. If you know that someone else will be picking up your child, please let your child's teacher know.

Departure: Pick-up is from 1:00-1:05 PM. Please call the preschool office (512-266-2250) if you will be unavoidably delayed and we will get a message to your child's classroom. If at all possible, parents should wait until 1:00 PM (dismissal times) to pick up their child. If you need to pick up early, please call the preschool office and we will get your child for you. **Pick up your child at their class and sign them out via the Brightwheel app.**

There is an immediate late pick-up charge of \$5.00 if picking up until 1:10pm and \$1.00 per minute after 1:10pm. Late fee notices will be distributed, and charges will automatically appear on your next monthly statement.

Parental Supervision

Parents are responsible for the supervision and safety of their children before and after school. **This includes while in our building and on our church property.** LTUMC Preschool assumes responsibility for the child when the parent has signed the child in, and the child arrives until the parent signs the child out at the end of the day and the child has left.

Operational Information

Children Served: The preschool is open to all children who are ages 18 months through 5 years as of September 1 of the school year. We welcome children of any race, religion, sex, or national origin. Class size will be appropriate to the ages of the children.

Our preschool is staffed with teachers and assistants at ratios far below the State maximum, but not small enough to allow for individual attention for any one student throughout the entire school morning.

It is our goal to have low student/staff ratios. We will try, but cannot guarantee, the following LTUMC suggested ratios:

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>LTUMC Suggested Ratios</u> With 2 Staff	<u>State Ratio</u> With 1 Staff
Toddlers	8 students to 2 teachers	9 students to 1 teacher
2's	10 students to 2 teachers	11 students to 1 teacher
3's	12 students to 2 teachers	15 students to 1 teacher
4's	12 students to 2 teachers	18 students to 1 teacher

Hours of Operation: The preschool is open Monday through Friday from 9:00am to 1:00pm from August 29, 2023 to May 16, 2024. Extended Day hours are from 1:15pm to 2:15pm on Mondays and Thursdays for Sportball, and from 1:15pm to 1:45pm on Wednesdays for Bounce Gymnastics.

On Lake Travis ISD early dismissal or delayed opening days (other than inclement weather), we will remain open. On days when LTISD closes, we will close as well.

Severe Weather: In the event of severe weather, we will follow the LTISD closing schedule. If LTISD school delays its start, the preschool will not open for the day. Please watch the local news channels for closing updates. **If Lake Travis Schools are dismissed early because of bad weather, you should pick up your child from the preschool IMMEDIATELY as many of our staff members have their own children that they will need to pick up from other schools.** Days missed for severe weather closings will NOT be made up.

Student Release Procedures: Teachers and Assistants will only release children to those individuals who you have authorized in your enrollment paperwork. A record of these individuals is maintained in each child's file. Until the staff can identify, by sight, those listed in the file, **the person picking up should bring their driver's license to verify proof of identification.** If you know in the morning that someone else will be picking up your child, please notify your child's teacher.

Custodial Status of Children: All parents/ guardians agree that should their child(ren) be the subject of an executed, court approved custody, separation or other form of legally enforceable agreement determining the custodial status of such child(ren), they shall provide copies of all such agreements to the preschool and shall provide to us any and all changes, amendments and updates to such agreements in a timely manner.

Child Abuse: We are required, under the Texas Family Code, Section 34.01, to report any suspected cases of Child Abuse to the Texas Child Protective Services Office and a local or state law enforcement agency. As a parent, you too may contact the agency by calling 1-800-252-5400, or visit their website at <https://www.txabusehotline.org>. The Statewide Abuse & Neglect Hotline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week if you would like to report any suspected abuse or neglect. If any parties feel they need assistance or intervention in any matters related to possible child abuse, neglect, or exploitation, we encourage you to get help. Please call the National Parent Hotline at 1-855-427-2736 or visit <https://www.txabusehotline.org> for more information.

As mandated reporters, our preschool staff cannot be held liable for reports made to DFPS/ Child Protective Services, provided the report was made in good faith. Staff are not required to discuss reports or concerns with parents prior to reporting the matter to authorities. Best practice is to report all suspicions or allegations of abuse.

Our preschool staff receives annual training on recognizing and preventing abuse and neglect. The preschool has been committed to increase awareness and prevention techniques to employees through training and supplemental materials.

Licensing: If you need to contact Licensing, below is their contact information.

Texas Health and Human Services

14000 Summit Drive

Austin, TX 78728

Ph: (512) 834-3426

hhs.texas.gov

Parents are able to look at the Preschool's most recent licensing inspection report found on the bulletin board next to the Preschool Director's office.

Parents can look at Minimum Standards online by following this link:

[Minimum Standards for Child-Care Homes \(texas.gov\)](https://www.texas.gov/minimum-standards-for-child-care-homes)

Health & Safety

Cell Phone Usage: In order to ensure children's safety, the use of cell phones is prohibited while driving on Lake Travis United Methodist Church property. Cell phone use by the driver is permissible only when parked in a designated parking space on the LTUMC property. This policy is enforced at all times.

Illness: Under normal conditions, our state license requires that we not admit students if **one or more** of the following exists:

- The child's illness prevents him from participating comfortably in activities including outside play.
- If your child has seasonal allergies preventing him/her from enjoying outside play time, please consider keeping your child at home for the day. We are unable to accommodate children inside while their class goes to the playground.
- Greater care is needed for the child resulting in compromising the supervision and care of the other children in the class.
- The child has an oral temperature of or above 99.6 degrees and accompanied by behavior changes or other signs of symptoms of illness.
- The child has experienced diarrhea or vomiting within the last 24 hours.

During the course of each day a health check will be conducted. Any child exhibiting any signs of potential illness will be removed from the classroom and the parent will be called for a prompt pick up.

Please do not administer medication to your child for the symptoms listed in the above and then send him/her to school.

When dropping off in the morning, please leave contact information where we can find you during the day if your child becomes ill if it is other than your home or cell numbers that have been previously given to us. If you cannot be reached, we will call the person you designated on your Enrollment paperwork as your "emergency contact". Also, if you know someone else will be picking your child up, please notify your child's teacher.

Our state license requires we inform parents if their child has been exposed to certain communicable diseases (in addition to Covid-19). Please contact the preschool office if your child's doctor diagnoses your child as having a contagious illness. We will notify the class of only the illness (your child's name will be kept confidential).

Your child's health and safety are of utmost priority to us at the preschool. We will always try to go above and beyond to keep our preschool as healthy as possible. Following are our safety protocols regarding Covid-19.

COVID-19:

If a child tests positive with COVID-19, please follow the instructions below:

- *Notify preschool immediately.
- *The quarantine requirements are as follows: 5 days (day 0 is the first day of symptoms or positive test)
- *If symptoms do not resolve after 5 days, you can return when symptoms improve, and you are fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medicine.
- *If symptoms resolve after 5 days, wear a mask for an additional 5 days.
- *If unable to wear a mask there will be a 10-day quarantine.

If a child is exposed with COVID-19, please follow the instructions below:

- *Children will not be required to quarantine but will be required to monitor signs and symptoms for 10 days from date of exposure.
- *If your child is showing signs or symptoms of COVID-19 while at home, please do not send them to school and continue to monitor them.
- *If your child is showing symptoms of COVID-19 while at preschool they will be sent home.
- *In order to return to preschool, we will require a note from your child's pediatrician.

**Face coverings are optional.*

**These Covid-19 guidelines and protocols may change as additional information becomes available and/or updated information is received from Child Care Regulation, Austin Public Health, or state officials.*

Medications: The preschool office will need medication instructions in writing from the parent and doctor prior to administering **any** medications. We will document each dose of medication given. Please call the preschool office so we can send you a form that will provide us information required under our state license.

Prescription Medications: Medications must be in the original container labeled with the child's name, a date, directions, and the physician's name. We must administer the medication exactly as stated on the label. We cannot administer expired medications.

Non-Prescription Medications: All medications must be labeled with your child's name and the date it was given to us. It too, must be in the original container and administered according to label directions or directions in writing by a health professional.

Change of Clothing: Preschoolers may have toileting accidents or get dirty when participating in various activities. **Please send complete changes of clothes (shirt, pants/shorts, underwear**

and socks) that are appropriate for the season in your child's backpack when he or she comes to school. Please put the clothes in a zip lock bag labeled with your child's name.

Potty Training: All children 3 years or older must be fully potty trained.

Proper Footwear: We ask that children only wear closed toe shoes with enclosed heels to school since our playground is covered with mulch and sand. **Please do not send your child to school in flip flops or crocs as it is difficult for them to run and ride bikes while wearing them.** Sneakers allow children to fully experience the playground in a safe manner.

Insect Repellant: Insect repellant is not administered to the children by the LTUMC Preschool staff. If the parent wants their child to have insect repellant on, the parent will need to put it on the child before school.

Sunscreen: Sunscreen is not administered to children by the LTUMC Preschool staff. If the parent wants their child to wear sunscreen, the parent will need to put it on the child before school.

Allergies: If your child has any allergies, please notify the preschool office. We will provide you with a form that seeks further information regarding the severity of the allergy and its treatment.

Epipens: If your child has a severe allergy, which necessitates the use of an Epipen, you will be given forms for your physician to complete which will instruct our staff on what symptoms to look for and when to administer the Epipen. The Epipen is to be supplied by the parent with written instructions. The Epipen will then be kept in a safe location in the office. Please contact the preschool office so we can send you a form. *The preschool does not maintain or administer any unassigned epinephrine auto-injectors.*

Accidents/Incidents: If a child is involved in either an accident (an unintentional event) or an incident (an event that happens with cause) while at school we will tend to your child and if the injury is minor (scraped knee or small bruise) and the child appears in good health, we will return the child to the activity (and continue to monitor the child). If the child appears distraught, we will telephone the parent and advise them of what has happened. In either case, an Incident or Accident Form will be written up and given to the parent at pick up time. If the parent later determines that the child needs to see a physician, the parent should let the preschool office know, (as documentation needs to be sent to HHSC in this situation).

Animals: All animals present at the preschool will meet the requirements set by Texas Child Care Licensing. Proper handwashing will be required after interactions with animals. We will communicate with parents prior to a visiting pet or animal on our campus.

Emergencies: If a medical emergency arises, and you or your emergency contacts are not available, your child's physician will be called. If a child needs to be transported to the hospital, a staff member will accompany your child.

Emergency Campus Evacuation Plan: Child Care Regulation guidelines require our preschool to have an emergency campus evacuation plan should an emergency situation (such as a wildfire) warrant an evacuation of our students from our church campus. Following a review by the Lakeway Police, Lake Travis Fire and Rescue, and our Health and Human Services Commission Representative, we have developed a plan where, depending on the location of the emergency, we will relocate our students to either Hudson Bend Middle School (north on RR 620) or Lake Travis Elementary (south on RR 620). After safely arriving at our destination, parents will be contacted regarding pick up instructions. A copy of our complete Emergency Preschool Campus Evacuation procedure is available from the preschool office upon request.

Firearms and Weapons: At no time is any person permitted to carry any type of firearm, ammunition and/or weapons on our preschool campus for any reason, regardless of a valid permit to carry such weapon. Weapons are considered but not limited to firearms, knives, explosives, archery equipment. **Concealed carry and open carry permits are NOT permitted on our campus at any time.** Only law enforcement is exempt from this policy.

STATE REQUIREMENT: Our state license requires we notify parents that under the Texas Penal Code, "any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty."

Immunizations: All children must meet applicable immunization requirements specified by the Texas Department of Health. **The State requires that all immunization records must be on file in the preschool office by the date of admission, along with a Medical Admission Form or Health Statement that must be signed by a healthcare professional who has examined the child within the past year.** State Affidavits are required for any child without up-to-date childhood immunizations. You may request the state affidavit form by going online to the following website: [CO Request \(texas.gov\)](https://www.co.request.texas.gov). You can visit [Texas Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Child-Care Facilities | Texas DSHS](https://www.texas.gov/health-services/immunization) for current immunization requirements for Texas childcare centers.

Nursing Mothers: LTUMC Preschool offers a designated area in room 8 for a mother to sit comfortably and breastfeed her child. A mother has the right to breastfeed her child or provide breast milk for their child while at LTUMCPS.

Seat Belt Safety: Texas child passenger safety regulations state that a person commits an offense if the person operates a passenger vehicle transporting a child who is younger than 8 years of age unless the child is taller than 4 feet 9 inches and does not keep the child secured during the operation of the vehicle in a child passenger safety system according to the instructions of the manufacturer of the safety system.

Field Trips / Transportation: LTUMC Preschool does not participate in field trips or transportation to events outside of the preschool.

Head Lice: Our school has a "no lice/no nit" policy. Our staff may make casual head checks for the detection of lice. These checks usually go undetected by the child. Should lice or nits be detected the child will be removed from the classroom and the parent will be called. The parent will be given a copy of our Head Lice Policy and information on how to treat head lice. When the child returns they must be totally free of lice and nits, and either stop by the preschool office for a head check with a Robi comb, or bring a statement from the child's doctor saying the child is nit free. In repeated cases, the child must get a signed doctor's statement.

Hearing and Vision Screening: The Department of Health requires that all children 4 years old or older complete a Vision and Hearing test.

Infant Safe Sleep Policy: The preschool does not provide care for infants.

Nap Time: Since our day is from 9:00am-1:00pm and it is filled with activities, we don't have a nap time.

Pesticides: As part of our commitment to provide your child with a safe, pest-free learning environment, the preschool may periodically apply pesticides to help manage insects, weeds or pathogens. Pesticide applications are part of our integrated pest management (IPM) program, which relies largely on non-chemical forms of pest control. Pesticide applications on the preschool property are made only by trained and licensed technicians. Should you have questions about this preschool's pest management program or wish to be notified in advance of pesticide applications, you may contact our IPM coordinator: The Preschool Office at 512-266-2250.

Special Needs/Adaptive Equipment: A child with special care needs will need to have accommodation provided by a health care professional or an early intervention professional. The preschool will use the adaptive equipment provided. The preschool makes sure the daily activities will integrate children whether they have special needs or not. If a child needs early intervention or special education services, the preschool will make arrangements for them to work with the child at the preschool.

Staff Providing Childcare: We are aware that from time to time, our preschool parents may ask our staff to provide childcare. Please be advised of the childcare policy of LTUMC Preschool employees.

- We ask our teachers to take into consideration the student/teacher relationship by not babysitting children within their own classroom.
- If a preschool parent requests a preschool staff member to assist with childcare, our staff member will ask the parent to sign a "Hold Harmless Clause" form stating: "LTUMC and LTUMC Preschool will not be liable for any damage or injury that may result if a Preschool family retains an LTUMC Preschool employee to perform child care services".

- If a staff member is to transport a child from our facility to care in the home, the parent is to add the staff member's name to the "pick up" information we have on file in the preschool office.
- Our facility is not to be used for extended childcare.

Staff Immunizations: We highly encourage our staff to obtain any vaccinations they feel necessary to protect themselves from contracting an illness during the course of their duties in our operation. However, at this time we do not have a policy that requires our employees to obtain immunizations for vaccine preventable diseases, including tuberculosis screening and testing.

Tuberculosis Testing: Based on local health department guidelines, proof of tuberculosis testing is not required to be enrolled or employed with our preschool program.

Water Activities: Classes will have sensory tables (or bins) that will sometimes have water in them. We have water/sand tables in the playgrounds as well. Both the teacher and the assistant teacher will supervise the children at all times.

General School Visitation

LTUMC Preschool always welcomes our preschool families to our campus to observe their child's class, program activities, visit the building, be on the premises, or check out the equipment without any prior approval. Please note that drop-off time can be a difficult transition for many children, so we do ask that each parent give their child a hug, say goodbye, and leave their child with their teacher as soon as possible helping make the transition a little smoother.

Meals and Snacks

Daily Lunch: Students are required to bring a lunch from home when they come to school. While teachers are prepared to assist at lunchtime, children should be able to handle the majority of their own lunches. Children seem to enjoy foods they can handle on their own --such as finger foods.

1. In accordance with HHSC standards, we ask that lunches be nutritious and include a variety of food groups. Please use sweets, salts and fats in moderation. Children will be encouraged to finish all of their "healthy" foods before eating any treat you may send.
2. Please send a beverage with your child's lunch each day (100% juice, milk, water). A thermos with flip top lid is much easier for a small child to handle than juice boxes/pouches.
3. We also ask that parents not send lunches that have to be heated or that are messy in nature.

4. The following foods have caused choking in children, (particularly those under the age of three):

Hotdogs, corn, raw carrots, peas, peanut butter, nuts, grapes & candy.

The preschool staff reserves the right to refrain from serving any of the above to our students.

Due to possible allergic reactions and to reduce spread of illness, our students are not allowed to exchange food with other students, teachers or parents. Your child is asked to eat what he/she brings to school and not to accept food from anyone else.

We are teaching students to eat healthy and exhibit self-control. To help in this regard, we ask that parents **not** bring fast food lunches to school for their children. It is hard for one child to eat the sandwich mom packed for him while his classmate eats a hamburger and fries from a fast-food restaurant.

Drinking Water: To encourage our students to drink sufficient water and to stay hydrated, we ask students to bring non-breakable water-filled bottles to school every day. These will be accessible to them at all times.

Snacks: Each day parents will provide a morning snack labeled with their child's name.

We ask that the snack be LOW IN SUGAR and contain NATURAL INGREDIENTS.

Allergies: Parents of children with food allergies are required to notify the preschool in writing regarding their child's allergy prior to the start of the child attending LTUMC Preschool. The Preschool has policies for managing children's allergies and we implement those as needed based on the severity of the allergy. The Preschool reserves the right to prohibit specific foods from a classroom, if deemed necessary by a child's allergist/pediatrician.

Birthdays: At the discretion of the teacher, parents may bring a special treat to school, in order to celebrate their child's birthday during snack/lunch time. These treats need to be store bought with listed ingredients. Since the birthday treat is part of snack/lunch time, we suggest treats such as **muffins, cookies, fruit or donut holes. Please do not send cakes or cupcakes with lots of icing.** Arrangements with the teacher should be made ahead of the birthday so that the snack will not interfere with anything else being done on that day in the classroom. Please do not send in balloons or candles in for your child's birthday.

Student Gifting: We ask that parents do not use the preschool to give gifts or goodie bags to students. These should be distributed at your home parties and outside of the preschool.

You may distribute birthday invitations to the students in your child's class cubby **only** if all students in the classroom are invited.

Special Events: Any special events going on at the preschool this school year will be communicated to parents via the preschool office, Brightwheel, or via Parent Committee.

Communications

Communicating with Teachers: Since we want our teachers to be attentive to all students, we ask parents not to engage teachers in lengthy conversations at drop off or pick up. If you need to speak to your teacher, please ask them to call you after hours, or schedule a meeting. All teachers and the Director are available by appointment, for telephone or video-call meetings.

Parental Notifications: Parents will communicate with teachers and preschool staff via Brightwheel app, email, or phone, depending on the circumstances.

Parent/Teacher Conferences: Teachers of ALL age groups will schedule fall and spring parent/teacher conferences. The fall conference is our opportunity to hear from parents on how they feel their child is adjusting to school. During the spring conference, we will share your child's progress with you.

Complaint Procedure: It is important that an open channel of communication exist between our Teaching Staff, Parents and Director.

The Preschool Director is always available to speak with and hear parents' concerns. She will return all parent phone calls within 24 hours.

Any parents with a teacher complaint/concern will be encouraged to discuss their concerns with the teaching staff first. If they choose not to, they are encouraged to speak with the Director.

Guidance & Discipline

The policy of Lake Travis United Methodist Church Preschool is for staff to be loving, accepting, and supportive of all children placed in our care.

It is our goal to help each child develop skills necessary to handle a variety of situations.

Discipline will be:

- Individualized and consistent for each child
- Appropriate to the child's level of understanding
- Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control
- Positive in nature and encourage self-control

Staff will only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which will include:

- Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing on unacceptable behaviors
- Reminding a child of behavior expectations using positive statements
- Using brief supervised separation from the group when appropriate for the child's age and development

Discipline Procedure: Misbehavior is natural and somewhat expected in preschool age children. In cases of continual misbehavior, the teacher will state the expected behavior, in positive terms and will repeat these expectations a reasonable number of times.

If the misbehavior is aggressive or if the child appears to be over stimulated, he/she will be taken aside and asked to sit away from the group for some quiet time. We may use this opportunity to talk to the child about the "choices" he or she has made.

If quiet time in the classroom is not effective, the child may be taken to the preschool office for a short interval we call "Recovery Time". Parents will be notified if their child has visited the preschool office.

If misbehavior has resulted in injury to another child, an Incident Form will be completed and given to both parents. (Please refer to Accidents in the Parent Handbook).

Behavior Policy: If a child has bitten or hit another child, both parents will receive an Incident Report.

Biting and hitting are common behaviors in young children. However, on occasion these behaviors become frequent. Our preschool has established procedures to help us monitor these situations, including such areas as seeking parental information, monitoring the behavior, shadowing the child, and, if deemed necessary, temporary removal from the program.

Dismissal and Suspension Policy: LTUMC Preschool believes that a child's success starts with a strong relationship with our preschool families. While our philosophy and mission seek to accommodate a wide range of individual differences, at times, a student's behavioral/developmental needs may require specialized staff that we are unable to provide. In this instance, the preschool director will partner with parents to determine the best plan of action. There may also be instances that arise when a child's or a parent's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for either a short term or permanent basis. Prior to the policy being enforced, meetings will be held with the family to work towards a positive solution and find the best learning environment for the child. The preschool will attempt multiple approaches before making the final decision to suspend or dismiss a child from our program.

Extended Day

Extended Day will consist of Sportball and Bounce Gymnastics this school year. Sportball is available on Mondays and Thursdays from 1:15pm-2:15pm. Bounce Gymnastics is available on Wednesdays from 1:15pm-1:45pm. Our preschool staff will take the children from their classroom to the location where Extended Day is being held.

Helpful Hints

- * Please label all items with your child's name.
- * Please send a water bottle to school every day. **No glass bottles.**
- * No personal toys or items should be brought to school. Please tell your child you will have their toy in the car for him/her to have after pick-up.
- * Parents of toddlers and 2's in diapers are required to provide enough disposable diapers (the kind with tab fastenings) to last for the day.
- * Your child will need a sturdy bag that will hold notes, artwork, and lunch boxes. It should be labeled with your child's name and be easy for him/her to manage and recognize.
- * Please do not send your child to school with open toed shoes or flip flops.
- * Do wear play clothes. We play hard and enjoy messy art projects, so wear things that can get dirty.