

First United Methodist Preschool/We-e Care Programs General Information

The First United Methodist Preschool was formed as a ministry to the community by the Board of Children's Ministry in the spring of 1973. We-e Care was formed in 1974 as another ministry to the community. The Preschool/We-e Care Ministries Board of the First United Methodist Church is responsible for the setting of major policies for the preschool/We-e Care programs. The board is comprised of church members and parents; all of whom are interested in the ministry of the school. There are by-laws that dictate the scope of the board's responsibilities as well as the staffing of the board.

The First United Methodist Preschool is in session from September through May and serves children ages 2 ½ to 5 years. Preschool classes take place from 9:00 am to 11:30 am. We-e Care is in session from October through May and serves children ages 16 months to 2 ½ years. We-e Care classes take place from 9:30 am to 1:00 pm. There are currently 8 preschool classes and 4 We-e Care classes.

Registration for both programs for the upcoming fall takes place in January. Prospective families are given program information and tours of the facility during planned information sessions. If a family needs to schedule a tour for another day, they are usually accommodated. (Currently enrolled families receive information as well through newsletters and backpack mail.)

Church members and Preschool/We-e Care board members are given priority in class choice. Currently enrolled families are given priority next with former families after that. Visitors (new) are the last group to register. If there are not enough spots for currently enrolled families in certain classes (100MWF, 200MTThF) the following ranking procedure takes place:

- First, the child's birthday is used to rank the applications—children with September birthdays would be given first choice; followed by October birthdays, November birthdays, December birthdays, January birthdays and finally February birthdays.
- Next a family's number of years of enrollment with the programs is used to rank the remaining applications.
- Finally, if there is still a tie, a blind lottery would be used.

There will always be space available in other classes that do not meet as often. Students who do not get into 100MWF would be placed in 214TTh; students who do not get into 200MTThF would be placed in 212 MWF.

Preschool children are placed in preschool classes based on their birth date. Children are placed in classes so that the age difference within that class is no more than 6 months. (Some years this is not possible.) At the beginning of the school year, each child is assigned a "table teacher". That is the teacher with whom parents will communicate about a child's progress and will be the teacher who conducts the parent/teacher conference. The teachers within a classroom work together to implement the curriculum and are responsible for the safety and well being of all children regardless of who is at

their table. Classroom teaching teams stay together for the entire school year. Children are not “moved up” to another class during the school year—they stay together as a group throughout the school year.

We-e Care children are placed in We-e Care classes based on their age. Children must be 16 months on or before October 1 for placement in Room 101. Children must be 2 on or before October 1 for placement in Room 102. Children must turn 3 between September 1 and December 31 for placement in Room 200. Students in We-e Care classes are not divided into “tables”. The teachers within a classroom work together to implement the curriculum and are responsible for the safety and well being of all children. Classroom teaching teams stay together for the entire school year. Children are not “moved up” to another class during the school year—they stay together as a group throughout the school year.

Classrooms have different capacities and age groups allow for different teacher to child ratio. Current ratios are:

- Preschoolers (ages 3, 4, 5): 8 to 1
- 2 ½ to 3 (Room 102MF, 200W): 6 to 1
- 2 year old (Room 102W, 102Th): 6 to 1
- 16 month (Room 101W): 5 to 1

Ratios are maintained when classes go outside for a walk, playground or games.

Forms, handbooks and a newsletter are given to all incoming and returning families in both programs between May and August. All important information is included in the parent handbook. (Examples: Guidance and Discipline Policy; Wellness Policy; Late Pick-up Policy; Late Payment Fee Schedule.)

Tuition is due the first week of each month. Preschool tuition for the month of September is paid at the time of registration (along with a one time non-refundable registration fee). We-e Care tuition is paid each month from October through May. (A one-time non-refundable registration fee is due at the time of registration.)

Preschool students and their parents attend Meet & Greet and Half Day Sessions prior to the start of classes. At Meet & Greet children and their parents are given the opportunity to meet their table teacher and learn about the daily routine. The Half Day Session is an opportunity for the preschooler to experience a shortened day. This is done to ease the transition for both students and families.

We-e Care students and their parents attend an Open House prior to the start of We-e Care. The Open House gives them an opportunity to meet teachers, visit classrooms, learn the routine and ask questions.

Preschool “Parent Night” is held in September so that parents can hear about what goes on in the classroom. Preschool teachers explain the how and why of what they do. Preschool Parent/Teacher (child’s table teacher) conferences are held in January.

Throughout the year, the director sends out a monthly newsletter. Preschool classes send out monthly newsletters and calendars. We-e Care classes send out newsletters on an infrequent basis. Both programs use a “What We Did Today” sheet. Short progress notes about children are sent home on a weekly basis.

Parents in both programs are encouraged to contact the teacher or director if there are any concerns or questions.