

First Presbyterian Church
Boone, North Carolina

First Morning Out **2017-2018 Handbook**



“Play is the highest expression of human development in childhood for it alone is the free expression of what is in a child’s soul.”
~ Froebel, “Father of Kindergarten”

“The child is in me still, and sometimes not so still.” ~ Fred Rogers

“There is in every child at every stage a new miracle of vigorous unfolding, which constitutes a new hope and a new responsibility for all.”
~ Erik Erikson

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fmo@firstpresboone.net

PHILOSOPHY AND PURPOSE

FIRST MORNING OUT is an early childhood program sponsored by First Presbyterian Church of Boone, NC. Under the direction of nurturing teachers who are well trained in developmentally appropriate practices for young children, we seek to provide an enriching and secure environment for children to grow physically, socially, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. We provide a safe place to play with active involvement in activities that are both guided and freely chosen with focus on process, not product. Each child is a unique creation and learns in an individual way. We respect these differences and offer a program that values each child's worth. Our church is called to servanthood as it ministers to our community's families and cares for its children. This outreach is an expression of God's love through Jesus Christ.

INCLUSION POLICY

In keeping with our call to minister to all of God's children, FMO is committed to the philosophy that including children with differing abilities benefits all the children in our school. We are clear, however, that FMO is not a therapeutic preschool, but an opportunity for children with disabilities and typically developing children to interact, learn and socialize.

When a child with an identified special need applies for enrollment in FMO, the Director carefully interviews the parents for information about the child's developmental strengths and weaknesses. Any relevant past and current records and evaluations of the child by professionals are requested. The child and parent will often be invited to join a classroom for a visit, where further observations will take place. If the child is transferring to FMO from another program, the child may also be observed in that setting or those teachers consulted.

Based on this information and in consultation with the child's prospective teachers when possible, the Director makes a decision to accept the child when the child and FMO will mutually benefit. When a child with special needs is accepted, the Advisory Board is given a brief description of the child.

FMO does not formally evaluate any child before entrance by means of testing. The above outlined evaluative process before acceptance is intended to provide enough information to indicate a beneficial match between school and child.

After preschool begins the child is observed closely for a period of *three to four weeks*. Teacher, the Director, parents, and professionals working with the child are consulted during this time. If, during this adjustment time, the child's needs are determined to put an exceptional stress

on the classroom, a third teacher joins the teaching team to provide additional support. It is felt that it is desirable to allow all children this adjustment period except in extreme circumstances. At the end of this period, a determination is again made as to whether the placement is mutually beneficial.

Three possible determinations at this time are:

- The child's presence in the classroom is of mutual benefit;
- FMO is unable to meet the child's needs;
- The need for professional consultation is realized; the exception being that appropriate intervention will enable the relationship to be mutually beneficial.

If it is determined by consultation between the teachers and the Director that FMO is unable to meet the child's needs, a conference is set up with the parents, and the parents are asked to seek another placement. Attempts are made to help the parents with placement.

If professional consultation is advised and the parents decline to use these services, and the child is determined not to be functioning well in the classroom setting, then the parents are asked to seek other placement.

If professional intervention is used, the situation is carefully monitored. The decision to continue the child's enrollment is based on:

- professional advice;
- behavior of the child;
- teachers' opinion;
- parental input;
- Director's opinion.

The Director continues to inform the Board of progress.

There are times when a child not identified at admission as having special needs will exhibit such behaviors at some point during the year. At this point, the process outlined above is put into place.

Whenever possible, FMO will make reasonable adaptations to meet the individual needs of each child. However, the safety and successful functioning of the class always has priority over the individual needs of any given child within the above outlined policy.

The philosophy of FIRST MORNING OUT affirms that there is a range of typical, normal, and acceptable abilities, behaviors, and needs of children. We attempt to accommodate as broad a range as possible in the belief that this diversity strengthens and enriches all children, and the adults who work with them.

ENROLLMENT INFORMATION & REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for our FIRST MORNING OUT Program children must be two, three, or four years of age on or before August 31. Toddlers must typically be 15-18 months old. Enrollment will be limited to the following class sizes:

Toddlers: six to eight **Twos:** eight to nine
Threes: ten **Fours:** ten to twelve
Transitional Kindergarten: twelve

In each of our classes there are a Lead Teacher and an Assistant Teacher.

Applications are available for all who are interested. Classes are formed upon the cut-off date and our lottery system draws based upon priority. Enrollment is open first to those who are presently enrolled and their siblings, then

to members of First Presbyterian Church not presently enrolled, and finally to the community at large.

Our schedule of classes for 2017-2018 is:

Toddlers – Monday/Wednesday/Friday
Young Twos - Tuesday/Thursday
Twos – Monday-Friday (2 or 3 days per week)
Threes – Tuesday/Thursday
Threes - Monday-Friday (2 or 3 days per week)
Fours - Monday/Wednesday/Friday and Monday-Friday (5 days per week)
Transitional Kindergarten (TK) – Monday-Thursday, 9-12:30

ENROLLMENT AGREEMENT

The registration fee of \$50 is applicable anytime during the year, regardless of when a child is enrolled. **The registration fee is non-refundable.** To register your child, return the registration form and fee during the registration period or thereafter if it is later in the year.

If you wish to observe any class, please call the FMO Office (828-264-9427) or email the director, Shelley Dewey, at fmo@firstpresboone.net) to make an appointment. We have an open door policy and welcome you to come! Because our hallway is secured during class time and as a courtesy to the teachers, we'd like to know about your visit ahead of time.

A month's tuition is due on May 15. Thereafter tuition fees are due by the fifteenth day of the month beginning in September. **Tuition paid later than the 15th of the month will be late with an additional \$10 fee charged.** Tuition is paid September - April; the May 2017

payment covers your May 2018 tuition. **This payment is non-refundable.**

The program of FIRST MORNING OUT is included in the ministry of First Presbyterian Church and subsidized by the church in order to provide a quality early learning environment for children.

Therefore when a child is withdrawn from our program after May 15, tuition for an additional month is due, with the following exceptions:

1. The church will assume the tuition cost upon receipt of a signed statement from the physician to the Director that the child is absent due to his own illness for a period of at least a month; on mutual agreement of both parents and school staff, the child could be withdrawn and could not re-enroll until the following Fall.
2. If the family moves out of the Boone area.
3. If the vacancy created is filled by the admission of a new child to the class.

STAFF

The staff to child ratio meets and is typically above licensing standards (2 teachers to 6-8 toddlers; 2 teachers to 8-9 two-year-olds; 2 teachers to 10 three-year-olds; 2 teachers to 10-12 four or five-year-olds). Our teachers have excellent credentials in the area of early childhood and are especially selected for their caring qualities and abilities to work with very young children. Professionalism and commitment are evident in their relationships with each other and with the families that we serve. Most importantly, in this setting these persons are spiritual leaders dedicated to living their faith with young children.

HOME VISITS

Your child's teachers will contact you 1-2 weeks before classes begin to schedule a visit at the school or at your home, if you prefer. This is primarily for your child to meet the teachers, and for you to ask any questions you might have. We will give you some informational forms for you to complete and return when school starts. For those who are new to FMO, home visits are a wonderful way to begin to establish a relationship with the families, and it is a very special time to see your child in the home setting. We are grateful that you allow us to do this – the children often refer to our visit throughout the year!

CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences are usually conducted midway through the school year. At that time, we share with the parents what we have observed at preschool and invite parents to ask questions and provide us some feedback about the child's response to this experience. If during the course of the year either of us has concerns or information to convey, we can meet or have a "phone" conference.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline is a way of behaving all the time and is viewed as a positive climate that remains unchanging in good times and bad. Children feel most secure when they know where the limits are (both physical and behavioral/social limits) and these limits are consistently enforced. Our classrooms attempt to create a stable,

predictable environment in which all children feel safe and in control.

At no time will physical punishment be used. A child needing to be gently reminded will be spoken to in a firm, but kind manner; a child may be redirected or involved in a talk that focuses on problem solving. The teacher may sit down with the child, removing the child from the situation to help him/her regain control. Continued problems will be brought to the attention of the child's parents, with an emphasis on solving them jointly or even with professional help. Parents/Guardians are asked to sign a Ready For School Policy at the beginning of each school year which details how any inappropriate or dangerous behaviors will be addressed with children and parents to maintain a safe environment for all children attending First Morning Out.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

A good experience for your child at FIRST MORNING OUT begins at home. A good night's sleep, a healthy breakfast and arriving on time will help make a successful day.

FIRST MORNING OUT begins at 9:00am and ends at 12:00pm/Noon (the TK class ends at 12:30). **The doors will be open at 8:50. As a safety measure, our doors will be locked from 9:20-11:45. You will need to ring the doorbell during that time to enter the building.** You must bring your child to the classroom and pick up your child at the same place. Please hold your child's hand while getting to/from the car and in the parking lot area. It is important for safety reasons that you NEVER leave your child's side until handed over to the teacher. Please be

prompt in picking up your child. A late fee of \$5 will be charged for each fifteen minutes past 12:00.

A child will not be released to anyone whose name is not on the list in your child's folder, unless written permission is given to the teacher. If a child is going home with a friend, verbal permission must be given to the teacher.

HEALTH POLICY

FIRST MORNING OUT is only prepared to care for well children. For the protection of your child and others, please keep your child home if he/she has symptoms of illness. Any child who is not feeling well, has a fresh cold, cough, diarrhea, or fever should stay at home. **A child's temperature should be normal and he/she should be symptom-free for 24 hours before returning to school.** When in doubt, keep your child at home. Our teachers reserve the right to send the child home because of symptoms of illness. Report any contagious or communicable diseases immediately so that other parents may be informed. Minor injuries sustained at school will be treated with soap, water, band-aids, or ice packs. Parents will be notified in case of severe bumps, cuts, etc.

Please note allergies on the health form. **Teachers may NOT give medications to children** (unless directed under a specific child's emergency allergy plan or under direction of emergency personnel).

SHOW AND TELL/TOYS BROUGHT FROM HOME

FIRST MORNING OUT provides appropriate activities and materials that allow your child to develop and learn as fully and richly as possible. We understand

that there are times when children need to bring a special toy to school. Toys brought from home are the child's responsibility. The teachers will encourage the child to put their toys in their cubbies when not in use. Looking after one's own things is one way to learn responsibility.

Our three and four-year-old class participates in show and tell or "share bags". This is a valuable opportunity for your child to sit before the group and explain what they have brought. Their sharing creates camaraderie and self-esteem. We suggest they bring books, nature items, pictures, etc. If they forget to bring something to show we encourage them to tell about an event or special toy at home. The FMO Advisory Board and staff discourage characters being brought to school that engage in fighting. The children know that weapon play isn't allowed at FMO. These toys, stories and characters affect the play that occurs in the classroom. The children's level of creativity is diminished because they are simply trying to copy what has been seen on TV rather than make up their own stories or solve their own problems. Our policy for solving problems is to use our words; our hands and feet are used in loving ways with our friends.

CLOTHES

Play and exploration with all kinds of materials (paint, clay, sand, and water) are best done in comfortable, washable clothes - clothes that are free of complicated fastenings and about which you won't worry if they are soiled when your child is having fun. Tennis shoes and treaded shoes (like Keens) for running and climbing are encouraged. Cowboy boots, thongs, crocs, and sandals are not safe for active play, so please bring tennis shoes to change into.

Each child needs a change of clothing marked with name and sent in a Ziploc bag that can stay at school (include underwear/diapers, socks, pants and shirt). Please label all coats, sweaters, gloves, and hats, too. We try to go outdoors each day that we can; be sure to dress your child warmly.

SNOWY WEATHER

Boone is in the mountains and some years we experience more snow/ice than others. We try to have school if possible, but the safety of your children and our staff in getting there is paramount. When we are on a delay in which we open at 10am, we will stay until 12:30 (the TK class will dismiss at 1pm). If we start to miss up to 1 week of school altogether, we may add some days to our calendar or try to provide some options for making up some of the missed time. **IT WILL NOT ALWAYS BE POSSIBLE TO MAKE UP MISSED DAYS.** Please be aware of this before we even enter winter season. Tuition credits also are not possible because our program is non-profit, and our qualified teachers count on a monthly check, regardless of attendance.

If weather conditions cause difficult travel near school, an announcement about closure will be made on-line at NCweatherclosings.com, our FMO Facebook page, and on the FMO outgoing message (264-9427) by 7:30. When public school announces a delay, we will also delay opening until 10am. However, we do not always follow the public school schedule for closures.

SNACKS AND LUNCH

Children will bring a packed lunch from home each day to eat around 11:40. They will enjoy an early/mid-morning snack provided by the parents. In both cases, let's be nutrition conscious by offering whole grains, fresh fruits or veggies, 100% fruit juice or water, and low-fat meat or dairy products. We can heat up small portions of leftover supper in a nearby microwave. **NO COOKIES OR CANDY for lunch, please.** *We are a nut free facility due to the very serious allergy of several of our children. You may use Sunbutter or Soy butter, but please no peanut or other nut butter or items such as granola bars that have nut products in them.

So that costs will be lower, we are asking parents to help us with snack. What this means is that several times during the year you will be asked to donate crackers, pretzels, fruit, etc. for the class. We provide water and a light snack to our children in the middle of the morning. For some who eat a small breakfast this helps to bridge until lunchtime.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Birthday treats may be brought to school when arranged in advance with the child's teacher. You are welcome to bring an after-lunch birthday treat like cookies, muffins, or Popsicles. If you would like to commemorate your child's birthday at the preschool, we would suggest donating a special book, music CD or other item his/her honor. We will inscribe the gift with the date and your child's name.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

We are very fortunate that there are church members and FMO parents who give to our scholarship fund each year. This fund helps us to provide financial assistance to some of our families who need a little help during the school year due to varying circumstances in the home. We have a sub-committee of our Advisory Board who handles these applications with confidentiality. If you are interested in this assistance please contact Shelley Dewey. You will be asked to fill out an application and possibly have a brief interview with this committee.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

FIRST MORNING OUT encourages the families of its children to be involved in our preschool community! We have an open door visitation policy (unless separation anxiety is a factor) and welcome you to visit occasionally to see what's going on. Here are some of the ways you can volunteer and support our preschool program:

- Providing transportation for a fieldtrip
- Sharing a story, sing-a-long, or coordinating a craft/cooking activity in your child's classroom
- Attending or helping coordinate parent classes that are scheduled throughout the year on various topics
- Being the class or school photographer
- Volunteering with a fundraiser
- Serving on the Advisory Board
- Bringing snack items
- Offering your home/yard as a site for your child's class end-of-year picnic

- Helping to coordinate Square 1 Art projects with our teachers
- Helping with Scholastic Book Orders

STAFF FOR 2017-2018

Shelley Dewey	Director
Nancy Perryman	Teacher (Toddlers/Young Twos, M-F)
Carolyn Flahart	Assistant (Toddlers/Young Twos)
Teresa Norman	Teacher (Twos, M-F)
Dorian Norris	Assistant (Twos, M-F)
Erin Fowler	Teacher (Threes, M-F)
Elizabeth Sudderth	Assistant (Threes, MWF)
Mitzi Triplett	Assistant (Threes, TuTh)
CarrollAnn Busher	Teacher (MWF Fours/TuTh Threes)
Grace Wilson	Assistant (MWF Fours/TuTh Threes)
Erin Dickson	Teacher (5-Day Fours, M-TH)
Julie Hunt	Teacher/Asst. (5-Day Fours, TuThF)
Kaitlin Prevost	Assistant (5-Day Fours, MWF)
Amber Kanoy	Teacher (TK Class)
Rebecca Pitts	Teacher (TK Class)