



# Welcome to Discovery Place Preschool At Christ United Methodist Church Parent Handbook 2020-2021

Discovery Place Preschool is a ministry of Christ United Methodist Church. Our goal is to provide a quality, caring, child-centered, developmentally appropriate program for children ages 18 months through Pre-K. We strive to nurture each child's emotional, social, physical, cognitive and spiritual needs in a safe and loving Christian environment. We communicate God's love and grace to children through words and actions by the teachers and leadership staff. We endeavor to instill in each child their capacity to show their love, respect, and compassion towards others. As a community, our greatest hope is that our students grow on a foundation of God's love and basic bible principles, that they develop a love of learning with an insatiable curiosity, and build life-long friendships that begin in our program.

## Curriculum

The curriculum is well planned and covers a variety of subjects and themes throughout the year. We offer a play based program, which means that we believe that children learn best through play and positive interactions with their teachers and peers. We believe that play is and should be the main method from which children learn new skills and that they benefit from learning about the world as authentically as possible. The children are exposed to age appropriate social skills, muscle development, environmental awareness, academic basics that correlate with their age, and some basic Christian foundations. Some of the daily/monthly activities the children engage in include the following: singing, playing, exercise, story-telling, manners, prayer time, bible stories, art projects, language and literacy, motor skill practice, prayer time, sensory activities, social studies, science, math, and holiday celebrations. We also include daily active outdoor activities (weather-permitting), or indoor activities in the large gym. The teachers in each classroom send out lesson plans to share with parents what their child will be learning in their classroom.

## Enrollment Policies

Discovery Place Preschool is for children eighteen-months-old to five-years-old. The program meets on Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday of each week. In order to provide for consistency within the program, we are currently offering enrollment for three days per week. We have previously offered one and two day enrollment options, but we will not be doing that this year. Our Preschool sessions are

approximately 3 hours long. We strive to keep a small teacher/child ratio. We have two teachers in each classroom. When the class has reached the maximum limit, a waiting list will be formed. We also offer summer preschool/school-age program. Summer preschool has a different fee and tuition structure than the regular Preschool year.

Immunization records must be submitted before the child can attend school, and then updated as soon as new vaccinations are administered.

Discovery Place Preschool program will operate on a similar schedule as the local school districts. Sessions will not be scheduled during public school holidays.

We also have some breaks throughout the school year. A list detailing Preschool breaks throughout the school year will be sent during the first few weeks of school and updated on our website as needed so families can plan accordingly.

## **Fees & Registration**

At the time of new student registration there will be a one-time non-refundable fee of \$40 per child. New and continuing students will be required to pay a non-refundable \$60 supply fee each school year. Tuition for the 2020-2021 school year is \$250 per month.

**We encourage you to pay tuition online through our website.** You can also pay by check or with cash. Tuition is due by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month. Please make sure you pay your tuition on time so that your child can continue to attend school. If tuition is not paid by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month, please add a \$20 late fee when you make the payment. If tuition is more than one week overdue, you may be at risk of losing your child's spot in our program. *Please note: You are paying for your child's place in the class, not the actual days your child attends. This means that occasional sick or missed days will not be taken off of your tuition.* Tuition is averaged out for the entire year, so tuition rates will remain the same, regardless of holiday closures. Please see our Covid-19 section in this handbook for more information related to pandemic closures and illnesses.

## **Withdrawal/Schedule Change Policy**

We require you to provide us with a 30 day withdrawal notice. If you withdraw from the preschool in the middle of a month for any reason, you are responsible for the entire month's tuition. In lieu of 30 days' notice, we require one month's payment. We request that once parents have chosen a schedule, they stick with it for the entire school year. We cannot accommodate mid-year changes of schedule, as it often leaves gaps that are difficult to fill and disrupts consistency in the classroom. Because of this, we ask parents to choose their schedules carefully at the time of registration.

## **Parent-Teacher Communication**

Parent teacher communication is very important to us. Teachers will send home a lesson plan on a weekly or monthly basis that will cover what the children will be learning in the classroom. Teachers will occasionally send out letters to the parent's regarding specific information about their class. Those will go home in the child's backpacks. If you would like more time to speak to the teacher about your child, please reach out to your child's teachers to schedule a time to meet with them. Because of how pickup will work this year, the teachers may not have much time to speak with you regarding your child's day. We will instead rely more on communicating with you via our app. This is also a place you can reach out to them with questions or concerns. The best time to reach our teachers is either before school starts or after class ends up until 1:00 PM on school days. After that, our teachers are 'off the clock' and will not be checking their messages until the next morning. If you need to reach the preschool office with questions, concerns, absence notices, illness reports or anything else, you can message the Director anytime. However, if we don't respond in the communication app and it's urgent, please call the preschool at (801) 483-2715 and leave a voicemail. We get our voicemails delivered to our email and if we get an urgent notification, we will contact you back ASAP. If someone in your family that lives with you tests positive for covid-19 and your child has been attending the preschool, please notify the Director ASAP. The director will e-mail important reminders and other information on a regular basis, so please make sure we always have your current e-mail address. We use the Remind app to communicate with families regularly and we request all families download and use the app while their child is enrolled at our preschool. More information will be emailed to parents with how to get this app and connect to our school once your child is enrolled.

## **Arrival & Departure**

- Preschool drop off is from 8:45-9:00 AM. Pick up is from 11:45-12:00 PM. Please call the preschool if you will be more than 10 minutes late picking your child up.
- If you're late to pick your child up, a late fee of \$5 per 10 minutes will be assessed. Please pay that fee upon arrival or on your child's next tuition payment. This policy needs to be enforced as late pick-ups cause our teachers to be late clocking out and getting their own kids home or getting to another job or appointment. This is especially important this year, as our teachers will have extra cleaning protocols to follow as we work to keep everything sanitized.
- Please do not park in the spots directly in front of the East Preschool doors or in front of the vinyl playground fence. It presents a safety hazard as

people back up and children exit the school from these areas. Please park in the larger east parking area or in the northwest parking lot.

- Drop off and pick up will be different this year. Due to the covid-19 pandemic, parents will generally not be allowed in the building. We believe this will help keep the risk of illness to a minimum.
- The 4 & 5-year-old class will be dropped off/picked up on the east side of the building at the double glass doors. This year, our 4 & 5-year-old teachers will be Ms. Shellie and Ms. Susan.
- If your child is 18 months to 3 years old, you will be dropping your child off and picking them up from the playground classroom doors. You can access the playground doors by entering the playground gate on the northwest side of the building. There will only be one gate entrance, but from there, parents will split into two groups.
- If your child is in Ms. Cornel's and Ms. Eliza's class (18 month-2.5 years old), they will be dropped off/picked up at the door closest to the gate.
- If your child is in Ms. Corina and Ms. Aura's class (3 year old class), they will be dropped off/picked up at the middle gate. Please help us by not allowing your child to play on the playground during drop off/pick up.
- Please keep a physical distance of 5-6 feet between each family dropping off/picking up. Please wear a mask during drop of and pick up and exit the playground as soon as your child is picked up. Doing these things will help us ensure we can run a smooth and safe drop off and pick up routine.
- **Due to covid-19, parents will not be allowed in the building this year unless it is prearranged with the Director or a teacher.** You can call the preschool or message the Director if you need to get in the building unexpectedly. Anyone who enters the building will be required to wash their hands and wear a mask.

### **Sign In/Sign Out/Healthcare Screening**

If you've been with us in the past, we have asked parents to sign your child in and out using our Procare program on a laptop. This year, we will be doing manual check in and check outs since parents will not be entering the building at drop off and pick up. Upon arrival, you will answer a few quick questions and we will complete a temperature check using a contactless thermometer at the door before allowing your child to enter.

### **Child Guidance Policy**

At Discovery Place Preschool, we have basic rules for the health and safety of the children. Definite guidelines for behavior are established so that children know what is expected of them. This helps them to feel secure. We tailor our expectations to fit the developmental levels of the children to minimize

frustrations and inappropriate behavior. We arrange the environment and offer a wide variety of age appropriate activities based on the interests of the children. Our goal in guiding children's behavior is to ensure their safety and to assist them in developing self-confidence, self-esteem, self-control, self-discipline and sensitivity in their interactions with others. In helping to direct the child, the following guidance techniques are used:

- modeling positive behavior;
- Redirection is consistent with the child's needs;
- stating clear limits and involving children in setting those limits;
- having appropriate expectations for children according to their development;
- teaching children to express their feelings in appropriate ways;
- teaching children problem-solving and conflict resolution skills and encouraging them to use those skills with their peers;
- respecting and reflecting children's feelings;
- allowing children to experience natural and logical consequences to their behavior;
- If needed, and only to be used sparingly, a child may be removed from the situation to calm down. This time shall be no longer than one minute per year of age.

If a child has persistent behavioral problems, staff will use a variety of guidance strategies, depending on the individual needs of the child. These strategies may include a behavior management program. Families will be consulted if a child has persistent behavioral problems in the center that require a consistent systematic approach.

### **Health and Safety during the Covid-19 pandemic**

- All students will wash their hands upon arriving at the preschool and upon getting ready to dismiss for the day. Masks will be required at all times, with the exception of outdoor recess and our students two years old and under. Mask wearing for two year olds is encouraged but not required. We do ask that students who are two bring a mask to school each day. State mandates no longer *require* masks in early childhood, but it is still *recommended* for children over 2. If the children are playing outside, they will be given the choice to remove their mask and place it either on a breakaway lanyard they will wear while outside or hang it by the classroom door on their own little hook that will be labeled with their name and placed out of reach. Teachers will do that part so we don't have any 'sharing'.
- As a facility, we will increase our cleaning procedures to include washing and sanitizing all used toys daily, not using materials/toys that are not easily cleaned and sanitizing all surfaces in the classroom daily. We will also steam

mop the hard floors and vacuum the carpet daily. We will wipe down the outdoor area after each use and have a 15 minutes window between each class to allow for proper sterilization.

Discovery Place Preschool follows the recommendations taken from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the CDC and the Utah Department of Health. For your child's protection and consideration of the teachers and other children, please follow these recommendations. Please be alert to your child's physical condition before bringing him/her to preschool. A child should not be brought to class when any of the following symptoms exist:

1. Fever or chills
2. Vomiting and/or diarrhea
3. Common cold (until symptoms are improving for 72 hours)
4. Sore throat
5. Cough
6. Body or muscle aches
7. Congestion or runny nose
8. Fatigue
9. Any unexplained rash
10. Pink eye and other eye infections

This year, we require that your child be free from any of the symptoms listed above for at least 72 hours before he/she is brought back to class. You will be called if your child becomes ill while attending preschool. Any child who is sick and awaiting parent pickup will be separated immediately from their classroom and placed in a designated sick area until a parent can pick them up. Please notify the director if your child becomes ill and receives a positive covid-19 test or another contagious disease so parents of the other children can be notified. We will never release the name of any child in this situation, but we have to alert parents if their child may have been exposed to a contagious illness. The director reserves the right to cancel class due to inclement weather or a significant health event, such as a large-scale covid outbreak or multiple confirmed covid cases within the school. You will be notified by a phone call, text and/or email if this is necessary. Please notify the director or your child's teacher of an expected absence as soon as you know the child will not be attending. We realize that you may not know until the morning of preschool that your child is sick, but please call the preschool number or message us on the app so that we are aware of which children to expect each day.

- If there are any significant changes in your life that may affect your child's behavior (i/e new baby, death in the family, move to a new house, divorce, etc....) or if your child has any physical or emotional concerns, please let your child's teacher know. You may also talk to the director regarding any concerns you may have.

## **COVID-19 Considerations**

We are requesting that parents let Lori know if you, your child, or a family member living in the same household is experiencing symptoms of Covid, receives a positive Covid test, or suspects a Covid infection. We will speak with you about the details and then make a decision based on individual case details. As needed, we will report any cases within the preschool to the Utah Department of Health and act according to their advice. We may also consult with Utah Child Care Licensing for advice. There will likely be a case or multiple cases of covid during the school year. Our hope is to treat each classroom as in individual cohort, not interacting with one another in any way. Therefore, if a case is reported in one classroom, our hope is to only have to shut down that one classroom. Even if just one class is required to close, we will let parents know if we have any cases of covid in the school and let you decide if you want to keep your child home. Please be aware that due to HIPPA regulations, we cannot discuss any names or details of a covid case with anyone.

### **Covid 19 tuition policy**

If we have a case of Covid in a classroom, we will follow the Utah department of health's advice on if and how long we need to close. Most closures will be 10 days, so up to two school weeks. There are many factors that will influence the decisions we make. We will keep parents informed as these situations take place. There is a chance that we will have to shut down the entire school or just a classroom over the course of the year, and we may have to do it multiple times. We realize this is not convenient and doesn't allow for consistency for your child and family. We'd like to avoid that, but we will follow recommendations from the Utah Department of Health as well as church leadership on how we will move forward in each individual case with the safety and health of our students, teachers and families as the highest priority. In order to continue paying our expenses, we will not be offering refunds or discounts if our preschool or a class in the preschool is shut down for two weeks or less. If we have to do a long-term closure, we will come up with a plan to refund or credit tuition if the situation calls for it. If the local school districts choose to move to a fully online format, we may close temporarily. We most closely follow the Granite School District, as that is the district within our bounds.

## **Emergency and Non-Emergency Medical Procedures**

*In case of minor accident or injury:*

Staff will administer first aid to the child. The child's parents will be called, if necessary. If any treatment is administered, an injury report will be filled out by the teacher and signed by the parent. One copy will be placed in the child's file, and the other will go home with the parent.

*In case of serious illness or accident:*

The staff will immediately call 911.

Emergency First Aid will be administered by a staff member if necessary.

All permanent staff are required to be first aid/CPR certified and re-certified every two years.

The parent will be called by another staff member once 911 is called. If unreachable we may call emergency contacts listed on the child's paperwork. The incident will be documented in writing and placed in the child's file.

## **Evacuation Plan**

In the event of a natural disaster, fire, or other emergency situation requiring a need to evacuate the preschool, the following steps will be followed:

1. Children will be escorted out the nearest doors to the farthest part of the parking lot by teachers.
2. Attendance will be taken by the teacher(s) with the group of children.
3. Teachers will bring attendance ledgers, emergency contact numbers, and cell phones in order to contact parents and emergency personnel as necessary.

If deemed necessary, a shelter-in-place protocol will go into effect until the situation is declared safe. Staff will practice emergency plans on a regular basis to ensure preparedness in the event of an actual emergency.

## **Items Your Child Needs to Bring to Discovery Place Preschool**

- On the first day of school, please bring two complete changes of clothing (including socks) for ALL ages, diapers/pullups and a container of wipes if needed. If your child is potty trained, diapers and wipes are not necessary. We suggest you bring a sleeve of diapers for the ease of both the teachers and parents. We will let you know when we need more supplies for your child.

- Please bring an extra mask for your child. Place it in a Ziploc with your child's first and last name clearly labeled on it.

- Please bring a labeled water bottle to school each day. We will send the water bottles home each day to be cleaned. We do have plastic cups to give the children

water in a pinch, but we prefer to use reusable bottles when able. A hydrated child is a happy, healthy child!

- Wear shoes and clothes appropriate for play (we ride tricycles and have rubber chips and sand in our play area, and we paint and do messy activities)
- During winter months bring boots, hat, gloves, snow pants and coat - we play outside as many days as possible.
- Please leave personal toys at home. This will eliminate lost toys or disputes among the other children.
- Be sure to label everything with your child's first and last name on it! Each child will have a cubby to put their personal belongings in. When you arrive to pick your child up, they will have all of their belongings ready to go at the playground doors.

### **Lunch, Snacks and Birthday celebrations**

- This year we will not eat lunch at Discovery Place Preschool. We feel it is a heightened risk to have children so close to one another without their masks on in an indoor setting. If your child is not able to go 3 hours without a meal, you are welcome to make arrangements with their teacher to pick them up earlier. The teachers may let you know if they are exhibiting signs over hunger early in the day. It will be helpful if your child has a nutritious breakfast at home to keep them tided over until they can get home for lunch. If hunger proves to be a continuous issue amongst many of our students and after settling into a routine, we may consider feeding them a small snack in very small groups at a table where they can distance themselves and remove masks. This is not our first choice, but we understand that children need to have their physical needs met in order to learn and be happy! We'll consider adjusting this policy if needed and also based on current trends within the community.
- Children may wish to share the excitement of their birthday by bringing a special prize for the class to enjoy. Please notify their teacher in advance. While we've allowed treats to come into the school before, we are not able to accommodate food as birthday treats this year. If families would like to bring something for their child to celebrate with, we recommend a little goodie or goodie bag with non-food item/items such as pencils, stickers, bubbles, etc. Please consider choking hazards when making decisions.
- We will work to make sure holidays and birthdays are special at Discovery Place. We understand the importance of birthday and holiday celebrations and want to ensure our students still receive the same fun, nurturing, loving and exciting preschool experience they've always enjoyed at Discovery Place Preschool.

## **Policy on "Moving Up"**

As a general rule, we move the children to the next age group/classroom at the beginning of the new school year each September. There are many important cognitive, social, and emotional milestones that take place during the early childhood years, and we strive to keep children in a setting that is most appropriate to their individual development. Because we have small classes, each child receives a great deal of individual attention, so you can rest assured that the teachers are making sure that their needs are being met. It is our highest priority at Discovery Place Preschool to encourage growth and development for each child to make sure he or she reaches his or her highest potential.

### **PRESCHOOL CONTACT NUMBERS**

**Director: Lori DeSmet**

**Preschool Office: 801-483-2715**

**E-mail: [discpreschool@gmail.com](mailto:discpreschool@gmail.com)**

**Website: [www.christumcutah.org/discoveryplacepreschool](http://www.christumcutah.org/discoveryplacepreschool)**



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