

UCP PARENT HANDBOOK



**United Church Preschool
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PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION

UCP is a high-quality early childhood program for children ages 2 to 5. We are a small, non-profit preschool with low child/teacher ratios. UCP strives to be a fun, safe, and happy place for children to explore and create. Children are given opportunities to participate in structured and unstructured activities, in groups and individually, within a warm and nurturing atmosphere. This preschool experience can help your child develop independence and a positive self-concept, while encouraging sharing and respect for others.

UCP is a program of the Board of Children's Ministry of the Church of Chapel Hill (UCCH). UCP is designed to provide an affordable, part-time, quality learning experience for the children of UCCH members as well as children of all faiths in the greater Chapel Hill community. As a program of the church, UCP follows UCCH's guiding principle of inclusion of all families regardless of "race, marital status, sexual orientation, means ability and spiritual tradition". UCP aims to enroll all children regardless of financial need. Upon demonstrated need, scholarships are provided.

ADMISSION GUIDELINES

Children must be the correct age for each class on or before August 31st for enrollment any time during the school year. Members of the United Church of Chapel Hill are given priority for enrollment. (Once a child is admitted to UCP, he/she cannot be "bumped" from a spot by church members.) Siblings of children currently enrolled in the program are given next priority. Alumni siblings are given 3rd priority and then spots are filled from our waiting list. We will consider children with September birthdays after priority enrollment (meaning children that are just past the August 31st cut off). There are 2 teachers in each class.

Applications for enrollment by church members must be made by February 1st of the preceding school year to receive priority. Current families claim spaces in January and then children are taken from the waiting list starting February 1st. All enrollment decisions are made by the UCP Director, including balancing the classes by age and gender.

Scholarship funds may be available. Applications can be obtained from the Director.

WAITING LIST & ENROLLMENT

You must submit a completed application form and a non-refundable application fee of \$50 to be placed on the waiting list. Applications are accepted year-round. When space becomes available, an appointment is made for the child and his/her parents to visit the school to observe the class and meet the teachers. After the school visit, the space can only be held for 48 hours. If you accept the space, you submit additional paperwork and the non-refundable deposit (equal to 1 month tuition). If your child is still attending UCP in May, then the deposit is used as May's tuition.

The one-time non-refundable Supply Fee is due in September before the first day of school.

TUITION POLICIES

Monthly tuition is paid by automatic draft on the 5th of each month. If a family chooses not to use automatic draft, then the full year's tuition is due by September 5th.

If it becomes necessary to withdraw your child from school, it is required to give the Director 30 days notice prior to the date of withdrawal. The supply fee and monthly tuition rates for the 2025-2026 school year are as follows:

<u>CLASS</u>	<u>SUPPLY FEE</u>	<u>TUITION</u>
2-day	\$175	\$250
3-day	\$200	\$330
4-day	\$225	\$430
5-day	\$250	\$495

CHILDREN'S NEEDS

Each child must have a spare change of clothes appropriate to the season that can be left at school. Children who are not potty trained must send in a supply of disposable diapers and a container of wipes. The 2-year-old teachers work to help children with potty training, but we ask that they not come to school in regular underwear until accidents are uncommon.

If children have a "security" blanket, doll, or stuffed animal, this may be brought to school. Otherwise, **all toys should be left at home.** Personal toys are difficult to share and can be lost or broken. Please send your child to school in washable play clothes. We spend our day looking for ways to get messy! Children should wear clothes that they can handle themselves when going to the bathroom. Appropriate shoes for running and climbing are also important. In cold weather, please send mittens, a hat, and a warm coat on your child. All children need to bring a back-pack, a filled water bottle (water only, please), and a snack to school each day. Please ensure your child's name is on **everything** he/she brings to school.

ADJUSTMENT TO PRESCHOOL

The very first day of school for each class will be one hour shorter than our usual day, from 9:00-11:00. On this first day, parents of older kids are welcome to stay as long as

they feel is necessary for their child to feel comfortable. Once the child is happily engaged in play, it is best for everyone if you leave, even if it's just for a short time. For parents of younger kids, we ask that you stay in the building during this first day. There will be an extra teacher in each of the classes for the first week to help with the adjustment process. On the second school day, teachers will help you decide the best separation routine for your child. The 2-year-old classes follow a slightly different schedule the first few days.

UCP will make every effort to meet the needs of your child physically, emotionally, intellectually, and socially within our abilities based on our staffing, ratio and facility resources. We will work with families in making necessary plans to accommodate your child in our program. However, if the Director determines that UCP cannot meet your child's needs, they reserve the right to withdraw your child's position from the school.

HEALTH POLICIES

At United Church Preschool, we are committed to providing a safe and healthy learning environment for children.

Your child's Immunization record and the Emergency Medical form must be completed and be on file in the Director's Office before any child shall be allowed to attend class. Parents must update these forms annually. Please notify the Director of any changes to these forms during the school year.

Children should never come to school if they are sick. Parents should carefully monitor their children for any symptoms of illness (fever, vomiting, diarrhea, runny nose, chills, sore throat, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, cough, loss of taste or smell, congestion, fatigue, pink eye, rashes, stomach bugs.) If symptoms appear, a child should not come to school and parents should contact the pediatrician for guidance.

Because of the close contact that naturally occurs among children this age and between teachers & their young students, our preschool will be more conservative in decisions about a child with symptoms attending. While doctors' notes provide some reassurance, the preschool reserves the right to refuse attendance to any child if we remain concerned about the health of the teachers and other students.

FEVER, VOMITING, DIARRHEA - Any child with a fever, vomiting, or diarrhea within the past 24 hours should not come to school.

COUGH - If your child has a mild, intermittent cough (i.e., can go 15 minutes without a cough) s/he is safe to attend school. Children that cough more consistently need to remain at home.

RUNNY NOSE - If your child has a runny nose with clear discharge, and there are

no other symptoms, then the child is safe to attend. However, if discharge is not clear, OR if the nose needs to be wiped repeatedly, the child should remain at home.

PINK EYE - If your child's eye is pink, swollen, or has any wet or dry discharge, please have him or her remain at home until the eyes are clear. It is recommended to be seen by the physician before coming to school to determine if antibiotic drops are needed. If drops are prescribed, then the child must be treated for at least 24 hours and the eyes should be clear of any discharge before returning to school.

ANTIBIOTICS - Children on antibiotics should wait a full 24 hours after beginning treatment before returning to school.

LAXATIVES - If you give your child a laxative, please do not send them to school until that laxative has cleared the child's system (usually 24-48 hours).

HEAD LICE – Children may not attend preschool with head lice or nits.

COVID/RSV/Flu: If a staff member or student tests positive for COVID, Flu, or RSV, they will need to stay out of school for at least 3 days following symptom onset. This is longer than CDC recommendations because children are not always able to cover their coughs & sneezes and they are often playing face-to-face in very close proximity with other children. After 3 days at home, the person may return to preschool IF symptoms are improving overall, and the person has been fever free for 24-hours without use of a fever-reducing medication. Please have your child wear a mask at school for at least 5 days after symptom onset and until symptoms have resolved to protect classmates.

Please notify the Director prior to the start of class when a child will not be attending his or her class due to sickness or otherwise. In addition, please notify the Director of any communicable disease or any serious illness or health problems.

If a child becomes sick during the school morning, one or both parents will be notified. In the event that parents cannot be contacted, the additional emergency contacts listed on the child's Emergency Medical Form will be called. ***Arrangements to pick up a sick child must be made immediately.*** Parents will also be called to pick up a child who is not able to function in a group. Teachers cannot administer any medication to a child.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

UCP begins at 9:00 AM and ends at 12:00 PM. The preschool entrance doors (at the bottom of the ramp) and the interior door into our hallway will only be unlocked from 8:55-9:15 each morning. After 9:15 you will need to use the church entrance and be buzzed in at the hallway door. Each child needs to first wash their hands in the hallway bathrooms and then be personally delivered to the classroom by their parent or other

authorized (in writing) adult. Please be prompt, as it is important for your child to begin the day with his/her classmates. Children should never be left alone, either outside or inside the building. Please call or e-mail by 9:30 if your child will not be coming that morning.

UCP closes promptly at 12:00 (1:00 for Lunch). Late fees in the form of extra volunteer time will be charged when a child is picked up late. If volunteer time is not completed by May 1st; a \$25 per hour fee is then due. You will receive a message confirming your late pick-up fee.

SNACKS

Your child will need to bring a snack and filled water bottle each morning. Please label all of these with your child's name. Thanks in advance for helping your child learn how to open and close the water bottle and snack containers as best he/she can. We cannot prepare fruit (peel, cut up, etc.) or refrigerate snacks/lunches.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parents are always welcome in the UCP classroom during school hours. We love to have family members come in to read, cook or share a special interest with the kids. However, it is best for the kids to keep your visits to a minimum during the first two months of school, just while everyone is getting adjusted. Parents are encouraged to communicate any pertinent information about the child's life at home to the teachers. Please let us know if there has been a change of address, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, new sibling, divorce, new medical development, or other major family event.

The teachers will keep the parents informed of their child's activities and behaviors at school as much as possible. We do not have parent conferences scheduled on a regular basis, but a parent may request a conference at any time. A conference can be arranged, before or after school or via telephone. Please do not hesitate to talk to your child's teacher and/or the director about any concern.

All class communication will be shared via Brightwheel. You will also receive school-wide updates from the Director each week. Check the white board next to the classroom door for daily news and reminders.

Parents are asked to complete 3 hours of volunteer work per school year. There are many different opportunities, including playground workdays, substitute teaching, fundraising projects and/or serving on the UCP Executive Board or committee. Details are explained at Parent Night in September, the night before school starts. A school calendar will be posted on our website and a back-to-school newsletter is sent in early August.

MORNING SCHEDULE

The classes do follow a schedule. However, we always remain flexible so we can adjust to variables such as the weather or children's needs and interests. Our older class's routine is as follows:

- 9:00-10:15 Free play using both the room and back porch
- 9:10-9:15 Morning meeting
- 10:15-10:25 Clean up time
- 10:25-10:35 Bathroom and wash up for snack
- 10:35-10:50 Snack
- 10:50-11:20 Outside play
- 11:20-11:40 Art and clean-up
- 11:40-11:55 Story time. Informal circle time (sharing, calendar, weather, finger plays, etc.)
- 11:55-12:00 Jackets on and dismissal

The younger class's routine is similar except that they go outside toward the end of the morning and they will often do art during free play.

ART

Children love to express themselves through art and at UCP we hope to encourage that love by giving the children lots of opportunities to experiment with different media every day. Our art is not teacher made. The end product is not important; it's the process that is fun for children. We always use washable paint, markers, and glue, but some play clothes may still get stains on them.

CLOSINGS

UCP policy on inclement weather: if Chapel Hill public schools are closed, we are closed. If CH schools are on a 1 hour delay, UCP still opens at 9:00; 2 hour delay means we open at 10:00. If CH schools release before 1:00, we release at the same time. Communication will always be sent as soon as the CH public schools make their decisions. UCP does not make up snow days.

BIRTHDAYS

You may want to send a special treat for your child's class to help celebrate his/her birthday. If your child's birthday is during the summer break, you may celebrate his/her half-birthday if desired. Please do not bring party favors or distribute birthday presents to other children at school. Do not hand out birthday party invitations at school unless all the children in the class are invited.

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is necessary to help maintain our reasonable tuition. Proceeds also help fund our scholarship fund. A fundraising committee of parents is established each fall to decide on and implement all fundraising projects for the year. They may include school photos, UCP t-shirts, Name Bubbles, or a fun plant project. UCP does participate in the Harris Teeter Together-In-Education program. If you add our school number (#3168) to your Harris Teeter VIC card, we receive a % back from all your store brand purchases.

LUNCH PROGRAM

Children in the Fish and Frog classes may choose the lunch option for the school year. Tuition is an additional fee each month (September-May). We will not have lunch on the third Thursday of each month to make space for a staff meeting. Children bring their lunches to school everyday and stay until 1:00p

2 days a week-\$60 per month
3 days a week-\$90 per month
4 days a week-\$120 per month
5 days a week-\$150 per month