UCP PARENT HANDBOOK

A cartoon of a tree with a sign

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United Church Preschool

1321 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Website: [www.unitedchurchpreschool.com](http://www.unitedchurchpreschool.com)

Director: Anitra Grove

UCP Office: Room # 118

Director e-mail: [director@unitedchurch.org](mailto:director@unitedchurch.org)

Telephone Numbers:

UCP: 919-338-7916/Anitra:919-451-4859

Church Office (for emergencies only): 942-3540 **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

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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. 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 $35 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 at Parent Night in September.

**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 2023-2024 school year are as follows:

CLASS SUPPLY FEE TUITION TUITION W/LUNCH

## 3-day $145 $290 $350

4-day $205 $380 $440

5-day $225 $440 $500

**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 do not come to school in regular underwear until accidents are uncommon. Although it is not required that the kids entering the 3-year-old class be totally potty trained, they need to be very close before school begins. Teachers will not change diapers in the older classes after November 1.

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 and a filled water bottle (water only, please) to school each day. Please mark your child’s name 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 must be free of fever, diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, unexplained rashes, runny noses, excessive coughing, sore throat, headache, chills, earache, and red eyes for 24 hours before coming to school. Please DO NOT bring your child to school with any of these symptoms unless you provide the school with a doctor’s signed verification that your child is not contagious to others. Children may not attend school with head lice or nits. ***The preschool reserves the right to refuse attendance to any child displaying the above symptoms and appreciates your cooperation in this matter.”***

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 (11:55 for “Turtles”). 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 an e-mail 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.

A class newsletter, calendar and photos will be shared via Google. You will also receive school-wide updates from the Director each week by e-mail. Check the white board next to the classroom door for daily news and reminders.

Parents are required to complete 3 hours of volunteer work per child per school year or pay a $25 fee per hour. There are many different opportunities, including playground workdays, substitute teaching, fundraising projects and serving on the UCP Board. 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.

**MUSIC**

Although music and creative movement are already included in our daily schedule, each child will also attend a music class once a week. Every Wednesday and Friday, each class will have a 30-minute Music class with Richard, our music teacher. Richard brings a variety of instruments for the kids to use when they meet with her in the music room.

**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. E-mails 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 provide scholarships. A fund-raising committee of parents is established each fall to decide on and implement all fund-raising projects for the year. They may include school photos, UCP t-shirts, and Name Bubbles. 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.

# SCHOLASTIC BOOKS

One great way we stock our school library is through the Scholastic Book Club. Each month a new book order is sent home with each child. If you wish to receive any books, order online at [www.scholastic.com/bookclubs](http://www.scholastic.com/bookclubs) by the designated due date. There is never any obligation to buy, of course; but this is a nice source of inexpensive children’s books. The school earns points for each book ordered, which we then use to receive free books and classroom supplies.

**LUNCH PROGRAM**

Kids in the Duck, Fish, and Frog classes may choose the lunch option for the school year. Tuition is then an additional $60 each month. Kids bring their lunches to school every Monday and Wednesday and stay until 1:00pm.