



2025-2026 FAMILY HANDBOOK

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Welcome

we're so happy you are here to share your child's journey with us! You are the most important influence in your child's life. we are YOUR partners. Your identities, traditions, hopes and dreams are very important to us. Thank you for trusting us to partner with you in this educational journey.

This handbook has an incredible amount of information inside. we have information on everything from arrival all the way to dismissal. And it includes information you might find useful at home: Child Guidance, Guides to Speech and Action, and Survival Skills for Classroom Volunteers.

This year you will find me in Early Bird on Tuesday, wednesday and Thursday; in one of our Explorers classes on Tuesday and wednesday mornings; and in our Researchers class on Fridays. However, Thursday mornings are reserved for YOU! I'd love to have a cup of tea or coffee and a chat. No appointment necessary.

Nothing without Joy,

Lowellette

Who We Are

Our History

A mother noticed a need in Wyoming and asked Friendship United Methodist Church to start a preschool. In 1983 Friendship Co-operative Nursery School began and still continues (as Friendship Preschool) to meet the needs of a diverse community. We are proud and happy to say that our founder is still involved in the preschool!

Our Purpose

Since 1983 our purpose has been “to provide a safe and stimulating environment which promotes the social, emotional, intellectual and physical development of each child enrolled; and to help parents acquire a greater understanding and enjoyment of their children and of other children.

Our Philosophy

“Learning and development are interrelated from the child’s very first day of life.” Lev Vygotsky (Theories of Childhood: And introduction to Dewey, Montessori, Erikson, Piaget & Vygotsky by Carol Garhart Mooney)

We are inspired by the theories of John Dewey, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, Jerome Bruner, Howard Gardner, Loris Malaguzzi, Maria Montessori, and others. Friendship Preschool embraces the social-constructivist theoretical reaching model. What does this mean?

- Play is an integral part of our day. During play children learn from each other, develop language skills and construct knowledge as they talk with one another and listen to each other.
- Because educators observe the children, they learn who each child is. With that knowledge they can plan opportunities and materials that will stretch children’s competence.
- Learning is an interactive experience with both adults and peers. Conversations, social interactions, and opportunities for children to work together increase their skills and help them accomplish their goals, whether their goal is to complete a difficult puzzle, figure out how something works, or solve a disagreement..

Classroom Life

Our Curriculum

Curriculum is not the same thing as content. Curriculum is the framework that the content fits within. Content is the specific information, activities, and materials that support learning. Our curriculum is a dynamic framework that meets the developmental needs of children, incorporates their interests and ideas, encourages children to be curious, creative and problem solvers while keeping in mind state standards.

There are four main components of our curriculum.

1. **School Environment**—Our indoor and outdoor spaces are thought of as another educator on our team. How it is arranged and what is in it has a significant impact. The school environment may be influenced by the season, patterns of play observed, conversations heard, etc.
2. **Daily Life**—The interactions that occur in our spaces also have an important role in our curriculum. What do educators hear the children having conversations about? What patterns of play do the educators notice? How is the space used?
3. **Invitations & Provocations**—In addition to centers, specific invitations to explore independently are provided. They provoke thoughts, discussions, questions, interests, creativity and ideas. They can also expand on a thought, project, idea and interest. A provocation provides a hands-on exploration for children to practice, test, construct and deconstruct their ideas and theories. If children are not engaging in the provocation as a support to their ideas and concepts, ask yourself, “Am I really honing in on their thinking or mine?” Children may choose to work on these alone or with a friend.
4. **Projects**—Sustained exploration and study of a specific topic can occur with the whole class or with small groups of children. Sometimes these are author or artist studies and sometimes they are focused on something more abstract, like emotions.

We also believe that all children at our school have the right to explore:

- ❖ **Relationships**
Developing, growing, and maintaining relationships with others—humans, plants, Animals
- ❖ **Identity**
Who am I? Who are you? Who are we as a community?
- ❖ **Stories**
Storytelling, Being read to, reading, structure of books, conversations
- ❖ **Mark Making**
Use of symbols progressing to letters, drawing, painting and writing to make meaning
- ❖ **Color Theory**
Exploring color and creating colors
- ❖ **Nature**
Each day we go outside, even for a small amount of time weather permitting. It may be the whole class is out on the playground or taking a walk around our grounds. It may be a small group working on a project outside or engaged in an invitation in the courtyard.

Our Content

We address math, literacy, science, social studies, large and fine motor, and social-emotional content into our daily life, environment, provocations & invitations, and project work. These content areas are presented within a meaningful context and always occur in some combination rather than in a single content area. We also provide opportunities to explore the content areas in small group work, individual work, and large group work.

You will not find many toys per se. For example, in our dramatic play area you will not find plastic food, but you might find acorns, glass mosaic tiles, felt pieces, or polished rocks. This way, children are able to cook or bake foods that may not be represented in the plastic food. And, let's be honest, the plastic food doesn't really look all that appetizing! Additionally, we do our best to minimize the amount of plastic that is in our environment. We think very carefully before purchasing anything new that is made of plastic.

Open-Ended Materials

Open-ended materials enable children to play freely. They are objects that have no rules to follow. They are raw materials that can be used to build or to create or to combine to make something new. Examples: art materials, blocks. However, some closed materials, such as puzzles, books, and games do provide important learning opportunities and should also be incorporated. They should not, however, overshadow or dominate over loose parts and open-ended materials.

Loose Parts

Loose parts are “alluring, beautiful found objects and materials that children can move, manipulate, control, and change while they play (Loose Parts: Inspiring Play in Young Children by Lisa Daly and Miriam Beloglovsky, pg 3)” Loose parts are open-ended rather than single purpose, such as a train set or puzzle. They may be combined with other materials and turned into whatever children imagine. Books on loose parts are available for your perusal in the director's office.

Natural Materials

It is our goal to use non-toxic, renewable and/or sustainable resources such as seed pods, branches, tree cookies, shells, rocks, natural textiles, etc. We also use items that may have otherwise gone to a landfill such as plastic lids, surplus building items, etc. We limit our use of buying new items made of plastic or other non-renewable resources.

Reuse Materials

In our effort to care for our world we often use materials that may have been thrown out by others. For example, we reuse Pringles lids in art and small empty plastic bottles in our sensory table. Packaging material also finds its way into our art area. Glass mosaic tiles that were left over from someone's project are used as a loose part. If you have something you think we could use please let your child's teacher or the director know, and we'll let you know if we can.

Sample Daily Schedule

Each class follows a rhythm consisting of individual, small group, and large group opportunities as well as quiet and active. Gross motor is offered every day.

9:00-9:15 arrival

9:15-10:50 Meeting/Circle, classroom exploration, small groups

10:50-11:15 Snack

11:15-12:00 Outside

12:00 dismissal

Separation

Children are not the only ones who have big feelings about being separated from each other. You may also feel big feelings. These feelings are normal. Unfortunately, they are also often uncomfortable. Not every child and not every family has the same feelings about separation or the same ideas about how to handle those big feelings. And that's okay! If you ever want to talk about your family's experience of separation please do not hesitate to talk to the classroom educators or the director. We are here to support you. With our combined over 40 years of experience just here at Friendship Preschool, and our years of parenting our own children, we get it! If you or your child is struggling, please let us know so we can work together and support you and your family.

Things we have in place

Transition schedule

In August we hold an open house for your family to visit the school and classroom, meet the educators, and meet each other. This informal time is a great way for children to become acquainted or reacquainted with Friendship without fear of separation. It is also a wonderful way to meet the other families!

The next week we hold transition days. The first day is half of the class for 1 hour 15 minutes. The second day is the whole class for 2 hours. And the next school day begins our regular schedule. If you do not have all necessary enrollment paperwork completed, turned in, and approved by the director, you may not leave your child at Friendship Preschool.

Photos

Educators will take a photo of you with your child during the Transition. That photo will then be printed and placed in your child's cubby (Explorers) or other place in the classroom (Investigators). Children are able to take the photo out of their cubby to hold or carry around if they wish. This brings comfort for those who are missing their families.

If your child is crying as you leave, know that this does not mean you are a bad parent or that your child is maladjusted. Remember that separation anxiety is a normal part of development and that different children experience it at different times and in different ways. Once your child has reached a state of calm and is engaged in the classroom, the educators will send you a message on StoryPark with a photo of your child calm and engaged. We know as parents ourselves how uncomfortable it can be to hear your own child crying as you leave.

Empathy

When your child is missing you we accept their feelings and encourage them to express them. We validate them and we empower them to express themselves through crying (with comforting from the educator), letting them hold their lovey or family photo, and/or encouraging them to draw or write a note to their family. Often other children will also try to comfort other children by bringing them a tissue, sharing their own stories of separation, or patting them on the back. However, we look to the crying child for cues and respect their boundaries if they do not want hugs, pats, or other attempts at comfort (and some don't). If your child does not want traditional methods of comfort, we continue to watch for cues and check in with them often.

When you are the one experiencing separation anxiety, we also encourage you to express yourself. The sofas in the narthex and the room on the left (formerly called the church nursery) just as you enter the building are two places you can go. On Thursdays, the director is available in the morning to offer you a cup of tea or coffee, offer you a tissue, and talk with you. (Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays our director is also teaching a morning class.) And all of us are happy to engage in creating a plan together that will help with the big feelings of you and your child.

Attendance

Children should attend school every day, unless ill, to maximize the benefits from the program. If a child does have to be taken out of school for a period of time because of family emergencies or a trip out of town, please notify the center.

Parents are expected to send a message via StoryPark to the classroom teacher to report the cause of the child's absence on the first day of the child's absence. If the child is out for three days, the parent should message again to inform us about the progress or changes in the illness or other reason for absence (unless vacation). You will receive communication from the preschool when your child is not attending and we have not heard from you.

Children should be kept home if they are not well enough to participate in all of the school activities and if sick. See our Illness and Communicable Disease section for more information.

If your child is arriving from another school or program, arrangements must be made with us prior to the transportation beginning. If your child does not arrive as scheduled, and we have not heard from you, we will call you to let you know that your child did not arrive as expected.

Indoor and Outdoor Play

School is messy! Please have your child wear the type of clothes that lend themselves to active play and which are easy to launder and take care of. Children dig in dirt, make mud, use messy art supplies, and generally get their clothes dirty every day.

Please make sure that your child wears shoes that are safe for climbing and running in mulch. Wearing shoes such as “crocs”, flip-flops, and platform shoes can cause injury and make it difficult for children to participate in large muscle activity.

Keep in mind that we go outside in all kinds of weather including snow and light rain. We stay inside for dangerous wind chills or heat indices, very poor air quality, storms that produce lightning and/or thunder, and heavy rain. Each classroom has a chart posted showing dangerous wind chills and heat indices for young children.

The following items should be kept at school or in their school bag:

- A complete change of clothes even if your child is toileting independently. Sometimes they have a spill or someone else spills and it splashes on them, or they get wet during an activity and need dry clothes. A complete set of clothes is: underwear, socks, shirt, pants.
- If your child is in diapers or pull-ups, please provide extra wipes and diapers/pull-ups to be kept at school.
- A sweater or jacket—to provide for sudden changes in temperature.
- Snow pants/suit or additional pair of pants and boots are needed in snowy weather Rain boots and raincoat for rainy weather.

Hospitality Spaces

Comfortable chairs in the narthex, just outside the sanctuary, can be a wonderful place to read, journal, or work on your laptop while your child is in class. At times there may be a church group meeting in the narthex. If so, you are welcome to sit in the sanctuary.

The sanctuary has a glider rocker for parents who need to breastfeed their infant. Enter the sanctuary using any door and then turn left. You will see the rocker and a small shelf with quiet toys.

Complimentary coffee and hot tea are available in the narthex. You can bring your own cup or use one of our disposable cups.

Special Occasions

We are blessed to have a diverse community that celebrates different holidays and/or celebrates holidays differently from one another. Therefore, Friendship Preschool does not engage in holiday class or school parties/celebrations. However, children are certainly allowed

to engage in conversations regarding holidays their families celebrate. If your family celebrates a holiday that you would like to share with the class as an exchange of cultural information please discuss with your child's teacher and director. We warmly welcome and encourage the exchange of cultural information.

Birthdays

We have a special tradition at Friendship Preschool for celebrating your child's birthday. If you have religious or cultural concerns regarding our birthday celebrations please notify the director.

The classroom teachers will schedule a day with you that falls on or close to your child's birthday. If your child has a summer birthday, it may be in the first or last month of school or at the half-birthday. A significant adult in the child's life will come to school to share the child's birthday story, one or two sentences for each year of the child's life. This is a beautiful tradition that the children enjoy very much. Your child may also be invited to create a special birthday artwork that will hang in the classroom to commemorate the event. No special treats or trinkets as our birthday traditions are already very special to the children.

School-wide Events

Pajama Party

Each October we have our Pajama Party. It is held on a Monday evening in Thomas Family Hall at Friendship United Methodist Church. Educators transform Thomas Family Hall into a very large multi-age classroom based on a children's picture book. Children and adults alike wear their pajamas and slippers for this fun evening. After about an hour of playtime, we have animal crackers and milk while we watch a very short animation of the picture book, and then say good night.

Feast for the Birds

In February we come together to make special treats for our feathered friends both at school and at your home. Friendship Preschool has bird feeders in our courtyard and outside the Explorers classroom. The children are responsible for filling these bird feeders and helping to take care of the living creatures we share our land with. (That includes the squirrels and chipmunks who think the bird feeders are for them!)

Kindergarten Celebration

In May those who will be going to kindergarten that fall come together with their families to commemorate their time at Friendship Preschool. This is not a graduation as a graduation signifies a diploma or degree earned. It is held on the last day of school in the evening. Children create a memento and we have a pizza dinner. Coloring activities are provided for siblings.

Ice Cream Social

All currently enrolled families come together for an ice cream party on the last day of school, 6:30-7:30 pm. We block off our parking lot from Thomas Family Hall to the side entrance by Explorers for families to gather. The playground is also open.

Children's Theatre

A parent typically coordinates the purchase of a block of tickets to performances for Friendship Preschool families. Friendship Preschool does not plan, execute nor benefit from this endeavor. All inquiries should be directed to the parent who coordinates the purchase of the tickets. Friendship Preschool does value the arts and believes that theater is an important part of a child's education. If your child is in Researchers you have our blessing to pick up your child early to attend the Theatre.

Transportation and Field Trips

Classes will take field trips at the teacher's discretion with approval from the director. Field trips are to be related to the topic of study in the classroom.

We offer two different types of field trips: Routine Field Trips, and those which require a parent or parent-appointed adult to be present for the entire field trip.

Routine field trips will have one permission slip that is valid for one school year. Routine field trips are walking field trips. No transportation is required. During Routine Field Trips, all children will be assigned to a teacher for supervision. Teachers will check attendance at various points throughout the field trip. Parents are welcome to join the field trip and help chaperone, but may not be counted in ratio. Children for whom we do not have emergency transportation authorization may not leave the premises.

Non-routine field trips require a parent or parent-appointed adult to be present and do not require permission slips as **the parent and/or their designee assumes full responsibility for their child throughout the duration of the field trip, including any emergency situations. Friendship Preschool staff may not be a designee.**

When field trips occur, parents are responsible for transporting their own child to and from the field trip site or designating an adult that is on the Authorized Pick Up form. Once you arrive at the destination, please escort your child to the pre-arranged meeting spot. At the conclusion of the field trip parents or their designee who is listed on the Authorized Pick Up form will transport their own child. You may not leave until a staff member has released your child and told you that you may now leave. Typically, Field Trips are scheduled so that you may go directly home from the field trip.

Child Guidance

The ultimate goal of discipline is self-control, making it possible to direct one's own behavior in the end. The role of the Friendship Preschool staff is to help young children take steps toward responsible self-direction as they are ready. Fundamental to this process is the child's feelings about self. The Friendship Preschool staff enhances the self-esteem of children, and does not use threats or label the child "bad." We want the child to feel accepted and successful.

Ground rules are reasonable and clear, established for the child's safety or to protect the rights of others. When ground rules are broken they are clearly and firmly restated. When a child

infringes on the rights of another, the other child is encouraged to talk about how that makes them feel and work towards restitution. The teacher may also explain or interpret how others feel when something happens.

Many other positive guidance techniques are used such as: structuring the environment to support appropriate behavior, appropriate timing of teacher intervention, natural or logical consequences of actions, etc. Physical and/or emotional punishment is never used.

Friendship Preschool implements developmentally appropriate positive guidance strategies with the children. The educators rely on many guidance techniques that specifically promote prosocial behaviors and emotional development. One of the most frequently used strategies is resolving conflict through problem solving. This is used to teach children who are disagreeing how to resolve the conflict rather than punishing them for having a conflict they do not know how to solve appropriately in the first place.

We use a 5-step problem solving process: 1. calm down 2. identify the problem 3. brainstorm solutions 4. choose one to try 5. try it and check back. This gives the children the opportunity to verbally express their feelings, listen to another's perspective, and generate their own solutions to the problem.

Other frequently used strategies, adapted from *Guidance of Young Children* (1995, Marion), are listed below:

Modeling appropriate behavior: Demonstrating desired behavior (e.g. hand washing, table manners, social skills, expressing anger with words instead of actions)

Using logical consequences: Consequences should be logically related to the unsafe or inappropriate behavior (e.g. we are here for story. You can sit next to Sue and listen to the story without pushing her or you can sit with Jane and listen to the story. You choose.)

Redirecting children's behavior: Making substitutions, remind/suggest a more appropriate, safer way to engage in an activity.

Active Listening: Careful, accurate listening to a child's feelings, conveying adult's recognition and acceptance, merely feedback your perceptions of the child's feelings without giving advice or trying to persuade the child to feel differently.

Using "I-Messages": Stating the problem and communicating your feelings respectfully, giving the child a chance to change behavior (e.g. "I see that there are a lot of pots and pans out in the house area and it is almost time to go outside.")

Managing strong emotions responsibly: Used to support children in recognizing and learning responsible ways to manage strong emotions like anger, allow and encourage children to acknowledge all feelings while firmly not permitting them to hurt anybody because of those feelings. Educators may invite children to our Mindfulness Studio to engage in mindfulness activities to encourage self-regulation. Educators will co-regulate with those who are not able to self-regulate at that moment.

We rely on our abiding respect for children and our perspective-taking skills. We do not punish.

We strive to be authoritative care-givers helping children to preserve their dignity. We hope our efforts help your child have a successful preschool experience. Our belief is that parents and teachers working together can lay a good foundation toward this goal. Consistency between home and school is crucial. If you are interested in learning more about our positive guidance strategies, ask your child's teacher or the director.

Friendship Preschool staff will consider the frequency, intensity, and duration of unacceptable behaviors as well as the developmental level of individual children to determine if a behavioral intervention plan is warranted. In the event that difficult, challenging, or unsafe behaviors occur, a team, including the parent, will convene to develop a behavioral intervention plan according to assessed individual needs. When these situations arise, Friendship Preschool staff expects parents to be active partners in the problem-solving process. We may refer you to an occupational therapist, physical therapist, speech and language pathologist, counselor or psychologist, or a parenting coach. Abusive behaviors will not be tolerated.

Friendship Preschool staff keeps information regarding children, families, and intervention plans confidential. We do not share information with other families.

Health & Safety

Diapering and Toilet Training

Children in the Investigators classes must be toilet trained unless the situation falls under ADA.

Children in our Explorers class are not required to be toilet trained. We realize that this age is the time when parents begin thinking about toilet training and we are happy to help. However, toilet training at home is very different from toilet training 12 children in a classroom setting. In order to make toilet training the least stressful for the children and educators we practice the following:

- Children are offered opportunities and encouraged to use the toilet. We will not, however, put undue stress on a child by forcing them to sit on the toilet.
- If your child wears pull-ups, please use those that have the tabs. This allows teachers to help your child with toileting without having to completely undress your child.
- Wet and/or soiled clothes will be sent home in a plastic bag.
- Diapers are checked no later than 2 hours after arrival.

Please keep 2-3 diapers/pull-ups at school along with a small pack of wipes. We do not have room to store large boxes of wipes or diapers/pull ups. Please write their name on wipes containers and diapers/pull ups.

Illness and Communicable Disease

Prevention

The tables are wiped down with an EPA approved food surface safe disinfectant before and after school and before and after eating. The staff assumes responsibility for disinfecting equipment as needed.

Staff members who are ill are required to call the director. Their duties will be assumed by a qualified substitute.

Children must be kept home if parents feel that they are not well enough to participate in all of the school activities. If a child is at school and is not well enough to participate in all of the school activities, parents or emergency contacts will be contacted to pick up their child.

The staff receives training in the Prevention, Recognition, and Management of Communicable Disease. Hand washing by staff and children occurs upon arrival at school, before and after eating, after toileting, and when objects come in contact with bodily germs.

Friendship Preschool follows CDC recommended early childhood protocols during health outbreaks such as but not limited to COVID-19.

Illness

If a child becomes ill after arrival at the school, the child will be removed from the classroom and the parent will be contacted to take the child home. If the parent cannot be reached, the staff will call the emergency number on the Enrollment form. The child will rest on a cot within sight of a staff member. The cot will be cleaned and sanitized after each use. If it is not possible to remove the child from the classroom, they will be moved to an area within the classroom that is away from the other children.

Parents will be called to pick up their child if he/she show any of the symptoms listed below:

- Temperature of one hundred degrees Fahrenheit taken underarm when in combination with other symptoms;
- Untreated infected skin patches, unusual spots or rashes;
- Diarrhea 3 or more times within 24 hours and vomiting more than 1 time or when accompanied by any other signs or symptoms of illness;
- Evidence of untreated lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestation; and signs of any communicable disease.

Signs of Communicable Diseases

- Stiff neck with an elevated temperature.
- Sore throat or difficulty in swallowing.
- Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or make a

- whooping sound.
- Difficult or rapid breathing.
- Yellowish skin or eyes.
- Redness of the eye or eyelid, thick and purulent discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching or eye pain.
- Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool.
- A Communicable Disease chart is located in each classroom and the office. It lists the symptoms and communicable stages of common childhood diseases.

Re-admittance

Children must be free from fever without the use of a fever reducer and other symptoms (listed above) for 24 hours before returning to school. A note from a physician may be required before children with some illnesses are permitted to return, based upon the discretion of the director.

Notification of Exposure to Communicable Disease

If your child has been exposed to a communicable disease, an announcement will go out via StoryPark to the classes and/or children affected. Please contact your child's educator or the director if you have questions. Confidentiality will be maintained regarding who has the communicable disease.

All exposures to communicable diseases should be reported to the educator by the child's parents. Friendship Preschool may be required to notify the Ohio Department of Children and Youth and Hamilton County Health Department of some communicable diseases.

Parent(s) of children who have contracted a communicable disease may be required to provide a doctor's note for re-entrance to the school.

Medication

Friendship Preschool administers emergency medication such as Epi-pen or Auvi-Q, Benadryl, inhalers, etc. Friendship Preschool does not administer vitamins, non-emergency prescriptions, pain or fever relievers, medical food, etc. The only exception is circumstances that fall under Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

If your child requires emergency medications, or has other medication that meets ADA, additional forms must be completed. Parents **must affix a label** to each medication which does not have a prescription label on the container. The label shall state the child's name, current date, name of medication, dosage and times to be given, and routes of administration. This label will be required in addition to the form prescribed for administration of medication.

Children who require emergency medication must have all required forms and paperwork completed and medications that are properly labeled and not expired in order to attend school. Children enrolled in Friendship Preschool are not allowed to carry medication in their bags or on their person. Children enrolled in Friendship Preschool are not allowed to administer medication.

Food

Water Bottles

Please pack a filled water bottle for your child each day. And please make sure your child's name is on the water bottle. It is not unusual to have more than one child with the same water bottle.

Snacks

Friendship Preschool is not permitted to serve food; however, it is permitted for parents to provide food. Parents will take turns providing snacks for the class for one week at a time. Each family will have at least 2-3 turns during the school year. You may choose to bring a snack each day of your assigned week or bring it all on the first day.

- Food items need to be in individual servings to comply with our food permit.
- Please provide food from 2 food groups. Food groups are: dairy, vegetable, fruit, grain/bread/cracker, and meat or meat substitute. Keep in mind that we will not heat food or keep food hot. We are able to keep snacks in a refrigerator.
- To prevent choking, foods shall be cut into cubes no larger than one-quarter inch (1/4"). Examples of foods that need this preparation: string cheese (also cut lengthwise), strawberries, grapes, dates, apples, pears, celery, meat, chicken, beans, cherries, melons, cheese, and cherry/grape tomatoes. Because both Explorers and Investigators have children under 3 yrs 6 months, this applies to both classes. Friendship Preschool staff cannot cut or otherwise prepare food for snacks.
- Carrots must be cooked until softened then cut.
- We will not serve: nuts, popcorn, dried fruits, seeds or chips.
- Minimum Serving sizes for 2-5 yr olds

Fruit or Vegetable	½ cup
Grain/Bread/Cracker/cooked pasta/noodles	½ slice or ¼ cup or ⅓ oz
Meats and meat alternates (include meat, poultry, fish, cheese, yogurt, soy yogurt, beans and peas, whole eggs, tofu, tempeh	½ oz

At the beginning of the school year we will inform families if there are certain foods that are not to be provided due to food allergies or religious observance. If we are not informed of any food allergies or religious observances then there will be no restrictions other than what is listed above.

Fridays (Researchers) and Lunch Bunch

Parents will provide lunch for their child. We encourage you to use reusable containers for your child's lunch to lessen our impact on the Earth. Please make sure that your child can open their own containers and close them.

Prevent choking by:

- shredding or cutting meat into small pieces, no larger than one-half inch ($\frac{1}{2}$ ") cubes.
- Cut cheese into thin slices or small one-half inch ($\frac{1}{2}$ ") pieces.
- String cheese should be cut in half lengthwise so it is no longer round, and then cut in one-half inch ($\frac{1}{2}$ ") pieces.
- Cut cherry tomatoes, grapes, strawberries and any other round foods in half the long way so that it is no longer round.
- Seed butter - spread seed butter thinly on toast, crackers, fruit or vegetables. Do not serve in large globs.

ODJFS recommends that the lunch you pack provides all of the following to equal $\frac{1}{3}$ daily allowance:

- 1 serving of fluid milk
- 1 serving of meat or meat alternative
- 1 serving of fruit*
- 1 serving of vegetables*
- 1 serving of bread and grains

*A vegetable may be used to meet the entire fruit requirement. When two vegetables are served at lunch or dinner, two different kinds of vegetables are to be served.

Building Security

- All families and visitors are to enter through the north doors that face Fleming Rd.
- Families and recurring visitors will be assigned a unique code to be used on the numeric keypad to gain entry into the building.
- The code only works during school hours and during school events during the school year.
- You may share your code with those who will be dropping off/picking up your child.
- It is your responsibility to keep your code safe. If lost or compromised please inform the director immediately.

Safe Arrival/Dismissal

Children may **not** be dropped off to enter the building unsupervised. Parents or authorized persons at least 18 years of age must accompany children to classrooms, make eye contact with the teacher. If someone other than the parent will pick up the child, their name must appear on the Authorized Pick Up form and they must provide a picture ID at pick up. If you need to add another person to the Authorized Pick Up, send a message in StoryPark with the person's name, phone number, and relationship to the child.

When you bring your child please keep him or her with you until the classroom teacher takes responsibility for them. If you arrive earlier than the start time, please do not take your child to the classroom. The teachers need this time to prepare materials and the room for your child and cannot be responsible for children in the classroom until arrival time. You may wait with your child in the Narthex or Nursery. Please be considerate of the church staff whose offices are directly off of the Narthex. When you take your child to the classroom, please stay with your child until your child is comfortable in the classroom, particularly at the beginning of the school year. **Please do not use cell phones while picking up and dropping off your child.**

Non-custodial parent pick up

Children will only be released to their own parents and those adults over the age of 18 that are listed on the child's escort form. If you would like someone other than a person on the form to pick up your child, and the person is an adult over the age of 18, you must email or message on StoryPark the director or classroom educator with the person's name and telephone number. The person picking up will have to provide a photo ID.

Families that have custody agreements must provide a copy of all custodial agreements to Friendship Preschool. The custody agreements will be placed in the child's file. Staff adheres to statements outlined in these documents.

Early Brld Drop Off

Please park in the north lot, near the school entrance. Walk your child through the building, through the glass doors at the end of our hallway, and then to the right to exit across from the playground. If you arrive when there is a carline for Wyoming City Schools, you may cross the parking lot when a Wyoming City School employee tells you it is safe. The carline will most likely be in the parking lot between 8:20-8:35 am.

Supervision of Children

All children will be actively supervised at all times. Children will be within eyesight and hearing of a staff member at all times.

School-age children may run errands inside the building, use the restroom, or engage in a short term activity which poses no physical risk to their safety alone or in groups of no more than six

children without adult supervision as long as the following conditions are met:

- Children are within hearing distance of a child care staff member, without the use of electronic equipment.

The child care staff member checks on the children who are in kindergarten through third grade at least every five minutes until they return to the group.

Unplanned Closures

- In regards to severe weather, in the event that Wyoming City Schools are closed, we are closed. In the event that Friendship United Methodist Church is closed, we are closed.
- If Wyoming City Schools are on a one hour delay

Early Bird is cancelled, and drop off begins at 9:45 am to allow Wyoming City Schools' carline to move through the parking lot.

- If Wyoming City Schools are on a delay longer than one hour, all classes are canceled.
- In the event we lose power, heat, or water for a period of more than 20 minutes, parents or emergency contacts will be called and required to pick up their child immediately.
- The director may close the school at their discretion should circumstances compromise the ability to operate in a safe and sanitary way.
- In the event of a health emergency, Hamilton County Health Board may close our school at their discretion.

Missed days and time due to cancellations and delays will not be made up.

Medical/Dental Emergencies and Serious Injury

1. All staff are trained in First Aid and CPR.
2. The classroom educator shall assume responsibility for care in any emergency which occurs on school property. The person picking up the child may be asked to sign an incident/injury report.
3. Volunteers will contact the classroom educator in case of emergency.
4. If in the judgment of the educator the injury requires medical attention, the Director will call the parent of the child. If the parent cannot be reached the person listed as an emergency contact on the Enrollment and Health Form will be contacted.
5. If the injury requires immediate emergency treatment, 911 will be called for medical

assistance and transportation to the Emergency Room or hospital authorized by the parent. Parents will be immediately contacted. The classroom educator will accompany the child to the hospital and the Director will contact the parent. If a parent does not grant permission to call 911 for emergency transportation, the parent will be called. If a parent cannot be reached immediately, 911 will be called.

6. If injury results in a school insurance claim, parents should contact Friendship United Methodist Church at 513-821-5725.

Safety Drills

Monthly fire drills are held at Friendship Preschool. Evacuation routes are posted in the classrooms. This is to ensure your child's safe exit from the building in case of emergency. In September and March through May we also conduct a monthly tornado drill.

Other Emergencies

Friendship Preschool has an Emergency Response Plan. You are welcome to request a copy at any time. The plan covers emergencies such as: utility outage, flood, severe weather, etc. In the event of an emergency, parents will be notified and supplied with any supplemental materials, policies, etc.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

All employees of Friendship Preschool are mandated reporters per Rev. Code §2151.421.

- In the event we suspect child abuse or neglect we must report to Child Protective Services (CPS) at 241-KIDS within 24 hours.
- The burden of proof does not fall on mandated reporters.
- The identity of the reporter and others involved in making the report shall remain confidential.
- No employee, board member, or staff of Friendship Preschool/FUMC shall knowingly share or disseminate information pertaining to a report and investigation of alleged child abuse or neglect unless directed to do so by the courts, CPS, or ODJFS.
- Should an employee receive notification that an allegation has been made concerning a child being at risk of abuse or neglect while at school, they shall notify the director who will notify the board president. The director will file a report with CPS and ODJFS. The board president will notify the pastor, as the executive officer of FUMC.
- The director shall notify the employee that an allegation has been made and that an

investigation is being conducted by CPS and possibly ODJFS. All employees, board members, and pastor shall comply fully with the investigation. The employee will be placed on paid leave until the investigation is complete.

- If the investigation confirms that an employee did engage in abuse or neglect of a child, the employee shall be terminated immediately in accordance with 5101:2-12-09.

Educators and Staff

The director of Friendship Preschool is responsible for the day-to-day operations, for maintaining licensing standards and supervision of educators. The director often also teaches a class.

Educators are responsible for classroom life, maintaining licensing standards as they pertain to classroom life, and supervise volunteers and student teachers.

All of our lead and assistant educators hold degrees. Associate educators are enrolled in a university education degree program or early childhood certification program. In fact, the majority of our staff hold advanced degrees in education! Together we have over 40 years just at Friendship Preschool.

Our educators are dedicated to professionalism and continuing education. We truly believe in life-long learning! We, as a staff, have formed a professional study group under the umbrella of Ohio Voices for Learning. We meet at least once each month and have assigned readings on a topic. If you are ever interested in reading what we are reading or in looking through our documentation of our study group, please let the director know. We are happy to share!

Educators and staff may also attend conferences. Conferences we have attended include: Ohio Voices for Learning's Inspired Teacher's Institute, NAEYC Professional Learning Institute, and Natural Start. Educators and staff are also encouraged (and do) present at conferences. We have presented at Ohio Voices for Learning's Inspired Teacher's Institute and National Association for the Education of Young Children's Professional Learning Institute.

Family Involvement

Communication

StoryPark

We utilize StoryPark to send you photos, notes, and have conversations about your child's day, as well as send school announcements. Lesson plans are also posted on StoryPark. It is important that you accept your child's teacher's invitation to Storypark so that you can know what is happening.

Parent to Teacher

With small children who are learning about their environment, events in the home are of major concern to the child and thereby markedly affect behavior. Because children might not report accurately, if at all, it is of utmost importance for home and school to share information. Teachers want to be supportive of the child and family.

Understanding why the child might be acting differently helps us know better how we can support the child and family. The staff would appreciate parents informing them of unusual happenings or events such as:

- Any surgery, illness, or hospitalization of the child or persons in the household or family group.
- Births or adoptions of siblings.
- Any deaths known to the child, whether family or family friend.
- Changes in the number of people living in the home.
- Any plans for moving the residence.
- Any extra stimulation (parties, visitors, special excursions, etc.)
- Any events that may be causing additional stress, tension, or change to the family system.

School to Parent

Just as we ask that you let us know about any major changes happening that might affect your child's day at school, we will also let you know of any major changes happening at school. Please keep in mind, though, that we are in a church. We will not necessarily share with you major church changes or news.

Each classroom has a bulletin board in the hallway at the classroom door that educators use for posting interesting and pertinent information, articles, quotes, etc. .Each month new information on child development and learning is posted with that month's calendar on the bulletin board across from the director's office. The bulletin board next to the director's office has program information, staff photos with bios, and our wifi password.

Parent-Educator Meeting

Parent-Educator Meetings are scheduled in November right before Thanksgiving break. By this time your child has been in school for approximately 10 weeks. This meeting is dedicated time for you to talk with your child's educators about your child. We ask that children do not attend these meetings.

Spring Classroom Visits

Each spring right before spring break the children prepare for you to visit their classroom for an hour. Children are very proud and excited to share their classroom community with you, and teach you "how to do preschool". On Classroom Visit day there is no regular class in order that we can have families in two different groups to prevent overcrowding.

Parent Nights

Periodically, we may offer Parent Nights as a time to come together and learn from a parenting expert or other professional whose work will support and encourage us as parents. Or, it might be a night for you to learn more about what your child does at preschool, our curriculum, or our philosophy. These will be held in the evenings. The preschool does not provide childcare. If you have an idea for a topic, whether it is parenting related or curriculum/school related, please let us know! Parent Nights are for YOU!

Classroom Volunteering

Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's classroom and school community. Please contact your child's classroom educator for volunteer opportunities. All volunteers will need to meet with the director for a volunteer orientation. It is very important for consistency within the school community that volunteers adhere to the policies and procedures regarding classroom and school life, including but not limited to, the child guidance policy, and health and safety policies. Volunteers may not be counted in ratio or left alone with children. If a parent wishes to volunteer more than four times per month, then additional licensing requirements will need to be met. A Volunteer Guide is at the end of our Policies and Procedures.

Portfolios

Your child's work is documented through words, photos and work samples. We use a digital platform called StoryPark for this purpose. Parents have access to their child's digital portfolio. We do not typically engage in standardized assessments. If we believe that your child would benefit from such assessments, we will refer you for further evaluation. We do not report any assessment data to ODJFS.

Program Administration

Licensing Compliance

- Friendship Preschool receives at least 1 unannounced licensing inspection per DCY fiscal year.
- Licensing inspection reports are in the director's office for review.
- The licensing record including compliance report forms, complaint investigation reports, and evaluation forms from the building and fire departments are available for review upon request from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. The department's web address is: <http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/childcare.stm>

Calendar

- Our school year begins with a transition in late August and our last day is in mid-May.
- We follow Wyoming City Schools calendar regarding days off.
- Friendship United Methodist Church is a polling location for the Hamilton County Board of Elections. On days that elections are held at the church, we are closed.
- Our calendar is on the same hidden page on our website that contains our enrollment paperwork. It is also posted in our hallway near the director's office.
- If you would like a printed copy please let the director know.

Classes and Tuition

Our school enrolls children who are 24 months old through pre kindergarten age. We group children together in mixed-age grouping. To understand the benefits of mixed-age groupings, please refer to the following article:

<http://ecap.crc.illinois.edu/eecearchive/digests/1995/lkmag95.html>.

Explorers

- 24 months through 3 yrs 6 months
- Do not need to be toilet trained.
- Meets Tues/Wed **or** Tues/Wed/Thur, 9:00 am-12:00 (noon)
- Ratio: Ohio is 1 teacher to 7 children with a maximum of 17 children. Friendship is 1 teacher to 6 children with a maximum of 12 children.
- Tuition for the Tues/Wed class is \$1800 payable over 10 payments of \$180 each. Tuition for the Tues/Wed/Thur class is \$2, 500 payable over 10 payments of \$250 each.

Investigators

- 3 yrs 6 months through prekindergarden
- Independent with toileting with minimal help from an adult
- Meets Tues/Wed/Thurs, 9:00 am -12:00 (noon)
- Ratio: Ohio is 1 teacher to 12 children with a maximum of 24 children; Friendship is 1 teacher to 10 children with a maximum of 18 children.
- Tuition is \$2, 210 payable over 10 payments of \$221 each.

Investigators with Researchers Enrichment

- Researchers Enrichment is for those eligible for kindergarten in their district the following

fall.

- Researchers Enrichment meets Friday 9:00 am -1:00 pm
- Children bring a lunch on Fridays
- Same ratio as Investigators
- Tuition for Investigators with Researchers Enrichment is \$3,180 payable over 10 payments of \$318 each.

Early Bird and Lunch Bunch may be offered at an additional cost dependent upon staffing and family interest.

- Early Bird is 8:00 am - 9:00 am, before classes begin. This time is spent in gross motor play outside, or in the event of inclement weather inside one of our classrooms. Lunch Bunch is 12:00 noon - 1:00 pm. Children will wash their hands and then eat their packed lunch.
- Children must be at least 2 yrs 6 months to enroll in Early Bird or Lunch Bunch. Our ratio is 8 children to 1 staff member.
 - 2-day Early Bird or Lunch Bunch is an additional \$660 per year.
 - 3-day Early Bird or Lunch Bunch is an additional \$980 per year.
- **Children may NOT be enrolled in both Early Bird AND Lunch Bunch.** We are not allowed to have children for more than 4 hours a day.

Enrollment

Who Can Enroll

We enroll children ages 24 months through prekindergarten. We strive to meet the developmental needs of children from all faiths or of no faith, reflecting the diversity of our community.

Children/Families are accepted regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, creed, gender, family structure, languages spoken or ability. We value a diverse community and strive to make sure that every child sees themselves represented in our classroom materials, as well as those who are not in our classrooms. The director and teachers are open and appreciative of parents sharing resources and information that will help us in this important endeavor.

Enrollment Process

- A tour is required prior to being accepted into the program.
- During the tour you will receive a QR code giving access to our enrollment application.

- There is a non-refundable \$85 enrollment application fee per child.
- After application and fee are received you will receive an email with your placement in a class or on a waitlist.
- In June a link to our enrollment paperwork will be sent via email or StoryPark to parents. It must be completed by July 31.
- If starting in January, paperwork must be completed by December 15.

Enrollment Priority

Priority enrollment for currently enrolled families is held in January for the following fall. Enrollment does not automatically roll over into the next school year. Enrollment is extended to the community in February. If your first choice is full, you are enrolled in your second choice and automatically placed on the waitlist for your first choice.

The following order of priority applies for Investigators:

1. Children currently enrolled in Investigators
2. Children moving up from Explorers
3. Waitlist
4. Friendship United Methodist members
5. Community

The following order of priority applies for Explorers:

1. Children currently enrolled in Explorers
2. Siblings of currently enrolled children
3. Waitlist
4. Friendship United Methodist members
5. Community

Enrollment Paperwork

The following forms are required prior to the first day of school:

- Enrollment and Health Form
 - If you mark yes to an allergy then you must also complete the Medical/Physical Care Plan and the Request for Administration of Medication form. You will need to have your child's pediatrician sign off on these.
 - Friendship Preschool requires that parents give permission for Emergency Transportation Authorization. If a parent does not give permission then the child may not be enrolled.
- Authorized Pick Up
 - This form must be signed, even if you do not authorize anyone other than parents to pick up your child(ren).
- Image Consent
- ASQ
- Child Medical Statement

- Each child must be examined by a doctor at the time of enrollment, and updated each year. We provide the medical form to be used by the child's physician. Each child must have current immunizations as required by the State of Ohio. Contact the director to discuss if your child is on an alternate schedule.

If your child requires emergency medication or other medical/physical care, including care that falls under ADA, you will also need to complete a Child Medical/Physical Care Plan that must be completed accurately and on file prior to the first day of school. The Child Medical/Physical Care Plan may require the signature of your child's medical provider.

Enrollment paperwork is sent out via email or StoryPark in June for fall and upon registration for January start.

Screening

During the enrollment process we use the ASQ screeners. The ASQ screeners are sets of valid, reliable, and age-appropriate questionnaires that are filled out by the true expert on your child—you! There are two screeners in the ASQ family: **ASQ®-3**, which looks at key areas of early development, and **ASQ®:SE-2**, which focuses on social-emotional development.

ASQ-3 is a set of simple questionnaires tailored to your child's age and trusted for more than 20 years to check child development. Here are the five important areas of development that each questionnaire looks at:

1. **Communication:** Your child's language skills, both what your child understands and what he or she can say.
2. **Gross Motor:** How your child uses their arms and legs and other large muscles for sitting, crawling, walking, running, and other activities.
3. **Fine Motor:** Your child's hand and finger movement and coordination.
4. **Problem Solving:** How your child plays with toys and solves problems.
5. **Personal-Social:** Your child's self-help skills and interactions with others.

The "Overall" section asks you open-ended questions about your child's development and lets you weigh in with any concerns you may have.

ASQ:SE-2 is a set of questionnaires with a deep, exclusive focus on social-emotional development. Here are the seven important areas of development that each questionnaire looks at:

1. **Autonomy:** Your child's ability or willingness to self-initiate or respond without guidance (moving to independence).
2. **Compliance:** Your child's ability or willingness to conform to the direction of others and follow rules.
3. **Adaptive functioning:** Your child's success or ability to cope with bodily needs (sleeping, eating, toileting, safety).

4. **Self-regulation:** Your child's ability or willingness to calm or settle down or adjust to physiological or environmental conditions or stimulation.
5. **Affect:** Your child's ability or willingness to demonstrate their own feelings and empathy for others.
6. **Interaction:** Your child's ability or willingness to respond to or initiate social responses with parents, other adults, and peers.
7. **Social-communication:** Your child's ability or willingness to interact with others by responding to or initiating verbal or nonverbal signals to indicate interests, needs, or feelings.

The "Overall" section asks open-ended questions about your child's social-emotional development and lets you weigh in with any concerns.

You'll only need 10–15 minutes to fill out an ASQ-3 or ASQ:SE-2 questionnaire. It's that quick and easy! And your child's teachers will share the results with you.

Friendship Preschool does not report screening or assessment information to DCY.

Withdrawal from School

If tuition is more than 10 days late and no arrangements have been made with the director, the child will not be allowed to attend until tuition is paid. Recurring late or missing tuition payments may result in your child being withdrawn from our program.

Friendship Preschool reserves the right to withdraw children when children/parents present an ongoing threat to the health and safety of others or if parental behavior is such that a professional relationship between families and staff is deemed to not exist. Problem solving meetings will be held to try to resolve the issue prior to withdrawal.

If parents decide to withdraw their child from Friendship Preschool parents must give 30 days notice in order to receive a tuition refund. If a child attends any days in a given month, tuition for that full month will be owed.

Tuition Payments and Fees

Payments

- Tuition is payable in 10 payments: The first payment is a deposit to hold your child's spot and is due in June of the preceding school year. The other 9 payments are due by the 15th of the month, September through May of the current school year. Invoices will be sent to the email on file using WAVE.
- Payment options
 - ACH payments through Friendship Preschool's credit union are automatic monthly payments.. No fees are charged to you or Friendship Preschool.

- Check or money order payable to Friendship Preschool. They can be given to the director or classroom teacher.
- ACH through Wave with each invoice. Friendship Preschool is charged 1% which means less of your tuition money is actually going back into our program.

A 10% sibling discount is applied to the youngest child(ren) when 2 or more siblings are enrolled at the same time.

Fees

- In the unlikely event that tuition is more than 5 days late, a late fee of 10% of the unpaid balance will be assessed.
- Payments returned for insufficient funds will incur a \$30 fee.
- In the unlikely event a parent is consistently late in picking up their child a \$1/minute fee will be assessed. Excessive late pick ups may result in your child being disenrolled.
- There is a non-refundable \$85 enrollment application fee.

Partial Scholarships

- Partial scholarships may be available based on income.
- All are welcome to donate to our scholarship fund.
- Scholarships are available for up to 50% off tuition. In special circumstances, scholarships greater than 50% may be awarded at the discretion of the board.
- To apply for a scholarship, ask the director for the application.
- The \$85 enrollment application fee is waived for scholarship recipients.

Refunds

In the event you must withdraw from Friendship Preschool, we require a 30-day notice in order for you to receive any refund. If your child is considered enrolled during any given month, there will be no refund for that month.

School to Outside Agency

Staff will not share information with outside agencies or specialists without your express written consent. However, should your child receive services or care from outside agencies, Friendship Preschool staff is committed to working with them to provide continuity and informed care. If you want an outside agency to observe your child at Friendship Preschool, please contact the director. Likewise, if an outside agency would like to offer services to your child at Friendship, please notify the director. We are open to outside agencies serving your child at Friendship Preschool.

Complaints and Conflict Resolution

Complaints or problems must be resolved directly with the person(s) involved using standard problem-solving techniques in good faith effort.

If the issue is not resolved after repeated attempts at problem-solving, the complaint or problem will be taken to the director. If the director is one of the parties, it will then be taken to a board member.

If the issue is still not resolved, continue to follow the chain until a solution is reached.
(teacher-director-board-FUMC pastor/leadership)

If the complaints or problems procedure is not followed, the person(s) submitting the complaint or problems will be redirected to follow the procedure.

Complaints or problems from the community at-large will be channeled to the appropriate person by the director or board member.

Concerns relating to State licensing not resolved through the procedure above should be directed to 1-866-866-3537.

This procedure is to be followed by parents, guardians, and employees

Sleeping, Napping and Resting

We do not offer a nap time or resting time. We do, however, provide areas in the classroom that are quieter and lower energy activities. If a child falls asleep during class and appears to be ill, parents will be called to pick up their child.

Water Activities/Swimming

Water is used in our sensory tables and provided outside in a rain barrel and/or in jugs for children to fill pots and pans in the mud kitchen and to use at the water wall. We do not use swimming pools or have large open containers of water. We do not go swimming.

Center Parent Information

The center is licensed to operate legally by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). This license is posted in a noticeable place for review.

A toll-free telephone number is listed on the center's license and may be used to report a suspected violation of the licensing law or administrative rules. The licensing rules governing child care are available for review at the center.

The administrator and each employee of the center is required, under Section 2151.421 of the Ohio Revised Code, to report their suspicions of child abuse or child neglect to the local public children's services agency.

Any parent of a child enrolled in the center shall be permitted unlimited access to the center during all hours of operation for the purpose of contacting their children, evaluating the care provided by the center or evaluating the premises. Upon entering the premises, the parent, or guardian shall notify the Administrator of his/her presence.

The administrator's hours of availability to meet with parents and child/staff ratios are posted in a noticeable place in the center for review.

The licensing record, including licensing inspection reports, complaint investigation reports, and evaluation forms from the building and fire departments, is available for review upon written request from the ODJFS. Inspections are also online at <http://childcaresearch.ohio.gov/>. Parents may search for a specific program and sign up to be notified when the program's latest inspection is posted online.

It is unlawful for the center to discriminate in the enrollment of children upon the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin or disability in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 104 Stat. 32, 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq. To file a discrimination complaint, write or call Health and Human Services (HHS) or ODJFS. HHS and ODJFS are equal opportunity providers and employers.

Write or Call:
HHS
Region V, Office of Civil Rights
233 N. Michigan Ave, Ste. 240
Chicago, IL 60601
(312) 886-2359 (voice)
(312) 353-5693 (TDD)
(312) 886-1807 (fax)

Write or Call:
ODJFS
Bureau of Civil Rights
30 E. Broad St., 37th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-3414
(614) 644-2703 (voice)
1-866-277-6353 (toll free)
(614) 752-6381 (fax)
1-866-221-6700 (TTY) or (614) 995-9961

For more information about child care licensing requirements as well as how to apply for child care assistance, Medicaid health screenings and early intervention services for your child, please visit <http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/families.stm>

Staff and Volunteer Guidance

Personal Belongings

When working or volunteering in the classroom, purses/bags must be stored out of reach of children. The tops of cubbies, shelves, or hutches are not out of reach of children. Empty coat pockets of any medications, make up, lip balms, essential oils, perfumes, or any other item that is potentially harmful to children or labeled with keep out of reach of children.

Following are some helpful tips and information to make the classroom experience positive for all.

Guides to Speech and Action in the Classroom

1. State suggestions or direction in a positive rather than a negative form. For example, instead of “stop running” say “walk, please”; instead of “don’t rip the book” say “turn the pages gently”.
2. Give the child a choice only when you intend to leave the choice up to the child. For example, do not ask “do you want to bring your coat outside?” if leaving it inside is not really an option.
3. Do not end your direction with “okay?” As in, “Take your coat outside, okay?”. Although we as adults see this as polite or seeking input that the message was understood, the child interprets this as “Is that okay with you?” and sees it as a choice, to which they can (and will) say “no”.
4. Your voice is a teaching tool. Use words and tone of voice that will help the child to feel confident and reassured.
5. Avoid trying to change behavior by methods that may lead to loss of self-respect, such as shaming or labeling behavior “naughty” or “selfish”.
6. Avoid motivating a child by making comparisons between one child and another or by

encouraging competition. For example, do not say, “I like the way (child) is sitting.”

7. Redirect the child by suggesting an activity that is related to his own purposes or interest whenever possible.

8. The effectiveness of a suggestion or a direction may depend largely on its timing.

9. Avoid making models in any medium for the child to copy. It shows them only that you can do it better than they can.

10. Give the child the minimum of help in order that he may have the maximum chance to grow in independence, but give help when the child needs it.

11. Make your direction effective by reinforcing them when necessary.

12. Forestalling is the most effective way of handling problems. Learn to foresee and prevent rather than mop-up after a difficulty. Being proactive is a skill to develop.

13. When limits are necessary, they should be clearly defined and consistently maintained.

14. Be alert to the total situation. Use the most strategic positions for supervision.

15. The health and safety of the children are a primary concern at all times. However, this is not to say that risk should be avoided. Risk helps children to discover their bodies' limitations. Risk is not to be confused with hazard.

16. Observe and take notes; increase your own awareness of what goes on.

(Katherine H. Read, *The Nursery School: Human Relationship and Learning*)

Survival Skills for Classroom Volunteers

Here are some helpful techniques that are used in our classrooms.

1. Make eye contact with a child by kneeling to the child's level. Go over to the child rather than calling across the room.

2. Use the child's name rather than sweetie, honey, etc. in order to help establish a trusting,

co-learner relationship.

3. State your directions in a positive manner. Tell the child what to do instead of what not to do.

4. Write children's names using a capital letter for the initial letter only, as – Marianna.

5. Ask questions that focus on how the child is thinking rather than questions with a one word answer or questions to which you know the answer. Examples: "How did you figure this out?" "What did you do to make this balance?" "What were you thinking about when you wrote this?"

6. Avoid judgmental comments such as "good job, nice work and pretty picture". Talk about what action the child is involved in such as "your whole arm moved across the paper". You can also describe how the child feels, for example, "You seem excited/proud/disappointed."

7. Warn children a few minutes in advance when a change of routine is going to occur. Do not expect a child to stop what he is doing at once. Let him finish his activity before directing him to a new one. Warn children by walking to them and letting them know rather than by turning off lights or yelling across the room, which is very disruptive.

8. Transition children to outside, muscle room, group time, lunch, etc. by speaking to one or two children at a time rather than announcing it to the whole group.

9. Use a calm voice and a gentle manner. The adult's voice can set the tone for everyone in the room.

10. Do not compare one child's behavior to that of another, such as "I like the way Ashton is sitting so quietly."

11. Let the children be as independent as they are able. Avoid being "too eager" to help. Solving problems and making mistakes are all part of learning.

12. If a child is experiencing difficulty becoming engaged, give the child a choice of actions, when possible, but limit the choice to help them decide. Example: "You may paint at the easel or put together a puzzle. Which would you like to do?" rather than simply, "What would you like to do?"

General Guidelines

Creative Work/Art

1. The process is most important. The finished product is secondary. Encourage experimentation with materials.
2. Children using messy materials are not required to wear smocks, although smocks are available should the child wish to wear one. You may want to encourage them to roll up sleeves to protect their clothing.
3. Talk to the children about their work in a nonjudgmental manner, focusing on the child's action rather than the end product. For example, "You spent a lot of time on that." or "I see green on your paper but I don't see green paint. How did that happen?"
4. Appropriate clean up by children is necessary and a part of their activity. They may need adult assistance hanging papers or returning materials or encouragement to write their names. However, any assistance given is with the goal of independence.

Blocks

1. Do not build for the child. If a child becomes frustrated almost to the point of giving up, help the child by posing questions or making suggestions such as, "I noticed that this tower has a really broad, stable base. I wonder if that would work for your tower that keeps falling?"
2. Remind children of other children around them to avoid accidents.
3. Cleaning up is overwhelming. Ask children, "Are you going to put away the triangles or the squares?" or assign shapes to children, "Sam, you put the pillars away; Amy, you find all of the long planks and put them away."

Sensory Table

Remind children to keep the material in the table. What lands on the floor is thrown away.

To ensure that water play does not spread infectious disease:

- All sensory tables containing water should be emptied and sanitized between classes as well as at the end of the day. This includes all materials used during water play.
- No child should drink the water in the sensory table or spit in it. In the event that this happens, the sensory table will be immediately closed until it is sanitized.
- Children with open or oozing sores on their hands are not permitted to participate in the water play.

Writing

Accept any writing as a form of communication. Say, “What were you thinking about when you wrote this?” or “Will you read it to me?” instead of “What does this say?” Offer the children opportunities to write their own name in a variety of situations.

Math

Allow children to make mistakes. Encourage interaction between and among peers. Ask questions that require thinking rather than an obvious answer. Example “Do you have enough shells so that everyone in your family can have one?” rather than “How many shells do you have?”

Loose Parts and Manipulatives

Loose parts and manipulatives are open-ended materials that do not have a right or wrong way to be used, as long as materials and people are safe. Children use their imaginations, creativity, problem-solving, and many other skills as well as cognitive functions when using these materials. Because these materials can be combined or used in other parts of the room, children may need some help when it is time to clean up. A way to do this is to say, “Mindy, you gather all of the glass marble chips and put them in this basket. Raphael, you can gather all of the tiles and put them in this basket.”

Bathroom

Make sure children flush and wash hands. If a child needs help with toileting or needs a diaper change, alert a staff person so that they can help the child. Volunteers are not to assist children with toileting, changing clothes, or changing diapers/pull ups, unless the volunteer is helping their own child.

Muscle Room

(Note: While Wyoming City Schools are using the Muscle Room, the climber will be in storage because it is rated for children up to 5 yrs old.)

If there are enough adults, you may take the tricycles to the hallway. This requires at least one adult in the hallway and one in the muscle room. Ratio must be kept in both the muscle room and the hallway. Keep in mind that volunteers may not be counted in ratio. Only the adults open the door to enter or exit the muscle room.

Expectations of adults

- Monitor the entire muscle room and equipment for safety concerns. One adult should be near the climber and one adult should be on the other half of the muscle room. If there are more adults, then another adult can monitor the other side of the climber and other adults may spread out around the room. If working with a child or small group of children to comfort or help resolve a conflict, then getting down on the floor at their level is permissible. **It is not permissible to sit while actively supervising as your sight lines are limited and you cannot quickly get to a child(ren) if needed.**

- Do not permit children to take tricycles, wagons, wheelbarrows, etc. onto the mat under the climber. The entire mat is designated as a fall zone for the climber. They may take fabrics and other soft materials to the climber area.

- Verbally coach children through challenging tasks such as climbing up the climbing wall or going across the monkey bars. Stand next to or behind a child who is attempting a challenging task. You will be there if the child slips or panics. Even when a child panics, your first response should be to assure the child that you are there and will not let him/her fall. You can place your hand on the child's back, over the child's hands, etc. Then you should try to verbally coach the child through the actions needed to feel safe. "Put your foot down here. I have my hand on your back. I won't let you fall. Now move your hand down to the next rung." Sometimes, especially if the child is new, the child may just let go. Then you will be there to catch him/her! This is dangerous for you and for the child so try to anticipate this situation and coach the child into a safer position before the panic sets in.

- If you help get a game started, then back out while you encourage other children to participate. You may also need to help hold hands to form the circle for Ring Around the Rosie and other such games. If you are playing a game with one or two children, then some area of the muscle room is under-supervised. If you are holding hands or rolling a ball to a group of 8 children then you are supervising a large portion of children in the muscle room.

- Active supervision is required. Be sure to have adults throughout the room rather than all in

one spot. Likewise, do not use your cell phone unless needed to call for help.

- Do not pick up children to play games, such as swinging them around.
- Encourage them to play together rather than with you.
- Our lights are on sensors that get disrupted when we manually operate them.
- Monitor the running and encourage all to run in the same direction.
- It is okay for children to go up the slide once they have checked to make sure no one is coming down.
- As a courtesy to the next class, before exiting the muscle room please help the children reset it for the next class, putting materials back where the planning teachers put them.
- If a child needs to use the bathroom while in the muscle room, a staff person can take as many children as necessary to maintain the ratio to the downstairs bathroom marked for preschool.
- If an item is broken and cannot be repaired then please dispose of it and let the director know if it is something that needs to be replaced. If a piece of equipment needs repair please inform the director. Broken equipment and materials may not be used by children.

Playground

As a courtesy, each class must clean up the outside area before going back inside. Provocations and experiences should be reset if another class will use the playground after you. Children should participate in the clean up just as they are responsible for cleaning up in the classroom. The last class (or teachers) using the play yard for the day should put everything away in the sheds and lock the sheds. The gate should remain closed and latched.

Expectations of Adults in the Playground

- Monitor the entire area and equipment for safety concerns. If something needs repaired let the director know. Move to the area with the most children or area of greatest safety concern. Adults need to spread out. Some areas are less visible or less accessible from a distance and someone should be handy to intervene when necessary.
- Just as in the muscle room, adults are expected to be standing in order to be actively supervising. Sitting does not allow for a good view of the area or allow you to quickly get to a child who may need help. If a child needs comforting, you may sit with the child. But once the

child is ready, please stand up again. You may sit to read a book to a group of children or have a conversation. It is important to be aware of ratios and placement of your body so that you can still actively scan the playground.

- As in the muscle room, children should be encouraged to problem solve moving over equipment. Reassure them you will keep them safe and coach them if necessary but try to avoid lifting them down. Lifting children increases the risk for you and them to get hurt.
- As in the muscle room, help get games started if necessary and encourage other children to participate then step back.
- Children are allowed to go up the slide once they have checked that no one is coming down.
- Mulch and dirt/mud should not be taken into the gazebo but may go under the gazebo.
- Do not allow children to climb the fence. If they choose to climb, they may climb the climbing wall on the gazebo, the sides of the house, or the tunnel and platforms.
- Children may not stand on the house roof. They may sit on the roof.
- Things you might need to say: "Mulch stays on the ground. Throwing mulch gets it in people's eyes, and that really hurts." "Shovels and rakes stay on the ground. If they are up over your head you might accidentally hit someone, and that would hurt them." "When you shovel, make sure your eyes can see where you are putting the mulch that is in your shovel."

Courtyard

- The courtyard is not for running around or to be treated as another outdoor play yard. It is for planned group activities. Children are not to go past the prayer labyrinth.
- If you set up an activity in the courtyard you will need to put it away unless it has been mutually agreed upon to leave out for another class, in which case the two educators need to also agree who will be putting it away. The key to the storage box is in the director's office.
- Small group activities that might occur: easels for painting en plein air, observational drawings of nature, yoga, story time, sensory table experience, loose parts with mirrors.