



# PRESCHOOL



# Family Handbook 2023-2024

Dear Parents,

Welcome to our First Kids family! We are honored that you have chosen us to be such an important part of your child's early years. We look forward to sharing this adventure with you. For years researchers have understood that a child's experiences and skills acquired during his preschool years correlate with his future success throughout the formal school years. What children learn during this time will lay the foundation for their learning and development throughout life. Techniques used to work with young children, however, should be different than those utilized in traditional elementary school settings. Young children perceive the world differently than older ones. They construct knowledge as they explore through hands-on experiences. We teach the child, not the subjects.

This year we celebrate our 68<sup>th</sup> Anniversary! In the 1950s First Presbyterian Church answered the prayers of many parents by developing classes for children with special needs before the county developed such programs. First Kids offered Kindergarten classes for many years, until they became standard in the public schools. Over the years First Kids, under the guidance of First Presbyterian Church, has strived to be a model of quality by providing developmentally appropriate learning experiences in a caring and nurturing environment. In 2008, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2016 and 2019, individual members of our staff were recognized by both The Cabarrus-Rowan-Stanly Association for the Education of Young Children and Child Care Resources of Charlotte for outstanding teaching or directing.

First Kids currently offers classes for infants through Transitional Kindergarten. A majority of our staff members hold degrees in education or related fields. Staff members are active in state and local childhood organizations and participate in in-service education for professional growth.

So, what kinds of things will you see when you visit our school? You will see teachers who greet your child with warmth and enthusiasm as she enters the classroom and who provide her love and support throughout the day. You will see your child curious, excited, and mentally involved as he experiments with manipulatives and toys, reads or listens to stories, and dictates or writes his own ideas. Sometimes you will see your child engaged and persisting in individual projects. Other times, you will see her solving problems as part of a collaborative group. You will see your child developing emotionally and socially as she builds relationships with others. You will see teachers talking with him about all these activities, helping him make thought-connections and challenging him to bridge upward. You will see a staff ready to build supportive relationships with you.

This Family Handbook describes even more of what you will find at our program. Please take time to read it carefully and let us know if you have any questions.

We depend upon your support, cooperation, and involvement and hope that you will look upon us as a support network for your family.

Playing and Learning Together,  
*Maureen O'Bryan*  
Preschool Director

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Annual Theme (“Hello World, Here We Come!”)	7
Babysitting Program	9, 13
Background Screening (Staff)	12-13
Behavior Management (Discipline Policy)	18
Birthdays	20
Breastfeeding	14
Calendar (Annual)	21
Car Seats	12
Cell Phone Use (During Pick-Up and Drop-Off)	12
Chapel Dates	5
Child Abuse/Neglect (Suspected)	13
Child and Youth Protection Policy	12
Class Lists (Distribution of Class Lists, Sharing Personal Information)	18
Color Days	7, 21
Contagious Illnesses & Covid-19	14,15
Corporal Punishment	13
Curricula	5
Discipline Policy (Behavior Management)	18
Drop-In Program	9
Dressing Your Child for Preschool (Proper Preschool Attire)	17
Drop-Off / Pick-Up Procedures	11
Elevator Safety	17
Emergency Plans	13
Enrichment Activities	5
Field Trips	18
Health & Safety Guidelines	13
Health Forms and Immunization Records	13-14
Healthy Lifestyle Choices	6
Healthy Lunch Ideas	19
Holiday Celebrations	19
Inclement Weather Policy	19
Illness (Should My Child Stay Home from School?)	15
Illness (What Happens When My Child Gets Sick at School?)	14
Lunch Guidelines	19
Medication (Administering at School)	14
Messages from Home	9
Mission Statement	4
Monthly Payments (How Much Do I Owe? How Do I Pay?)	10
Parental Support (Volunteer Opportunities)	4, 20
Parent-Teacher Conferences	18
Parties at School	19

Partners In Education	18
Party Invitations (Handing Out at School)	20
Pets at School	14
Philosophy	5
Pick-Up Information Cards (What if my alternates change?)	12
Pick-Up / Drop-Off Procedures	11
Playground Safety & Guidelines	17
Preschool Committee Scheduled Meetings	20
Preschool Objectives	6
Registration Policy	9
Scholarship Program	9
Seat Belts/Car Safety Restraints	12
Severe Weather Policy	17
Sick Children (When Should I Keep My Child Home From School?)	16
Six-Month Rule	13
Social Media	18
Staff Roster	8
Tax ID Number	11
Teacher List	10
Tuition (Annual, Monthly Rates; Where Do I Send My Payment?)	10
Two-Adult Rule	13
When Should I Keep My Child Home from School?	15-16
Withdrawal Policy	9

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## **PARENTAL SUPPORT**

*“It Takes A Village...”*

We encourage strong partnerships between staff and parents. We do encourage you to stay in touch with what is happening at school virtually, through Facebook pages, and weekly emails as well as in-person substitutes and volunteers. We appreciate open communication as we work together to guide your child through these precious early years.



## **MISSION STATEMENT**

First Kids’ mission is to nurture the intellect, personality, body, and heart of each child by creating a safe and developmentally-appropriate environment and experiences that lay a foundation for lifelong learning. Our highly-educated and dedicated staff works in a loving Christian atmosphere and in partnership with parents to create a community of joyful, compassionate, and confident learners.

## PHILOSOPHY

The process of children learning *how* to learn is best facilitated through all domains of development via hands-on, intentional play; engaging and meaningful experiences; and ample opportunities to form significant social connections.

## CURRICULA

Our program is based on three primary areas which help build confidence, creativity, and critical thinking skills: 1) teacher-student interactions, 2) ongoing observations and assessments, and 3) developmentally appropriate, high-quality learning environments. Infant/Toddler rooms are designed to provide nurturing, home-like experiences with a variety of sensory-rich activities. Classrooms for older children focus on center-based play highlighting construction, table toys, art, discovery, circle time, writing, dramatic play, library, and outdoor play. Following are the principle resources and curricula that we use:

- Conscious Discipline: Focuses on the social and emotional needs of children.

<https://consciousdiscipline.com>

- The Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers: Focuses on hands-on discovery, supportive teacher interactions and a center-based classroom set-up that promotes learning in the interest areas listed above. [\\_https://teachingstrategies.com](https://teachingstrategies.com)
- Learning Without Tears- Approaches to letter & number formation & concepts [www.lwt.com](http://www.lwt.com)
- Letterland for Preschool- Incorporates a multi-sensory approach to number and letter shapes and sounds while building phonemic awareness [www.usletterland.com](http://www.usletterland.com)
- North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development- Research based teaching guidelines which consider child development and learning styles

<https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Foundations-for-Early-Learning-and-Development>



## ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

- **Music and Movement Classes:** Classroom teachers will incorporate weekly sessions to experience music through singing, listening, instrument play, and movement.
- **Chapel Time** Students in classes aged three-years through TK will enjoy monthly visits with Pastor Ellen or Pastor Casey.
- **Library Time** (Cabarrus County Library): Students in classes aged three-years through TK will visit the local library once each semester for interactive story time.
- **Field Trips/Guest Speakers-** Classes will enjoy trips to area farms, businesses or the fire station as well as “in-house” field trips with visits from fire fighters, police officers, environmental educators or musicians.

## **PRESCHOOL OBJECTIVES**

### **SPIRITUALITY**

- To grow in the understanding of God as our Creator and to learn of His love
- To guide children in talking with God and thanking Him for His love and care
- To hear stories of Jesus and to know they come from the Bible

### **APPROACHES TO LEARNING**

- To ponder, process, and apply experiences
- To seek information and to show curiosity and eagerness in learning situations
- To take academic risks, solve problems, and show flexibility
- To exhibit tenacity, attentiveness, flexibility, imagination, creativity, invention, and aesthetic sensibilities

### **HEALTH AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

- To develop an awareness of self-care and increase independence
- To demonstrate an understanding of personal safety
- To develop an ability to follow health and safety rules and to recognize and avoid danger
- To refine both fine and gross motor skills
- To build an awareness of personal health and fitness and to make it a part of daily practices

### **LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION**

- To broaden receptive and expressive language skills
- To develop foundations of reading through vocabulary, oral language, printed words, alphabetic principles, and phonological comprehension
- To build foundations of writing through fine motor activities, dictation, connecting sounds with letter forms, and practice with writing implements

### **EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

- To grow in the ability to interact cooperatively with peers and to develop friendships
- To adjust to working in group settings
- To appreciate differences in others and to develop respect for them
- To learn to share space, work materials, and toys
- To work through disputes by way of problem-solving and negotiation
- To recognize that as individuals each child has rights which he must learn to protect
- To build a sense of responsibility
- To develop healthy feelings about herself and to grow in self-confidence
- To understand and accept change, opposition, and defeat

### **COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT**

- To foster mathematical thinking and expression via numbers, shapes, classification of objects, weights and measurements, comparisons, positional language, observations, use of senses, predictions, and experimentation
- To increase social connections
- To participate as a member of a group or community
- To demonstrate an awareness of diverse cultures
- To make sense of the world by asking questions and engaging in imaginative play
- To engage in creative expression through art, music, drama, movement, and dance
- To share ideas and to show interest and respect for the creative expression of others

## ANNUAL THEME: Hello World, Here We Come

Month	Theme	Featured Books	Bible Verse
SEPTEMBER	Africa	"We All Went On Safari" Laurie Krebs & Julia Cairns	"In the beginning, God created heaven and earth." Genesis 1:1
OCTOBER	South America	"Zonia's Rain Forest" Juana Martinez-Neal	"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God." Matthew 5:9
NOVEMBER	North America	"I Am America" Charles Smith Jr.	"Give thanks to the Lord of heaven. His love endures forever." Psalm 136:26
DECEMBER	Christmas Around the World	"Joy To The World! Christmas Around the Globe" Kate DePalma & Sophie Fatus	The angel said, "I bring you good news. It will bring great joy for all people." Luke 2:10
JANUARY	Arctic/Antarctica	"Mama Do You Love Me?" Barbara Joose	"You are all children of God by faith in Jesus Christ." Galatians 3:26
FEBRUARY	Australia	"Over in Australia Amazing Animals Down Under" Marianne Berkes & Jill Dubin	"Be kind and compassionate to one another." Ephesians 4:32
MARCH	Europe	"City Cat" Lauren Castillo & Kate Banks	"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only son" John 3:16
APRIL	Asia	"The Wheels on the Tuk Tuk" Surishtha & Kabir Sehgal	"Be exalted O God above the heavens, let your glory be over all the earth." Psalm 57:5
MAY	The Islands	"Island Counting 123" France" Lessac	"So go and make followers of all people in the world. Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." Matthew 28-19

**CELEBRATING COLOR:** Two days each month we celebrate a color with special activities and snacks. Five-Day Classes typically choose one day on which to celebrate, and will let you know which one. Join us by wearing these colors...

MONTH	DAYS	COLOR
SEP	13 & 14	YELLOW
OCT	11 & 12	ORANGE
NOV	15 & 16	BROWN & BLACK
DEC	6 & 7	RED
JAN	17 & 18	WHITE
FEB	14 & 15	PINK
MAR	14 & 15	GREEN
APR	10 & 11	PURPLE
MAY	8 & 9	BLUE

## PRESCHOOL STAFF ROSTER

POSITION(S)	NAME	EMAIL	PHONE
Director & MWF Fours	Maureen O'Bryan	<a href="mailto:mz.mo223@gmail.com">mz.mo223@gmail.com</a>	704-425-8623
Assistant Director	Pam Prentice	<a href="mailto:misspamp@yahoo.com">misspamp@yahoo.com</a>	704-701-1481
Ones M-F	Kristi Dugan	<a href="mailto:kldugan24@gmail.com">kldugan24@gmail.com</a>	850-319-9952
Ones M/W/F	Kristina Revels	<a href="mailto:kristinarevels3@gmail.com">kristinarevels3@gmail.com</a>	704-771-5008
Ones T/Th	Sally Price	<a href="mailto:sallyypricee@gmail.com">sallyypricee@gmail.com</a>	704-467-3353
Two A M-F	MaryAnn Harrison	<a href="mailto:hmaryann25@hotmail.com">hmaryann25@hotmail.com</a>	916-412-3192
Two A M-F	Lisa Sackeli	<a href="mailto:lisavsackeli@gmail.com">lisavsackeli@gmail.com</a>	704-578-7469
Three B M-F	Amber Huggins	<a href="mailto:ahuggins8389@gmail.com">ahuggins8389@gmail.com</a>	704-956-7788
Three B M/W/F	Megan Kopasz	<a href="mailto:megan.kopasz@gmail.com">megan.kopasz@gmail.com</a>	909-644-2160
Three B T/Th	Hope Duckworth	<a href="mailto:hope.duckworth@gmail.com">hope.duckworth@gmail.com</a>	704-794-8324
Three A M-F	Julia Holshouser	<a href="mailto:juliaholshouser@gmail.com">juliaholshouser@gmail.com</a>	951-902-0803
Fours and Threes M/W/F	Tara Garrett	<a href="mailto:tarapgarrett@gmail.com">tarapgarrett@gmail.com</a>	980-521-9220
Five-Day Fours M-F	Laura Lyon	<a href="mailto:lauralyon628@gmail.com">lauralyon628@gmail.com</a>	704-707-6714
Five-Day Fours M/T/W	Elyse Lambert	<a href="mailto:Elyse.lambert@yahoo.com">Elyse.lambert@yahoo.com</a>	304 544-4811
Five-Day Fours Th/F	Golda Jay	<a href="mailto:waselovich@gmail.com">waselovich@gmail.com</a>	865-824-8964
TK W/F	Holly Westbrook	<a href="mailto:hlwdance@aol.com">hlwdance@aol.com</a>	704-467-7555
TK M-F	Jennifer Michalski	<a href="mailto:jscharrison@yahoo.com">jscharrison@yahoo.com</a>	704-576-1421



## REGISTRATION POLICY

In 2024 registration forms for the 24-25 school year will be distributed via Brightwheel to all church members with young children and currently enrolled First Kids families and their siblings. Completed forms and registration fee for “early registration” must be returned by February 29, 2024. Registration fees are non-refundable unless all requested classes are full. See the current registration brochure for a list of fees.

We base enrollment on a random selection, prioritized as follows:

1. Church\*/Staff Members currently enrolled
2. Church\*/Staff Members not currently enrolled
3. Non-Church Members currently enrolled
4. Siblings of Non-Church Members currently enrolled
5. All Others

\*For the 2024-2025 school year, “church member” is defined as anyone who has been received by the Church Session by November 2023 and who is listed on their active roll.

Applications returned after the February 29th due date (including current church members) are processed on a first-come, first-served basis.

## WITHDRAWAL POLICY

If you need to withdraw your child from preschool, **notify the Director** as soon as possible. To receive any applicable tuition reimbursements, you must give at least a **one-month notice**. The first month’s tuition due in July, once paid, is non-refundable. All registration fees are non-refundable. Overpayment of tuition, beyond the one-month notice, is refundable.

## CHANGES IN PERSONAL INFORMATION

Changes in personal information should be updated on “Brightwheel.” Please also alert our director and your child’s teacher immediately if you have changes to your address, phone number, emergency contacts, or any other pertinent information.

## PRESCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

As part of its community outreach program, First Presbyterian Church established a memorial fund to offer preschool scholarships to families needing financial assistance. A Subcommittee chooses recipients on an annual basis. Contributions to the Fund are always welcome. Your contribution would enable a needy child an opportunity to benefit from an early educational and social experience that she may otherwise miss. Please contact the Director for more information.

**DROP-IN/BABYSITTING PROGRAMS-** We do offer drop-in childcare on a limited basis, provided our safe child:teacher ratios can be maintained.

The cost for this service is \$30/day. **You must obtain the director’s approval, not the teacher’s approval, before bringing your child to school on non-regular days.** You may call her at 704-425-8623.

Additionally, staff members may be available to provide before or after school care off campus. If you are interested in this service, please speak with your child’s teacher or the director. Parents will be asked to sign a special waiver for this service.

## MESSAGES FROM HOME

Staff members cannot accept verbal messages from children. Please contact your child’s teacher via written note, email, phone call, or text message. Relaying important information during busy times, such as during drop-off or pick-up, may lead to misunderstandings. Written communication directly to the teacher is best, be it handwritten or electronic (text/email).

Important messages throughout the day are best delivered by text to your child’s teacher or director.

### TUITION

Tuition is based on an annual fee which may be paid in full or in monthly installments.

2023-2024 TUITION RATES		
DAYS PER WEEK	ANNUAL RATE	MONTHLY PAYMENT
2	1440.00	160.00
3	2025.00	225.00
5	3465.00	385.00
TK	3555.00	395.00

**The first month’s tuition is due on July 1 each year**, and once paid, is non-refundable to hold your child’s spot for the fall. **Subsequent payments are due on the first of each month beginning in September with late fees of 5% being assessed on payments received after the 10th.** No payment will be due in May. Monthly reminders will be sent via “Brightwheel.”

Online payments may be made through Brightwheel. We also accept checks and cash. Make checks payable to either First Kids or to First Presbyterian Church and write your child(ren)’s name(s) and class(es) on the memo line.

John Smith  
555 Your St.  
Your Town 54321

DATE 09-01-23

PAY TO First Presbyterian Church 225.00

Two Hundred twenty-five and NO/100 Dollars

MEMO Luke Skywalker 3A Padame Amidala

1234 5678 9876 543210

**DO NOT SEND TUITION PAYMENTS TO SCHOOL WITH YOUR CHILD or PLACE IN HIS/HER BACKPACK**

**Address all questions regarding payments or statements to either our financial secretary Pam Prentice or our director Maureen O’Bryan. Do not speak with classroom teachers regarding these matters.**

You may drop your check in the locked mailbox, on the ramp outside the office door, or in the indoor wooden mailbox by the office. If you wish to make a payment in person when First Kids is closed, you may give it to the church secretary in the Fellowship House during office hours: Monday-Thursday- 8:30-4:00

FIRST KIDS PRESCHOOL  
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
P.O. BOX 789  
CONCORD, NC 28026-0789

ATTN: PAM PRENTICE

### IMPORTANT NOTES:

- First Kids’ Tax I.D. Number is 56 052 9971. Annual tax statements will be available via your Brightwheel account.
- At the Preschool Committee’s discretion, families who are more than one month late in their

tuition payments may be asked to leave the program.

- **Tuition must be up-to-date in February** to be eligible to register for the next school year and “paid-in-full” to register for summer preschool programs.
- **We will remove your child’s name from our roster and decline re-admittance if your tuition for the previous year is not paid in full by May 15.**

### DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP PROCEDURES

Drive through service is a courtesy not offered at many other centers and should be regarded as such. Parents are welcome to park and walk their children to the check-in stations outside. Staff members work diligently in all types of weather to unload/load children safely and efficiently. Parents should continue to put their car into park to help unbuckle and buckle their child into his/her seat. Please see details below.

**From 8:45-9:15 a.m. and 12:30-1:00 p.m. each school day, the Union Street driveway will open in the opposite direction. During those times, please enter via the driveway closest to the playground. At any other time during the day, please enter from the driveway closest to the church.**

Follow the directions listed below based on your youngest passenger. Staff will ensure that all children get to their correct locations. **DO NOT ARRIVE MORE THAN FIVE MINUTES OUTSIDE THE TIMES LISTED.**

**EARLY/LATE ARRIVERS WILL BE CHARGED \$1 PER MINUTE.**

CLASS	STAFF ON DUTY	DIRECTIONS
Ones	<u>DROP-OFF</u> 8:50- 9:10 <u>PICK-UP</u> 12:30 - 12:45	Park in the Davis Hall lot and bring children to the porch entrance at the top of the stairs closest to the playground. A teacher will meet you there. During pick-up please wait at the door and a staff member will bring your child to you.
2A, 2/3B 3A, MWF 4	<u>DROP-OFF</u> 8:50 - 9:10 <u>PICK-UP</u> 12:35 - 12:50	Enter from Union Street via the south entrance (near playground). Pull forward through the circular drive, turning right to go under the breezeway between the two buildings. Continue forward with the flow of traffic. Put your car in park, turn off engine, and bring your child to his teacher’s check-in station. Exit on Church Street. During pick-up, put your car in park, turn off engine while in the line, a teacher will bring your child to you to load.
5-Day 4	<u>DROP-OFF</u> 8:55 - 9:15 <u>PICK-UP</u> 12:45 – 1:00	Enter the courtyard drive from Church Street. Exit straight onto Union Street. Put your car in park, turn off your engine, bring your child to the check-in station. <b>Please do not arrive early to enable us to unload all TK children.</b> During pick-up, put your car in park, turn off engine, stand by your car and a staff member will bring your child to you.
TK	<u>DROP-OFF</u> 8:45 - 9:00 <u>PICK-UP</u> 12:35 - 12:55	Enter the courtyard drive from Church Street. Exit straight onto Union Street. Put your car in park, turn off engine, bring your child to the check-in station. During pick-up, put your car in park, stand by your car and a staff member will bring your child to you.

**IMPORTANT NOTES** NEW SAFETY FEATURE THIS YEAR- Check-In and Check Out: Using QR code.

Directions

1. Download the Brightwheel App onto your phone
2. Go to the privacy settings on your phone and allow Brightwheel to access your camera. (This is so you can scan the QR code at check-in.)
3. Learn the 4 digit code assigned to you. You will need this to check in and check out each day.
4. Each person authorized to pick up your child is assigned their own number.
5. You can find this code by clicking the 3 bars in the top left hand corner of the screen.
6. Click “Edit Profile” under your child’s name and you will see your 4 digit code.
7. You may edit this code at that time if you wish to change it to something you can easily remember.

8. As you are dropping off and picking up, you will be asked to scan a QR card that our teachers will have on their phone or lanyard. You will then enter your child's four digit code. You can find this code by following these directions. We will have a "test run" at Open House and will work together for a smooth transition.

### **Additional Safety Procedures**

- ALWAYS DISPLAY YOUR CAR TAG
- You may park in the Davis Hall lot, the First Pres lot across Church St., and on Church St. Do not park at Wells Fargo. Be aware that Trinity Church now charges a parking fee and will tow cars if not paid.
- Never leave your child alone in the car and ensure that he remains properly restrained until you remove him/her from the car. Law requires us to report these violations to local authorities.
- **Please only have cell phones out for checking in and out, we ask that you not be "on the phone" for other reasons, so we can all be safe.**
- The maximum safe speed is 5 mph. Do not pass cars in the car line unless directed by Staff.
- **NEVER ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO WALK TO CLASS UNATTENDED.** If you arrive late and find no Staff on duty, park in a designated area and walk your child to the check-in station closest to the office door. Ring the bell or call your child's teacher and someone will assist you.
- Do not let your child walk on the brick walls in the Davis Hall lot.
- Keep conversations with Staff brief to keep traffic flowing smoothly.
- **BEFORE ENTERING THE CAR LINE, DISPLAY YOUR CAR TAG AND ROLL DOWN YOUR WINDOWS.** We cannot see through tinted glass.
- Notify Staff **in writing** (note, email, text) of any change in regular pick-up persons.
- Keep your Pick-Up card up-to-date. Staff will check IDs of anyone with whom we are unfamiliar to ensure that he is listed on your card.
- We cannot legally withhold a child from his parent or legal guardian without documentation. In legal cases, be sure to speak with the Director and provide the proper forms.



**Buckle Up Kids**  
NORTH CAROLINA

### **CAR SEATS BUCKLE UP - IT'S THE LAW**

The Preschool Committee mandates that Staff follow current NC laws regarding seat belts and safety seats: children younger than 8 years and/or weighing less than 80 pounds must be secured in a size-appropriate child restraint system (infant seat, toddler seat, or booster).

First Kids has two seats which may be available to borrow on occasion. If you need one:

1. Park your car in the Davis Hall lot.
2. Alert a staff member that you need a car seat.
3. If one is available, you will be asked to install it in your vehicle.
4. If one is not available, leave the premises to obtain one elsewhere. Staff will remain with your child while you are gone. Standard late fees will apply, if applicable.

If you leave the premises with a child who is not properly restrained, law requires that we report you to local authorities.

## **CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY**

In January 2015 First Presbyterian Church adopted the “Child and Youth Protection Policy” which says:

*As the First Presbyterian Church of Concord, North Carolina, we hereby express and affirm our commitment to maintaining a safe and nurturing environment for all of God’s children, especially the most vulnerable among us.*

First Kids adheres to all guidelines set forth in this policy. You may view the full document on First Presbyterian’s website [firstpresconcord.org](http://firstpresconcord.org) under the GROW tab, Child Formation.

Highlights include:

- **Background Screening and Child Protection Training:** All employees of the church and preschool, including regular volunteers and substitutes, must complete a background check through a screening service designated by the Church Session. In addition, each must complete the “Child Protection Safety Training”.
- Occasional substitutes and volunteers who have not met these requirements may assist only in the presence of a screened staff member.
- **Drop-In/Babysitting Services:** You must complete a “Release and Identification” form if you:
  - Employ First Kids staff for before/after school babysitting on campus or transportation to/from preschool
  - Use our Drop-In Program to bring your child on a day for which she is not registered or for a child who is not registered in the program (i.e., sibling). Church staff must approve and document the form before services may begin. The arrangements are expressly excluded from the scope of the policy.
- **Corporal Punishment:** Staff members are strictly prohibited from using any form of corporal punishment while on duty.
- **Two-Adult Rule:** The intent of this policy is to minimize the time a child is alone with a single adult. Exceptions to this rule include: administering First Aid; transferring a child from one area to another (i.e., restroom visits, pick-up time) ratio changes and smaller class sizes, in which case a “floater” staff member will drop in the class periodically throughout the day to monitor and assist.
- **Six-Month Rule:** Substitutes and volunteers who have less than a six-month relationship with the church or preschool must be in the presence of two screened staff members at all times.

## **CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

Law requires us to report to the Department of Social Services any instance in which there is reasonable cause to believe that child abuse, neglect, or exploitation may have occurred.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

First Kids observes good health standards and follows consistent safety guidelines to ensure that your child remains in good care.

- We follow all regulations designated by the Concord Fire Marshal and conduct fire and emergency drills periodically.
- Our building is equipped with both an alarm and a sprinkler system.
- Each staff member is certified in CPR for infants and children, and follows the health and safety guidelines outlined by the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Our “Emergency Plan Booklet” outlines our guidelines in dealing with threatening situations: abduction, bomb threats, intruders and weapons, emergency evacuations, extreme weather, lock downs, serious illness or injury, transmission of blood borne pathogens. Copies of this booklet are displayed in the classrooms.

## GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

- **Health Forms:** Each child must provide a completed health form and current immunization record showing an original signature from your source of medical care prior to their first day of school and each time immunizations are updated throughout the school year. We cannot accept copied or faxed forms. **All children must have up-to-date and required immunizations as outlined by the American Academy of Pediatrics ([www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)). We do not accept children who are following a delayed immunization schedule. No exemptions allowed.**
- **Handwashing:** Each teacher and child, must wash her hands just prior to or upon entering a classroom, after using the restroom or diapering a child, before and after playground visits and before and after consuming food.
- **Contagious Illnesses:** Contact us immediately if your child develops or becomes exposed.
- **Sick Children:** A child who arrives noticeably ill (i.e., fever, rash, green or yellow nasal discharge, chills, vomiting) will not be allowed to stay at school. Children becoming ill during the day will sit in an isolated area with adult supervision until an authorized person arrives to take him home.
- **Medication:** Staff may not administer prescription or over-the-counter medications without a signed "Permission to Medicate" form on file. Included in the definition of "medication" are diaper ointment, lotion, lip balm and sunscreen. Exceptions include bug bite relief sticks and emergency treatments (i.e., extreme allergic reactions). All medication must remain out of children's reach. **Do not send any medications to school with your child** without prior approval.
- **Visiting Pets:** Pets who are up-to-date on vaccines may visit with prior approval of the director.
- **Smoking, Alcohol, and Illicit Drugs:** All are strictly prohibited when children are on the campus.
- **Weapons of Any Kind:** All weapons are strictly prohibited on campus.
- **Latex Balloons:** **Latex balloons are a choking hazard and not allowed.** Mylar balloons are acceptable.
- **Umbrellas & Backpacks with Wheels:** These items are not allowed for safety reasons. Backpacks or Totes may be sent on a daily basis, but do be aware these items may be disinfected with a wipe or approved spray.

## FIRST KIDS PRESCHOOL IS A BREASTFEEDING-FRIENDLY CENTER

We support and welcome all mothers who breastfeed their babies. Breastfeeding provides the healthiest start for babies, offering ideal nutrition and a multitude of health benefits for both infant and mother. Research indicates that breastfed babies have less risk of asthma, childhood obesity, Type 2 diabetes, SIDS, ear infections, diarrhea, and vomiting. Mothers who breastfeed have a decreased risk of developing breast and ovarian cancer. Breastfeeding-friendly centers report having healthier infants with less colic and greater parent satisfaction. What will you find in our center?

- A quiet, comfortable breastfeeding station in the first floor restroom beside Davis Hall.
- Refrigerator space for storing expressed milk

Visit [cabarrus.nc.networkofcare.org](http://cabarrus.nc.networkofcare.org) for additional resources for support in our community

Current COVID-19 and Health Guidelines

Updated August 2023

1. Children & adults are not currently required to wear masks, but use of masks is always welcomed.
2. Children will have the opportunity to wash/sanitize their hands upon arrival, before snack or lunch time, after bathroom use and as needed throughout the day.
3. Social Distancing is currently not required. Parents, who are symptom-free are welcome to enter the building and attend classroom parties. Classes of children may overlap in common areas such as the playground, hallway, and music room.
4. Highly used areas and bathrooms will be disinfected daily and as situations dictate throughout the day. Toys that children have put in their mouths will be disinfected before placing back into circulation.

Illness: If a child/staff/volunteer has fever (>100°.4), body aches/chills, sore throat, cough, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, congestion/runny nose, or new onset of severe headache:

- Individual must stay home and text Maureen 704-425-8623
- An individual may return to school when they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.
- If an individual vomits or has diarrhea, either at home or at school, they must stay home for 24 hours after the last episode.

If you have a contagious rash, pink eye, or any contagious infection where an individual visits their provider (flu, strep, etc.):

- Stay at home and text Maureen- 704-425-8623
- An individual may return to school when they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.
- If antibiotics were prescribed by their provider, they must have completed 24 hours of the antibiotics.

If a family member has COVID-19 symptoms, we encourage you to test, and if that test is positive the family is responsible for keeping others safe by:

- Isolating the individual positive for COVID-19 for five days.
- Returning to campus only when symptom-free and after those five days of quarantine.
- Encouraging the individual (over age 2), upon return to campus, to wear a mask while indoors for an additional five days.
- Other family members are not required to quarantine or test unless they also develop symptoms.

A child may come to school if other family members are positive for Covid as long as he/she has no symptoms. Should symptoms develop throughout the day, our staff will call you to pick up your child.

CDC Prevention Recommendations: “The most effective way for individuals to protect themselves and their loved ones from COVID-19 is to get vaccinated and stay up-to-date with booster doses and/or additional doses. Evidence shows that COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective at preventing COVID-19, including severe illness and death. COVID-19 vaccines are now available and recommended for people 6 months and older. Please discuss your child’s eligibility with your pediatrician. To determine eligibility for additional doses and/or booster shots, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html>.”

## WHEN TO KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL

KEEP HER HOME IF SHE HAS:	SHE MAY RETURN TO SCHOOL WHEN:
<b>Fever:</b> Temperature of 100.4 or higher	She registers a <b>normal temperature (without medicine) for at least 24 hours</b> . If the fever is a symptom of a more serious illness, she may return when she has had no fever for at least 24 hours, and the symptoms have cleared. (Does not apply to Covid or the flu)
<b>Vomiting:</b> 1 or more times in a 12-hour period	She has <b>not vomited in 12 hours</b> and has had <b>no fever for at least 24 hours</b> .
<b>Severe cold:</b> Including any of the following symptoms: fever, sneezing, coughing, yellow/green nasal discharge	All <b>symptoms are clear</b> and she has had <b>no fever for at least 24 hours</b> .
<b>The Flu</b>	A child who has had the flu may return to school one week after the initial onset of symptoms and if all fever and symptoms have disappeared.
<b>Diarrhea:</b> 3 or more loose, liquid bowel movements in a 2-hour period	She/He has had <b>no diarrhea within the last 12 hours</b> , she/he has had <b>at least 1 normal bowel movement</b> , and has had <b>no fever for at least 24 hours</b> .
<b>Skin Rash:</b> Any skin irritation of unknown origin	The <b>rash has cleared</b> , or she has been <b>cleared by a doctor</b> to return to school.
<b>Coxsackie Virus</b> (“Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease”): Lesions or blisters on the hands, feet, and/or mouth; may be accompanied by fever and/or sore throat	The <b>blisters have cleared</b> , he/she has had <b>no fever for at least 24 hours</b> , and is <b>no longer contagious</b> . <u>The disease is contagious 3-5 days after the first lesions appear.</u>
<b>Conjunctivitis</b> (“Pink Eye”): Redness and irritation in eye; may be accompanied by thick yellow drainage	Medicine has been administered and the <b>symptoms have cleared</b> .
<b>Impetigo:</b> Skin blisters surrounded by redness; may be on any area but most commonly on face, ears, or nostrils. When the blisters rupture, skin is raw, weepy, and oozy; turning yellowish and crusty	The <b>blisters become dry</b> and she is no longer contagious.
<b>Bronchitis:</b> May begin with hoarseness, a mild fever, and a dry and painful cough which loosens as the condition progresses	The <b>symptoms have cleared</b> .
<b>Strep Throat:</b> Scratchy, sore throat; may be accompanied by fever	He/She <b>has taken doctor-prescribed antibiotics for at least 24 hours</b> , she has had <b>no fever for at least 24 hours</b> , and the <b>symptoms have cleared</b> .
<b>Head Lice:</b> Grayish, crawling bugs which infect the scalp, causing intense itching. The bugs and/or their tiny, whiteish, oval eggs adhere to strands of hair, usually about 1/4 inch from the scalp.	After <b>successful treatment</b> with a shampoo or medication ( <b>no evidence of bugs or their eggs</b> remaining)
Any <b>Contagious Illnesses</b> including: Chicken Pox, Roseola, Scarlet Fever, Mumps, Rubella etc.	The <b>symptoms have cleared</b> , and he/ she has been <b>cleared by a doctor</b> to return to school.



## ELEVATOR SAFETY

Please help us reinforce elevator safety by following our school-wide rules:

- Remind children to remain outside the taped areas while waiting for the elevator.
- Keep children from touching the elevator door (inside or outside) at any time.
- Do not allow children to ride the elevator without an adult.
- **Only adults may push the elevator button during school hours.**

## PROPER PRESCHOOL ATTIRE

- Dress your child comfortably for both indoor and outdoor play. In all likelihood, he/she will get dirty.
- Tennis shoes and socks are the safest form of footwear for our sandy playground and play equipment. Children in slick-soled shoes will not be allowed on climbing equipment. Clogs, flip flops and sandals are not allowed.
- Children who wear pull-ups or who are potty training, should be dressed in clothing which is easy to remove. Pull-ups must have side-releasing tabs so your child can be changed without removing all clothes.
- Diapers must be disposable, not cloth, for health reasons.

**Potty Training is a “team” effort, one that we love to help you with. Please communicate with your child’s teacher regarding your child’s readiness to go without a diaper or pull-up in the classroom.**

## PLAYGROUND SAFETY

Our playground was constructed in accordance with safety standards set forth by the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission.

For your child’s safety, when using the playground outside of school hours, please remember:

- Adults must supervise children at all times.
- Gates must remain securely latched while children are on the playground.
- **No pets are allowed on the playground at any time.**

## UNSCHEDULED SCHOOL CLOSINGS

In case of inclement weather, loss of power or water, illness outbreaks, or other circumstances making travel to and from school or occupation of our building unsafe, First Kids’ top priorities are to ensure that our families and staff, who reside in all corners of our county and beyond, can safely travel to and from school and to maintain adequate staff coverage.

When making decisions, we depend upon guidance from our local weather agencies, the transportation departments of area schools, our own maintenance staff and state and local health organizations.

If Cabarrus County Schools...	Then First Kids will...
Close for the day or Go Virtual	Close for the day & Offer Virtual Check-Ins When possible
Delay opening for more than 2 hours	Close for the day
Delay opening for 2 hours	Open at 11:00, Close at 1:00
Delay opening for 1 hour	Open at 10:00- Close at 1:00
Dismiss early	Notify all parents of early pick-up and close early

**You will receive a text or email message from Staff to notify you of any schedule changes**, as soon as those decisions are made and information will be posted on Facebook on the First Kids Family and First Kids Preschool pages.

Up to five school days missed due to any of the causes listed, may be excused (not made up). The Preschool Committee will further determine whether to make up any missed days beyond five. If our original calendar changes due to make-up days, we will email all families.

## **DISTRIBUTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION / SOCIAL MEDIA**

**If you do not want your personal information included any of the following ways, please notify the preschool office in writing prior to the first day of school:**

- Teachers will distribute to all families a copy of the class list which includes students' names and birthdates, parents' names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses. Many parents use this information to contact families for play dates, birthday parties, etc.
- First Presbyterian Church and First Kids occasionally share photographs and names of our children on our website, emails, and social media posts to show them enjoying special events, daily activities, etc.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Based on the developmental theories behind two of our curricula, The Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers and Conscious Discipline, we know that children learn best in the context of relations. For this reason, we create communities in our classrooms where the children feel safe, want to help, and see themselves as an important member. Our classroom communities nurture social competence and self-discipline by helping children understand how to *treat* others and how they want to be treated *by* others. Because these skills are not easy to acquire, they deserve time, patience, and oftentimes direct teaching.

Our preschool setting allows children many opportunities to develop social behaviors. Children are still learning, and experimentation with negative behaviors is developmentally suitable. We do not look upon these trials as problems; we see them as learning experiences. Teachers will not share every instance of correctable behavior with you. They will share problems only when they go beyond what is considered developmentally appropriate, or if they need your help in understanding certain behaviors.

To help guide the children into learning appropriate vs. inappropriate behaviors, teachers will give positive verbal rewards and model acceptable practices. They will ask a child to stop and think about his choices and help him understand better options. They will allow children to work through their own differences, offering direction and encouragement. They will use various methods to remind children of proper behaviors (songs, pictures, words). They may sit next to a child to help keep him focused. They may move him to a calm area to allow him time to settle down or to redirect his thoughts. **They will never use corporal punishment, withhold food or rest, confine your child to a small area, yell, or roughly handle your child.**

## **PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Teachers hold formal parent conferences each January-February to discuss with parents their child's progress for the year. After the Christmas break, teachers will begin scheduling these appointments. All teachers offer several options, including at least one nighttime session. Virtual meetings may also be an option.

## **PARTNERS IN EDUCATION**



First Kids is registered with Harris Teeter's "Together in Education" program. Link VIC card with us, and a portion of your purchases will go to our scholarship program.

Ask your cashier, go to [harristeeter.com/together-in-education](http://harristeeter.com/together-in-education), or call 800 432-6111 to link to **First Kids Preschool #6125**. Don't forget - all VIC cards must be linked yearly.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field Trips, other than walks on Union Street, will be restricted with COVID-19. Once reinstated, the following will apply.

Teachers use field trips to expand the children’s experiences. Even our youngest children go on neighborhood strolls. **For your child to be able to participate, we need your written permission.**

In your Welcome Packet you will receive a permission slip covering all trips for the year. Please sign and return it if you would like for your child to be able to attend all outings. If you prefer, you may request individual slips for each event. Keep in mind, however, that sometimes trips within a two-block radius of our campus are impromptu, and your child will miss out if we are unable to reach you in the moment.

For any trips outside a two-block radius of our campus, teachers will contact you with details. They may request parent volunteers to assist with transportation. In such cases, your auto insurance will be liable should an accident occur, and First Kids’ insurance would offer secondary coverage. For field trips, we abide by the rules set forth on page 12 of this handbook regarding car safety. Each parent is required to install her own child’s car seat in the transport vehicles.

## LUNCH GUIDELINES

To help teach healthy habits and self-care, First Kids established the following guidelines:

- **The One-Year Class will be peanut-free. PEANUTS AND FOODS MANUFACTURED IN A FACILITY IN WHICH PRODUCES NUT PRODUCTS ARE NOT ALLOWED.** Tree nuts (cashews, almonds, etc.) are allowed.
- **Two-Year thru TK class will allow peanut products on a case-by-case basis.** If no child in the class has an allergy or sensitivity to peanut products, and all members of the class have been introduced to peanut products with no negative reactions, then children in that given class may bring peanut products in their lunch and may consume snacks that contain peanuts.
- **Be sure to clearly LABEL ALL ITEMS with your child’s first and last names, including the lunch box, food containers, ice packs, and eating utensils.**
- Send your child’s lunch in a lunch box, not loose in his bookbag.
- To reduce the general consumption of sugar, we serve only water with snacks and lunches. The only exception to this rule is milk or formula for the Infants/Ones classes.
- For children aged 2 and older, do not send drinks of any kind to school. Please send a water bottle. We will provide cups of water for those who forget. For the Infants/Ones classes, please send in a bottle or sippy cup, clearly labeled with your child’s first and last names.
- Remember to include an ice pack for foods which are normally refrigerated.
- Use only plastic or recyclable containers. Glass containers are not allowed.

Items which are low in sugar and salt are wonderful.

- **Candy is not allowed.** Teachers will ask children to save it in their book bags until they get home.
- Do not send in items which must be cooked or heated.
- If your child needs a spoon or fork, send in a metal or hard plastic one. **Disposable plastic utensils are not allowed.** **We have had issues with children biting those items.**

Following are suggestions for healthy lunch options:

- |                            |                   |   |
|----------------------------|-------------------|---|
| • Veggies (raw or cooked)  | • Graham crackers | • Applesauce  |
| • Turkey/Tortilla Roll-ups | • Saltines        | • Pretzels  |
| • Cheese                   | • Raisins         | • Salad   |
| • Fresh Fruit              | • Mini bagels     | • Nutella   |
| • Yogurt                   | • Rice cakes      | • Almond or Soy Butter or peanut butter in approved classes |

## SCHOOL-WIDE HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

We celebrate three holidays with classroom parties.

Halloween & Trunk or Treat- Oct. 30 or 31 Christmas: Dec. 11, 12 or 13 Easter: Mar. 27 & 28

Teachers will honor other holidays, including Thanksgiving, Valentine's Day, and St. Patrick's Day, with simpler class activities and healthy snacks.

## BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

We love celebrating special days, and your child's birthday is no exception! We observe all birthdays at school in a similar way. Be sure to confer with your child's teacher first to schedule a time and to get information regarding food allergies and classroom favorites. You may furnish a small treat for each child in the class. You may send the treat to school with your child. All items must be store or bakery-bought and provided in their original container with the ingredient list present.

If you plan to invite classmates to a party outside of school, you may send invitations to go home with each child **only if every child in the class will receive one.**

We so appreciate the opportunity to be a part of your child's early educational experiences.

We look forward to a wonderful year together!

## PRESCHOOL COMMITTEE

Preschool Committee members serve for a minimum of two years and help form all preschool policies. Please contact any of the members below with questions or suggestions regarding First Kids.

This year's in-person meetings are scheduled on the following Thursdays from 9:20-10:30 a.m. in the Senior High Room on the Third Floor of the preschool building: 10/3, 11/30, 1/11, 3/19 and then as needed by Zoom or by email decision.

Church Member (CM) Non-Church Member (NM) of First Presbyterian Church

Name	Role	Contact Info
Amber Huggins	Teacher NM	704-956-7788 <a href="mailto:ahuggins8389@gmail.com">ahuggins8389@gmail.com</a>
Alex Martin	Parent NM	704-707-6716 <a href="mailto:Akteague16@gmail.com">Akteague16@gmail.com</a>
Amy Murphy	Christian Ed. CM	704-488-7326 <a href="mailto:asmurphy250@gmail.com">asmurphy250@gmail.com</a>
Ellie Sherrill	Parent CM	804-387-0230 <a href="mailto:Ellie.sherrill@gmail.com">Ellie.sherrill@gmail.com</a>
MaryAnn Harrison	Teacher NM	916-412-3192 <a href="mailto:Hmaryann25@yahoo.com">Hmaryann25@yahoo.com</a>
Maureen O'Bryan	Director/Teacher NM	704-425-8623 <a href="mailto:mz.mo223@gmail.com">mz.mo223@gmail.com</a>
Rene Prager	Christian Ed/Staff CM	704-788-2100 ext. 4 <a href="mailto:r.prager@firstpresconcord.org">r.prager@firstpresconcord.org</a>
Pam Prentice	Teacher NM	704 701-1481 <a href="mailto:misspamp@yahoo.com">misspamp@yahoo.com</a>
Sarah Callahan	Parent NM	828-279-8598 <a href="mailto:Sarahcallahan611@gmail.com">Sarahcallahan611@gmail.com</a>
Taylor Blackman	Parent CM	704-787-4844 <a href="mailto:tblackmanconsulting@gmail.com">tblackmanconsulting@gmail.com</a>

## FIRST KIDS ANNUAL CALENDAR 2023-2024

**THU** Aug.24 **Open House 9:30 – 10:30 MWF & 5-Day Fours 11-Noon- TTH & TK Classes**  
**MON & TUE** Aug.28-29 **First Days of School**

### SEPTEMBER

**MON** Sep 4 **SCHOOL CLOSED LABOR DAY**  
**WED-THU** Sep 13-14 **YELLOW DAYS**  
**MON** Sep 25 **School closed Teacher Workday**

### OCTOBER

**TUE** Oct 3 **Preschool Committee Meeting 9:20**  
**WED/THU** Oct. 4 - 5 **Fall Pictures Individual and Class**  
**MON** Oct 9 **School Closed Teacher Workday**  
**WED-THU** Oct 11-12 **ORANGE DAYS**  
**MON** Oct 23 **Early Dismissal 11:50 Staff Meeting**  
**THU-FRI** Oct 27-11-3 **Scholastic Book Fair Details TBA**  
**MON-TUE** Oct 30-31 **Classroom Halloween Parties - Wear Costumes to School Trunk Or Treat 9:30-10:00**

### NOVEMBER

**TUE** Nov 7 **School Closed for Election Day**  
**FRI** Nov 10 **School Closed for Veterans' Day**  
**WED-THU** Nov 15- 16 **BROWN & BLACK DAYS**  
**WED-FRI** Nov 22-24 **School Closed for Thanksgiving Break**  
**THU** Nov. 30 **Preschool Committee Meeting 9:20**

### DECEMBER

**WED-THU** Dec 6 - 7 **RED DAYS**  
**THU** Dec 7 **Early Dismissal @ 11:50 for Staff Meeting**  
**MON-WED** Dec 11-13 **Classroom Christmas Parties**  
**THU-FRI** Dec 14 -15 **Polar Express Days - Wear Pajamas to School**  
**MON-FRI** Dec 18 -Jan 2 **School Closed for Christmas Break**

### JANUARY

**WED-THU** Jan 3-4 **Return from Christmas Break, First Days of School for 2024**  
**THU** Jan 11 **Preschool Committee Meeting 9:20**  
**MON-TUE** Jan 15-16 **MLK Holiday/Workday No School**  
**WED-THU** Jan 17-18 **WHITE DAYS**

### FEBRUARY

**TUE** Feb 6 **Early Dismissal @ 11:50 Staff Training**  
**WED-THU** Feb 14-15 **PINK DAYS**  
**MON** Feb 19 **School Closed for Presidents' Day**  
**WED-THU** Feb 28-29 **Doughnuts With Daddy Breakfast 8:45-9:30**

### MARCH

**MON-FRI** Mar 4-8 **School Closed for Spring Break**  
**THU-FRI** Mar 14-15 **GREEN DAYS**  
**MON** Mar 18 **School Closed Teacher Workday**  
**TUE** Mar 19 **Preschool Committee Mtg. 9:30**  
**FRI** Mar 29 **School Closed for Good Friday**

### APRIL **Month of the Young Child Activities throughout the month**

**MON** Apr 1 **Easter Monday School Closed**  
**WED-THU** Apr 10-11 **PURPLE DAYS**

### MAY

**WED- THU** May 1 **Mother's Day Tea 8:45-9:30**  
**WED-THU** May 8-9 **BLUE DAYS**  
**MON-TUE** May 13 & 14 **Last Days of School**  
**WED** May 15 **Staff Brunch 9:00-11:00; Graduation for 4-year and TK classes 5:00 pm**

Dear God,

I thank you for the gift of this child to raise, this life to share, this mind to help mold, this body to nurture, and this spirit to enrich.

Let me never betray this child's trust,  
dampen this child's hope or  
discourage this child's dreams.

Help me dear God to help this precious child  
become all You mean him to be.

Let Your grace and love fall on her like gentle breezes and  
give her inner strength and peace and patience for the  
journey ahead.

Marian Wright Edelman

