



2012-2013 Parent Handbook

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Our Ministry

First Friends is organized and operated as a part of the total ministry of First Presbyterian Church, Huntsville, Alabama. The tuition and fees support the salaries of the teachers and the operating expenses of the program.

Our Christian preschool staff has a deep concern for the total development of each child and the well being of the family of each child. Well-trained and dedicated teachers, enthusiastic and cooperative parents, and the committed support of First Presbyterian Church are the necessary ingredients for our outstanding program.

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide a weekday early childhood Christian education program; to nurture children of First Presbyterian Church and other Christian congregations; to support the evangelistic effort of First Presbyterian Church to bring new families into the church membership; and to serve as a preparatory school for entrance into public or private school Kindergarten.

It is our sincere desire to provide a constructive, meaningful program for young children under the guidance of trained personnel in a Christian environment and to promote emotional, social, physical, intellectual, and spiritual growth of each child.

Registration

Registration for the next school year begins the first week of **February** in this order:

Week One	Presently enrolled children and siblings.
Week Two	First Presbyterian Church members
Week Three	Public

Admission Requirements

All required forms must be completed and returned to the Director along with the registration fee and the first month's tuition by August 10th or prior to the child's first day of attendance if during the school year. If you registered your child during the formal registration period, you paid the registration fee at that time.

Forms to be returned are:

1. Registration Form with Parent Agreement (due at registration)
2. Enrollment Form
3. Blue Immunization Form (completed by physician)
4. Emergency Form
5. Carpool Release Form

Parents may withdraw their child from enrollment upon request and are responsible for the tuition for the current month. Parents must give a written two-week notice to the director in order to not be responsible for the next month's tuition.

Children are accepted into our school in order to benefit from group experiences in this setting. We reserve the right to drop any child from enrollment upon two weeks notice to the parents involved. The director will try to assist parents in assessing possible needs of the child and offer suggestions for further evaluation.

Arrival and Pick-up

Our hours of operation are 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Tuesday through Friday.

Infants and Ones: Infants and one-year-olds must be brought into and picked up in their rooms by their parents. Parking is available at the Lincoln Street entrance to the playground for the one-year old class. Parents of infants can enter through the fellowship hall entrance or through the main office doors on Gates Avenue. Please find legal parking. No double-parking please.

Twos, Threes, Fours: Morning carpool drop-off runs from 8:50 a.m. until 9:10 a.m. A teacher will meet you at your car on Gates Avenue during these times. To help expedite the traffic flow, please do not get out of your car. For safety reasons, please do not try to pass other cars in line unless directed to do so. If you arrive after 9:10 a.m., please find legal parking and bring your child in to his/her classroom. Afternoon pick up begins at 12:50 and ends at 1:10. Children not picked up by 1:10 p.m. will be charged a late fee of \$5.00 per 5 minutes.

If children are to leave the school with a person other than the parents or designee, you must send a signed note or have them on the Carpool Release Form. If you need to leave, transfer, or pickup a car seat, you need to bring it into and pick it up from the Fellowship Hall. All car seats need to be labeled with the child's full name on them.

Calendar

A school calendar for the following school year is published in the spring after the Huntsville City Schools approve a calendar. In most cases all City Schools holidays and parent conference days are observed by the preschool.

Class Placement

Class placement of children will be determined by their age on September 1st. This is the policy cut off date used by the Alabama State Department of Education. Spaces will be given on a first come, first served basis. **Parents will be notified of their child's class assignments one week before Open House. Children entering the Three-year-old class must be potty trained.**

Clothing

Children should wear comfortable play clothes to school. Tennis shoes or other sport-type shoes are recommended. All coats and outside clothing should be labeled. Children should have a seasonally appropriate change of clothes in their bags or stored in the classroom.

Communication

Communication between First Friends and the families it serves is vital. We hope to keep the lines of communication open through the following ways:

- This handbook

- A monthly newsletter via email and/or hardcopy

- Calendars and notes sent home by teachers

- Daily conversations with teachers or the director

- Formal conferences with teachers or the director by appointment

- Student evaluations

- Parent visits

Curriculum

Teachers plan and implement a curriculum that is developmentally appropriate and age appropriate for their classrooms. The arrangement and duration of activities vary according to the particular age group.

Our curriculum promotes the development of your child socially, emotionally, and spiritually, and it fosters the development of language skills, reading readiness, math and science skills, interest in music and art, cognitive skills, self-help skills, problem-solving skills, and fine and gross motor skills.

Pre-K: Our Pre-K class is designed to prepare the four-year old child for Kindergarten the following year, as well as, provide a rich preschool experience for them. We use the *Beginning to Read, Write and Listen* Curriculum along with the Huntsville City Schools' Readiness Curriculum Guide as a teaching guideline (A copy is available in the director's office). One of our main goals is to build self-esteem and confidence in each child, giving them an excitement about the learning process and an appreciation of God's world. Evaluations are completed in the fall and spring to monitor each child's progress and to determine his/her readiness in social, emotional, and academic areas. Pre-math, pre-reading, and pre-writing skills are worked on throughout the year using a variety of fun activities. Part of each class day is an "open" environment where children are offered a variety of learning experiences allowing them to make decisions about how to best use their time. Children are taught to be responsible for themselves in the areas of self-control, cleaning up, completing projects efficiently, sharing, learning to raise their hands, using manners, walking in a straight line, etc. Craft activities are designed to promote fine and

gross motor skills, as well as to promote the child's imagination. Number and letter recognition is worked on in a wide variety of activities as well.

Three-year-old class: The three-year-old curriculum is designed to provide a rich and fun learning and play experience (A copy of the objectives are available in the director's office). Units are based on interaction with friends, family, seasonal activities, and an appreciation for God's world. Social and classroom behavior skills, such as sharing, helping others, playing together, learning to walk in a line, and using inside voices are worked on throughout the year. Color recognition, number recognition 1-10, letter recognition, counting, and name recognition are worked on during the school year.

Two year old class: The classroom experience for the two-year-old is primarily a play experience although seasonal units and units teaching appreciation about God's world and family are incorporated along with colors and shapes. Learning to share with friends, helping one another, listening, and following simple directions are emphasized.

Discipline

No harsh words or corporal punishment will be used in discipline; only positive praise, and if necessary, a brief "time out". If any child shows excessive disturbances or undesirable behavior, we will contact the parents, and ask for assistance.

Fees

Registration fee of \$75.00 (due at time of enrollment) is non-refundable.

Tuition due before the 10th of each month.

Infants	2 days/wk \$135	4 days/wk \$220	
Ones	2 days/wk \$130	3 days/wk \$170	4 days/wk \$205
Twos	2 days/wk \$130	3 days/wk \$170	4 days/wk \$205
Threes	3 days/wk \$170	4 days/wk \$200	
Fours*	4 days/wk \$200	

*one time \$50 curriculum fee

Supplies fee for all students is \$20 annually.

The first tuition payment for August is due by Open House.

Tuition is due on or before the 1st of each month and considered late if received after the 10th.

A late fee of \$20.00 will be charged after the 10th.

There is a \$20.00 charge on all returned checks.

Please make checks payable to *First Friends*.

Please give tuition payments to the director, your child's teacher, or clip to their tote bag. Refunds are not given for days missed .

Class availability is subject to change depending on enrollment.

Health Policies

Children with a sore throat, cough, fever, etc. are asked to stay home until they have been free of symptoms for 24 hours.

If your child has a communicable disease, please notify the school and obtain doctor's approval before returning the child to preschool.

The staff will administer no medication, and the children may not carry or transport medication while at preschool.

All parents of children with food allergies are required to specify one the Medical Emergency Form, the nature of the allergies and whether or not having the substance in the child's classroom would be considered acceptable or not, depending on the recommendation of the child's physician as to the severity of the allergy.

Please refer to the excerpt from the Preschool Policy Handbook at the end of the handbook for further information regarding illness.

Holidays and Birthdays

We will celebrate several holidays throughout the year. Check the sign-up sheets posted in the classroom during Open House if you would like to help.

Birthdays may be celebrated at school. Your child may bring special treats for the class if you like. Please let the teacher know in advance. Please do not send large cupcakes for one and two-year olds.

Inclement Weather Policy

Preschool classes will not be held when weather conditions prevent safe operation. The Preschool will follow the same inclement weather schedule followed by the Huntsville City Schools. News media will be notified by the Preschool Director of closings as early as possible.

- ◆ If the Huntsville City Schools are closed, we are closed.
- ◆ If the Huntsville City Schools start late (after 8:00 a.m.), we are closed for the day.
- ◆ If the Huntsville City Schools close before 1:00 p.m. you need to come and pick up your child from the Preschool **an hour** before Huntsville City Schools close. (ex. If Huntsville Schools are closing at 11:30 a.m., First Friends closes at 10:30). Many teachers have children to pick up at the Huntsville City Schools, so your promptness of picking up your child is greatly appreciated.

Lunch and Snack

A snack is served each morning. Please send a lunch with your child's name on it. Please avoid sweets if possible, and send containers that are easy for the child to open. **Please advise us if your child has any food allergies.**

Open House

Prior to our first day of school in August, a Preschool Open House takes place. Parents will be notified of this date through summer correspondence in July. Each child will receive a postcard from his/her teachers welcoming them and inviting them to the Open House. This day serves as a wonderful tool for acclimating the children to a new classroom and new teachers. Secondly, the day serves as a time for parents to turn in required paperwork and pay fees for the upcoming school year. We strongly encourage all parents and children to attend if possible.

Special Events

We have special events during the year to encourage family involvement. They are: a Thanksgiving Feast, Christmas Music program, a Daddy's Night in February, and a Mother's Day Art Show in May.

Supplies

Each child needs to bring two boxes of baby wipes and two boxes of tissues to his/her classroom at the start of the school year. Also, please pack a change of clothing in your child's tote bag for all infants, ones, and twos.

Toys

We prefer that children not bring toys to school. Many toys are unsuitable for group play. Books and tapes can be enjoyed by the entire class. Please help us by being selective if a child insists on bringing something to school. **Nature items or items that pertain to the unit being studied are always welcomed and encouraged.**

Student Illness Policies

The Preschool staff and the Board of Supervisors would like to have each child maintain a 100% attendance record but recognize that for the health and safety of all children attending the Preschool program an illness may cause an absence. If there is any doubt about the health of any child enrolled in the Preschool, the Preschool staff will, and the parents, should err on the side of caution to ensure that other preschool children are not exposed to a possible contagious disease. The Director will make the decision that child should be excused from the preschool if the child should appear to become ill during the school day. The Director shall also determine when a child should be readmitted to the preschool following the child's absence due to illness. In the event a child becomes ill during the school day, the parent will be notified by the Director to return to the preschool to pick-up the child. The Director will follow guidelines adopted by the Board of Supervisors. In making decisions involving instances of child illness, and parents are asked to adhere to the same guidelines in making decisions about the attendance of each child.

Guidelines for Excluding from Program: Certain symptoms in a preschool student may suggest the presence of a communicable disease. A child who has the following symptoms should NOT be sent to the Preschool until 1) a physician has certified the symptoms are not associated with an infectious communicable disease, or the disease no longer poses a threat to the health of other children in the preschool program, or 2) the symptoms have completely subsided. Parents are requested to exercise their good judgment in determining the suitability of sending their child to the Preschool when any of the following symptoms are present. The Director may exclude a child from the Preschool program when the child exhibits any one or more of the following symptoms

- 1) Fever: Auxiliary or oral temperature 100 degrees or higher, especially if accompanied by other symptoms such as vomiting, sore throat, diarrhea, headache and stiff neck or undiagnosed rash.
- 2) Respiratory Symptoms: difficult or rapid breathing or severe coughing: high-pitched croupy or whooping sound after coughs; inability to sleep comfortably due to continuous cough.
- 3) Diarrhea: Increased number of abnormally loose stools in the previous 24 hours, associated with symptoms such as fever, abdominal pain, or vomiting.
- 4) Vomiting: Two or more episodes of vomiting within the previous 24 hours.
- 5) Eye/Nose Drainage: Thick mucus or pus draining from the eye or nose.
- 6) Sore Throat: Sore throat, especially when fever or swollen glands in the neck are present.
- 7) Skin Problems: Skin rashes, sores with crusty, yellow or green drainage which cannot be covered by clothing or bandages.

- 8) **Appearance/Behavior:** Student looks or acts differently, is unusually tired, pale, lacking appetite, confused, irritable, or difficult to awaken.
- 9) **Itching:** Persistent itching (or scratching) of body or scalp.

Guidelines for Readmitting: The Director will follow the following to determine the appropriateness of readmitting a student to the Preschool program after illness:

- 1) **Chicken Pox:** Exclude until all blisters have dried into scabs; usually about 6 days after rash onset.
- 2) **Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye):** Readmission after 24 hours of antibiotic therapy, or with Doctor's excuse.
- 3) **Diarrhea:** Generally, exclude until stool returns to normal form; each circumstance to be evaluated on an individual basis.
- 4) **Impetigo:** Exclude until sores are healed or can be covered with bandages, or until child has been treated with antibiotics for at least a full 24 hours.
- 5) **Head Lice:** Exclude until first treatment has been completed and no live lice and nits are seen.
- 6) **Measles:** Exclude until 4 days after the rash appears.
- 7) **Mumps:** Exclude until swelling subsides, usually 5 days but may be as long as 9 days after swelling begins.
- 8) **Colds:** Exclude until sneezing and/or sinus drainage subsides.

Biting Policy:

We want to insure that every child is safe while in our care. Our program provides an environment that encourages and promotes cooperative interaction, respect for others, and non-aggressive problem solving between the children. Biting is a normal stage of development for young children who are teething and are still developing their language skills. It is usually a temporary condition that is most common between thirteen and twenty-four months of age. This means that is a particular concern for the teachers in the Ones' and Twos' Room.

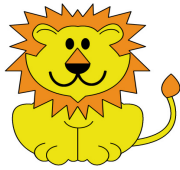
For safety and health concerns, we take biting seriously. When it happens, it's very scary, frustrating, and stressful for children, parents, and teachers. It is also not something to blame on children, parents, or teachers, and there are no quick and easy solutions to it. Children bite for a variety of reasons: simple sensory exploration, panic, crowding, seeking to be noticed, or intense desire for a toy. Repeated biting becomes a pattern of learned behavior that is often hard to extinguish because it does achieve results: the desired toy, excitement, attention. Knowing that the effect of their biting will hurt another person is not yet a part of a child of this ages' mindset, so the

“cause-effect” relationship is not internalized. Our teachers plan activities and supervise carefully in order for biting not to happen. There are times, however, when everyone cannot be within immediate reach to prevent a bite.

Our policy for handling a biting incident is the following:

- The biter is immediately removed from the group with a firm NO. The bitten child is consoled and the bitten area washed with soap and water. If necessary, ice is applied to reduce any swelling or bruising.
- The incident will be documented on an incident form that will need to be signed by the parents, teacher and director. The parents of each child will receive a form in regards to what occurred and how the matter was handled. The name of a biting child is not released because it serves no useful purpose and can make an already difficult situation more difficult. The parents will receive a copy of their form and the originals will remain at the preschool.
- We look intensively at the context of each biting incident for pattern, in an effort to prevent further biting behavior.
- We work with each biting child on resolving conflict or frustration in an appropriate manner. We try to adapt the environment and work with parents to reduce any child stress.
- We make special efforts to protect potential victims.

If a child bites or begins to bite they will have four weeks to correct the behavior. If the child is excessively biting other children the four weeks time frame may be shortened. We may offer a “shadow” teacher to redirect the child at the expense of the parents (substitute pay). Next, if behavior is not corrected, the child will be asked to withdraw until behavior is corrected.



First Friends Preschool Fall 2012 Registration

Child's Name _____

Birthday (mm/dd/yy) _____

Parent's Name (s): _____

Address (include zip code) _____

Phone Number: _____

Email address: _____

To secure enrollment for your child the registration fee must be attached to this form when returned. Please fill out a form for each child.

Please check the appropriate box:

- Infants Tuesday & Thursday
- Infants Wednesday & Friday
- Infants Tuesday, Wednesday Thursday & Friday

- Ones Tuesday & Thursday
- Ones Wednesday & Friday
- Ones Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
- Ones Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday

- Twos Tuesday & Thursday
- Twos Wednesday & Friday
- Twos Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
- Twos Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday

- Threes Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
- Threes Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday

- Fours Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday

*Class offerings will depend on the number of children enrolled.

I have read the First Friends Preschool Parent Handbook and agree to abide by the written policies.

Signature: _____ Date: _____



**First Friends Preschool
2012-2013
FEES and TUITION:**

Registration Fee: \$ 75.00 (due at time of registration)

Tuition: (payment begins in August)
(Class is determined by child's age on September 1st.)

	<u>Per Week</u>	<u>Per Month</u>
<u>Infants</u>	2 days	\$135
	4 days	\$220
<u>Ones</u>	2 days	\$130
	3 days	\$170
	4 days	\$205
<u>Twos</u>	2 days	\$130
	3 days	\$170
	4 days	\$205
<u>Threes</u>	3 days	\$170
	4 days	\$200
<u>Fours</u>	4 days	\$200

Curriculum Fee: \$50.00 (Fours only, once annually)

Supplies Fee: \$20.00 (all students, once annually)

