

Little Methodist Preschool



**"We teach children life's sweet lessons,
But they teach us how sweet life can be."**

2023 - 2024

Parent Handbook

(Updated June 2023)

200 W. Oak St.

Lodi, CA

209-368-5111

www.lodifirstchurch.org

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Little Methodist Preschool Philosophy Statement

At Little Methodist Preschool we strive to provide a curriculum that supports and enriches the whole child, emotionally, socially, physically, academically and spiritually. We follow current research as provided by the National Association for the Education of Young Children which states that age-appropriate curriculum for preschool-aged children should be centered around well-planned activities that build learning into a play environment. We believe learning for preschoolers is enhanced when multiple senses and physical action are engaged. Our teachers observe their students closely and plan play-based activities that support interests and build skills. They strive to keep a balance between confidence-building daily structure and a variety of new attractive topics. Your child will experience daily teacher-guided large and small group activities, as well as a substantial period of time each day when each child may select from a variety of choices which have been prepared for them at areas throughout the classroom. They will share a light daily snack and have ample time to enjoy the out of doors.

You can expect your child to enjoy the following age-appropriate activities:
Daily there will be:

- Games, floor toys, and dramatic play areas that build social skills, foster cooperation, make friendships, and learn respect for others
- Art activities and dramatic play themes
- Opportunities to share thoughts and items with others in a group.
- Exposure to letter and numbers through games and art
- Stories, music, songs, and finger plays
- Child participation prayers
- Small and large motor activities
- Lots and lots of language and vocabulary enrichment

There will also be:

- Science exploration and cooking projects
- Special days that follow the children's interests; we might have a Pajama or Teddy Bear Day, a Pirate Day, a Treasure Hunt, or a Nature Walk.
- Seasonal celebrations which might include a Nativity Parade, an Egg Hunt, Valentine exchange, or Chinese New Year celebration
- Most of all we'll plan these things to meet all children right where they are, help each one know how very special he or she is, and to know that we are all very good at learning

A Parent's Prayer

O Heavenly Father, help me to be a better parent.

Teach me to understand my children, to listen patiently to what they have to say, and to answer all their questions kindly. Keep me from interrupting or contradicting them.

Make me courteous to them as I would have them be to me. Forbid that I should ever laugh at their mistakes or resort to shame or ridicule when they displease me.

May I never punish them for my own selfish satisfaction or to show my power.

Let me not tempt my child to lie or steal. Guide me hour by hour that I may demonstrate by all I say and do that honesty produces happiness.

Reduce, I pray, the meanness in me, and when I am out of sorts, help me to hold my tongue.

May I ever be mindful that my children are children and that I should not expect of them the judgment of adults. Let me not rob them of the opportunity to learn for themselves and to make decisions.

Bless me with generosity to grant all their reasonable requests and the courage to deny them privileges I know will do them harm.

Make me fair and just and kind. Fit me, O Lord, to be loved and respected and imitated by my children.

Amen

IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW

Teacher Visits: Before school begins, your child will have a chance to meet the teacher and visit the classroom in an informal setting. This activity usually takes place the week before school starts. Check the calendar for dates.

Parent Orientation: Before school begins, you will be required to attend a parent orientation. We will discuss the philosophy and structure of our program, preview the year's activities and give you a chance to meet your child's teacher and other parents. Plan to stay about 1.5 hours.

Parent Meetings: Parent meetings are mandatory and very informative. Childcare is not provided. Check the calendar for dates and times.

Carnival: This is our major fundraiser for the year and participation is mandatory. It is generally held the Saturday before Halloween from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. on the church grounds. Game booths, a petting zoo and food are all geared toward preschool aged children. The Carnival is planned, set-up, run, and cleaned up entirely by parents. Each family is required to donate three cake mix baskets/bags per child enrolled and work a two-hour shift at the Carnival. There is a \$250.00 non-participation fee.

T-shirts: At the beginning of the school year, LMPS T-shirts will be available for purchase at a minimal cost. Your child is encouraged to wear the shirts on field trips for easy identification.

Book Club: Throughout the year, you will receive book club flyers in your child's classroom file. Participation is voluntary. Orders take a few weeks and are distributed to you in the classroom.

Parent Conferences: If you feel the need to conference with your child's teacher you may request an individual conference at any time by scheduling it in advance directly with the teacher. It is the policy of Little Methodist Preschool to **NOT** conference with parents in the presence of children.

Clean Up Days: These workdays are scheduled occasionally to maintain and improve the classrooms, grounds, and equipment. Set-up and pack-up days are held at the beginning and end of the school year. Check the calendar for dates.

LITTLE METHODIST PRESCHOOL

2023-2024 PARENT BOARD MEMBERS

President	Lauren McHugh
Vice President	Jillian Barlet
Secretary	Sarah Wiebe
Treasurer	Tacie Donati
LMPS Member at-large	Bethany Wacker
FUMC Member at-large	Helen Gross
Publicity	
Fundraising Chair	Natalie Kiesz

STAFF MEMBERS

Natalie Kiesz, Director	
Mary Langston, Teacher	2's
Jenny Norman, Teacher	3's & 4's
Whitney Ross, Teacher	3's
Teri Jones, Aide	3's
Julie Nerio, Aide	3's & 4's
Amanda Proviencence, Aide	3's & 4's
Grit Avellar, Aide	2's

PHONE NUMBERS

School Office	(209) 368-5111
Church Office	(209) 368-5357

YOUR CHILD'S DAY AT PRESCHOOL

Clothing: Rough and tumble play clothes are advised...expect to see paint, playdough, and dirt on your child's clothing. Cowboy boots, flip-flops, jellies and slick dress shoes are dangerous on the blacktop. Tennis shoes and rubber soled shoes are best. Avoid clothing that may cause potty accidents, such as overalls or hard-to-button pants or shorts.

Dropping Off: It is helpful for you to establish a routine with your child when you come to school. When you arrive, **sign your child in** and be prepared to say "good-bye" at the classroom door. If your child is upset and cries, let him. All children have feelings of separation, whether they show it or not. We want them to express their feelings, not inhibit them. We do not seek prolonged dependence; nor do we desire premature independence. Stay with your child until he feels secure, but not long enough for him to stage a scene to keep you at school. Here are some suggestions that might help:

- Try to stay in the background, then allow your child to leave you. If he comes to you from time to time or clings to you, respect his need for security and follow his lead.
- Watching is a form of participation. If your child is not interested in actively participating, he may just watch.
- Be passive - Let the teacher enlist your child's participation and give him guidance. Do not discuss your child (or any other) in his presence.
- Avoid telling your child what you'll be doing while he's at school. He may feel left out and refuse to stay at school.

The first few weeks of preschool, your child may exhibit unusual behaviors, including: shyness, clinging to you, hitting another child during play, watching the other children, refusing to take turns/share, crying at home or at school, or refusing to follow directions.

Each child reacts differently to new situations and people. Try not to be too sensitive about your child's reactions and don't make an issue of them at home.

Picking Up: You must be on time to pick up your child. He/she will be tired and needs to be assured that he can count on you. Gather your child's belongings and remember to **sign your child out**.

If someone else will be picking your child up, you must let the teacher or office know in advance and in writing. The teacher will not release your child to **anyone** whom you have not **specifically** authorized.

**** Due to insurance liability and state regulations, we cannot allow children or siblings who are not enrolled at LMPS to engage in classroom or playground activities or be present in the classroom or playground during school hours.**

Field Trips: Unless siblings are specifically invited, no additional children are allowed. If you intend to drive any children, other than your own, this must be arranged between you and the other parent. LMPS will not arrange for transportation.

Security: You must indicate any person other than yourself who may drop-off and pick-up your child. You must also notify the school if there is someone who **may not** pick up your child. Please speak to the teacher or write a note if someone other than you will be picking up your child. LMPS cannot, by law, refuse to allow a parent to pick up a child unless we have a formal custody document on file stating that the parent cannot take custody of the child.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR CHILD

Much of the behavior of your preschool child that is annoying is very normal for this stage of development. You can save yourself a lot of worry and trouble if you know what to reasonably expect. A study of 555 preschool age children revealed that:

Most 2, 3 & 4 year olds

Pay no attention to what you ask them to do.
Say "No" and refuse to do what is expected or asked.
Are poky, waste time eating, dressing, washing.
Leave tasks undone; start but don't finish.
Wiggle around; can't sit still. Laugh, squeal, jump around most of the time.
Refuse to share.
Grab toys, shove, hit others.
Ask for help unnecessarily.
Cry easily; sulk.
Pick their nose; play with fingers.
Stay close to adults.
Seek attention by showing off; look for praise.
Go to adults with criticism of others.
Boss others.
Stay awake at nap time; don't want to rest.
Refuse food.
Speak indistinctly.
Are hard to reason with.

One-third to one-half

Grumble & whine.
Chew objects, twist hair, suck thumb, lisp.
Are shy, fear strangers.
Tell fanciful stories as the truth.
Won't play with others.
Are jealous.

More than one-fourth

Bite nails, twitch, handle genitals.
Break toys, tear books, mark walls or furniture.
Have temper tantrums.
Have potty accidents.
Fear animals and loud noises.
Secretly take things that belong to others.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR PRESCHOOL TEACHER

An effective preschool teacher:

- Plans for a variety of learning experiences appropriate to the age and needs of the children, emphasizing exploration and creative expression.
- Plans room arrangement and schedule to allow individual and group choices by children.
- Is prepared for the beginning of class before the first child arrives.
- Reinforces positive behavior; uses preventive discipline more often than corrective.
- Sets limits and expectations while communicating warm acceptance.
- Helps children develop problem solving skills, building up self-worth and social skills.
- Listens to the children, is sensitive to their interests and needs, and incorporates them into the curriculum.
- Provides cognitive learning opportunities through games, songs, and activities which promote learning.
- Gives complete attention to children and program during school hours.
- Sets an example by taking care of the room and equipment.
- Communicates well with parents - listening, reinforcing, sharing goals and strategies.
- Accepts and incorporates, where appropriate, parent ideas, suggesting meaningful ways for parents to participate.
- Cooperates well with other staff members, sharing materials and ideas.
- Is open to suggestions and seeks to learn and grow as a teacher, attending classes or conferences and reading professional literature.

ENROLLMENT POLICY

LMPS does not discriminate on the basis of sex, color, race, creed, political or religious belief. Enrollment is open to any preschool child, provided the school can meet his/her needs.

Age: As of **September 1st**, children entering the Two year old class **must be** at least 2 years old; Three year old class **must be** 3 years old; Four year old class **must be** 4 years old.

Class Size: Classes held in Rooms A/B are limited to 15 children; Room C is limited to 6 children and Rooms D/E, 15 children.

Priority: You may register your child for the upcoming school year based on the following order of priority:

First – Children presently enrolled.

Second – Siblings of children presently enrolled.

Third – Children of members of the First United Methodist Church.

Fourth – Children of former Little Methodist Preschool families.

Fifth – Children in order of date of application (open registration).

Application and fees must be submitted at the time of registration in order for your child to be placed in a class. **Your tuition account must also be current.**

Registration: The Director will establish the dates for priority and open registration.

Waiting List: The Director will maintain a wait list for each class that is full. Names are listed on a first-come, first-serve basis. You will be notified if a spot becomes available for your child and you must accept within 24 hours or the next family on the list will be contacted. Fees and application forms must be received by the Director within the 24 hour period.

Exceptions: The Director, in consultation with the President and classroom teacher, may grant exceptions to enrollment policies under special circumstances.

SCHOOL POLICIES

Registration: - The following items must be submitted before your child may attend:

- Registration application
- Registration fee (\$100)
- Identification & Emergency Information
- Child's Preadmission Health History – Parent's Report
- Physician's Report and Immunization Record
- Consent For Emergency Medical Treatment
- Notification of Parent's Rights
- Personal Rights
- Photo Release

Tuition: 2's class - \$130/month; 3's Tu/Thur. class - \$200/month;
3's M/W/F class - \$255/month; 4's class.... \$255/month.

Tuition is due on the 1st day of the month; if school is not in session on the first then it is due on the next school day. A late fee of \$25 will be assessed after the 10th of each month. A \$25 fee will also be assessed for all returned payments. If tuition is more than one month in arrears, your child will be dropped from the program. New students starting after the 15th of the month may pay 1/2 tuition for that month.

Tuition Statements will be delivered to each family by email at the end of each month for the following month's tuition.

Class Times: 2's class – Monday or Tuesday or Wednesday or Friday – 9am-12pm
3's class – Tue/Thurs – 9am-12pm
3's class – M/W/F – 9am-12pm
4's class – M/W/F – 9am-12pm

Parent Obligations:

Parent Meetings - You are required to attend all scheduled parent and classroom meetings. Classroom meetings are either followed or preceded by a general parent meeting. Check the calendar for dates.

Carnival - You are required to work a two-hour shift at the carnival and donate three cakewalk prizes per child enrolled at LMPS. There is a \$250.00 non-participation fee.

Field Trips - You will be notified in advance of field trips. Permission slips for walking trips (Library, Post Office, etc.) must be signed before your child can participate. For driving trips (Pumpkin Patch, Pizza Parlor, etc.) you will be responsible for bringing your child to the site and supervising your child during the activity. No more than two children shall be under the supervision of one parent. **Unless siblings are specifically invited, no additional children are allowed.**

Illness: If this is your child's first group experience, it is possible that he/she will have more colds. Please keep your child at home if he/she is ill, fatigued, or upset. Notify the Director immediately if your child has a communicable disease or has attended school when he/she was contagious. We are not equipped to care for sick children and should your child become sick during class, you will be called.

Leave of Absence: YOU: A one-month leave is available for health problems that will excuse you from parent or classroom meetings. YOUR CHILD: If your child is out of school for an extended period of time, you must continue paying tuition or your child will be dropped from the program.

Withdrawal: VOLUNTARY: If you wish to terminate your child's enrollment, a two-week notice is required. Tuition will be charged if the Director does not receive the required two-week notice.

Cubbie Use: It is our school policy to use the classroom cubbies for your child only. This means that only the classroom teacher, Director or anyone that has had prior authorization from the Director may put inserts in the cubbies. These are **not** to be used for birthday invitations or any other invitations. Our school policy is that you may stand outside the school gate and pass out invitations, but we do request that they only be passed out if the entire class is invited, otherwise kindly mail them. Thank you for your understanding in this area.

Classroom File Box: Each child has a file in the classroom file box. This is where you can expect to find important communication from the Director or classroom teacher. This classroom file box should be checked daily.

Birthdays: Due to the increase of food allergies among children, we are no longer able to allow families to provide birthday snacks for their child's class. Children with birthdays during the school year will be celebrated in the classroom with a birthday crown and happy birthday song.

SUPPORTIVE PARENT POLICY

Little Methodist Preschool is built upon the assumption that educating your child is a team effort with teachers and parents working together in support of each other. This support must be in place for education at LMPS to work. As you are a parent of a LMPS student, you have made a commitment to support the faculty and staff of LMPS and trust in their ability to provide the best education for your child. This would include support for the school and staff with the willingness to meet with the teachers personally to mutually work out any issues or differences of opinions that may result in the education of your children, which means talking with teachers and the Director about concerns you have, rather than other parents or community members. What happens when we don't address the concern to the proper person and start to talk to our particular friends about the issue, rumors may start to spread. Rumors seriously erode the morale of the school, and can put the good name of individual members and LMPS in jeopardy. They also make an issue more complicated than when it started and much harder to fix and resolve. To prevent this from happening, this policy stresses that we should not talk openly to a number of parents about an issue that we have with a teacher or Director, or for that matter the policy of LMPS, but practice the steps that are outlined below:

- Making the best efforts to resolve a particular problem.
- Making an initial commitment to the staff member with whom we are currently experiencing difficulty by approaching them **first**.
- Safeguarding the good name of the person and LMPS with whom we have an issue (remember, even if we feel angry with somebody, their good name is in our hands).
- Avoid personal attacks (stay specific to the problem and avoid references to the past or general statements about what they are 'like' as an individual).
- Encourage other parents who have issues to do their best to resolve them by following the agreed procedure (we owe it to each other to insure that the integrity of LMPS is maintained).
- Making sure that the children are free of worry about such issues.
It is the policy of Little Methodist Preschool to **NOT** conference with parents in the presence of children.

Please remember that LMPS and our program policies have the best interest of the children at heart. Our procedures and policies are in full compliance with the California Dept. of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Dept.

Little Methodist Preschool Behavior Policy

- The school reserves the right to remove a child from enrollment if the parents do not abide by the school policies, or if the child is continuously disruptive or incompatible to group activities.
- The school reserves the right to remove a child for the remainder of the day when that child is disruptive, non-compliant, aggressive and/or exhibits behavior which is injurious to self or others.
- Each child should benefit from the program. Therefore, due to the size of our staff and facility, if we are unable to reasonably accommodate children when they require staff time needed by other children, we will take the following actions:
 1. The first step Little Methodist Preschool will take is to call the parents to pick the child up for the remainder of the day.
 2. If the behavior continues and shows no improvement, the child will be removed from enrollment.

APPENDICES

PARENT CONCERN / SUGGESTION FORM

During the course of the year if you have any questions, concerns, ideas or suggestions, please feel free to record them on this form and submit it to the Director or the Board President. As a Parent Member, you are the eyes and ears of our daily operations and your input is critical. It would be appreciated if you would sign the form so your issue can be addressed directly, but a signature is not mandatory. Of course, you are always welcome to speak directly to the Director, staff, or any board member as well as attend any Board Meetings.

SUBJECT:

DETAILS:

SIGNATURE:

PLAYDOUGH RECIPES

LMPS PLAYDOUGH

2 Cups of All-Purpose Flour 4 Tablespoons Cream of Tartar	1 Cup of Salt 2 Cups of Water	4 Tablespoons Vegetable Oil Food Coloring
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Mix all ingredients in a pan, cook over medium heat, stirring until thick (about 4 minutes). Knead while still warm. Store in sealed plastic bag or air tight container.

SESAME STREET PLAYDOUGH

3 Cups Salt 6 Cups Boiling Water	3 Tablespoons Powdered Alum 1 Tablespoon Salad Oil	6 Cups Flour Food Coloring
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Add boiling water to dry ingredients and stir. Add oil and knead. Store in sealed plastic bag or airtight container.