

# **Paradise Hills United Methodist Church Preschool Parent Handbook**

“Train a child in the way he should go and  
when he is old he will not turn from it.”

Proverbs 22:6

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# Welcome

## About Us

Paradise Hills United Methodist Church Preschool and Friday Fun Day is licensed by the state of New Mexico for children two through pre-kindergarten. We currently hold a Two Star license and are working on obtaining our Three Star verification. Our school is a ministry of Paradise Hills United Methodist Church.

## What drives us?

We believe that each child is an individual created by God. Our purpose is to provide an environment where children will thrive and develop a strong feeling of self-confidence. We believe that children grow developmentally at their own individual pace. Our program combines social interaction and free play with planned learning time that encourages these ideal. We are committed to providing a physical environment that is clean, safe, and oriented to children. Classrooms are arranged to offer challenging learning choices at a range of developmental levels. Activity (learning) centers allow children the opportunity to explore, experience, and most importantly....to succeed.

## Staff

We believe the greatest strength of our program is our teaching staff. We support our teachers with training, resources, and the freedom to create a unique Christian experience for children. Each staff member has a heart for children and desires to positively impact our preschool. Our teachers hold current CPR and First Aid certification. They also attend early childhood training during the school year.

## **Mission Statement**

Our primary purpose is to provide a safe place for the young children in our community to grow, develop, and learn to be equipped for future education and have fun in a Christian setting. The teachers provide planned activities that seek to meet the emotional, physical, mental, social and spiritual needs of each child within a safe and caring Christian environment.

## **Philosophy Statement**

We believe that children learn best through play and experiencing the world around them. We believe that each child is an individual created by God. Our purpose is to provide an environment where children will thrive and develop strong feelings of self-confidence. We believe that children grow at their own individual pace. Thus, it is essential that children be provided activities that are developmentally appropriate. Our program combines social interaction and free play with planned learning time that encourages these ideals. We believe in providing a physical environment that is clean, safe, and oriented to children. Classrooms are arranged to offer challenging learning choices at a range of developmental levels. Activity (learning) centers allow children the opportunity to explore, to experience, and most importantly ...to succeed.

We believe the strength of our program is our teaching staff. We support our teachers with training, resources and freedom to create a unique Christian experience for children. Our teachers plan a creative thematic plan throughout the year that strives to accomplish all our spiritual and academic goals. This is accomplished through planned learning time, exploration, and interaction with adults, which serve as facilitators.

We believe that parents are the most significant adults in a child's life. We strive to create mutual respect between parents and teachers and develop a partnership for the benefit of the child. We encourage daily communication between parents and teachers. Our doors are always open to parents at all times. We value the experiences that our parents are able to offer to our school and welcome parent input and involvement in our classrooms. We are here to serve you and value the relationship that is nurtured between parents, students and teachers.

Our philosophy concentrates on the fact that children learn best through play. Our play-oriented activities offer choices and freedom of expression that builds independent children with good self-esteem. We offer activities in our classrooms and outside on the playground that encourage children to explore the world around them and enjoy learning through play.

## **Program Overview**

Our school is a ministry of Paradise Hills United Methodist Church. We are located at 4700 Paradise Boulevard, Albuquerque, New Mexico. We are licensed by the state of New Mexico for children ages 2 through Pre-Kindergarten. Our school day begins at 9:30 am and ends at 1:30 pm.

There are several options for children who attend our program. Each day we have one 2 year old class, one 3 year old class, and two 4 year old pre-K classes. Parents may register their children for one to five days per week.

The one day per week option is on Friday. The Friday class is known as Friday Fun Day. In reality, Friday Fun Day is preschool in a condensed form. The children do the same types of activities as the children who attend two days or more per week. However, we strive to maintain reasonable expectations of the children since they are only at school one day per week. The one day per week option is a wonderful choice for the family that wants their child introduced to the preschool experience more slowly.

We have two options for families who want their child to attend two days per week. Parents may sign up their children for a Monday and Wednesday class OR a Tuesday and Thursday class. The children who attend two days per week or more are able to participate in our music class which occurs on Wednesday and Thursday each week. The children participate in Music and Movement each class day regardless of the number of days they attend.

Some parents prefer sending their child to school three or more days per week. If parents desire this option, their children may attend school Monday/Wednesday/Friday, Tuesday/Thursday/Friday, OR Monday through Friday. This is a wonderful choice for children who are ready to explore their world in the preschool setting. Please feel free to talk to the administrators if you would like to discuss your child's readiness for multiple days per week.

## **Hours of Operation**

The preschool is open Monday through Friday from 9:30 – 1:30. The doors to the building are unlocked at 9:25am in order for families to have time to check their children into their classrooms for the school day. The door is monitored by the administration until 9:45am. At that time, the doors are locked and parents must ring the preschool doorbell in order to gain entrance to the building.

The doors are unlocked at 1:25pm for the end of the school day. The door is once again monitored by the administration for security. Parents must pick up their children no later than 1:35pm.

### **Late Pick Up Charge**

The doors to the preschool are locked at 1:35pm so parents are urged to be on time. If a parent arrives late to pick up their child they will have to ring the preschool doorbell in order to gain access to the building. The late pick up charge is determined by the time the parent arrives. The student account will be billed and payment is due by the next class day the child attends.

#### Fee Explanation:

If parent arrives anytime between 1:35pm and 1:45pm the charge is \$5. After 1:45pm you will be charged the initial \$5 and an additional \$1 per minute until the parent arrives.

If your schedule will not allow you to pick up your child by 1:30, have a friend or family member here at 1:30pm. Please remember that the person who picks up your child must be listed in your child's registration paperwork. The individual must also present valid identification in order for your child to be released to them.

### **Registration and Paperwork Finalization**

Registration for preschool starts in February with our existing families registering ahead of the general public. Packets will be available to print on our web-site at [www.phumcpreschool.net](http://www.phumcpreschool.net) starting January 4, 2010 for the 2010/2011 school year. Registration paperwork for the 2010/2011 school year is due no later than February 3, 2010 for our Monday/Wednesday families, February 4, 2010 for our Tuesday/Thursday families, and February 12, 2010 for our Friday Families. Church families will be able to register on February 22, 2010 from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm. The general public will register on March 4, 2010 from 9:30 am- 12:30 pm.

Paperwork must be complete at the time of registration in order to hold your child's spot. Please follow the provided check list to insure that your child's registration packet is complete. We also ask that you provide a new copy of your child's shot record for the packet. We are unable to make copies of the existing shot record in your child's current school file. Thank you in advance for your understanding.

Classes will be filled on a first come/first served basis.

## **Wait List**

Parents who wish for their child to be placed on a wait list may do so if the desired class is full. You may do this by calling the school and leaving a detailed message. We need the child's name, birth date, parent name, phone numbers, and the desired class. We call families in order on the list so please be patient. If you receive a call notifying you of an opening, please call us within 24 hours to let us know if you would like to take the available spot. If we do not hear from you within 24 hours, we will assume you are no longer interested in the class and the next person on the list will be called.

Sometimes parents decide they want to switch their child to a new class due to connections they have with families on a different day. We urge you to carefully consider the impact this type of decision has on your children. Change is tough on children, especially when they have already adjusted to the current class. **Class changes will only be made under extenuating circumstances at the discretion of the director. At which time a \$25 per child administrative fee will be collected.**

A new wait list is created each year during registration for the next school year. Names are not transferred from the old list to the new list. Parents must request their child be placed on the wait list each year.

## **Registration Fees**

At registration we collect a \$30 non-refundable registration fee and a non-refundable materials fee. The amount of the materials fee depends on the number of days your child attends preschool.

The non-refundable materials fee amounts are as follows:

Child attends one day per week = \$40 materials fee

Child attends two days per week = \$80 materials fee

Child attends three days per week = \$120 materials fee

Child attends four days per week = \$160 materials fee

Child attends five days per week = \$200 materials fee

The registration and materials fees must be paid at registration in order to hold your child's spot.

## **Tuition Fees**

Child attends one day per week = \$75 per month

Child attends two days per week = \$150 per month

Child attends three days per week = \$225 per month

Child attends four days per week = \$300 per month

Child attends five days per week = \$375 per month

### **Tuition Discount**

We offer a \$10 per month discount for siblings attending preschool two days or more per week on the same days. We also offer \$5 per month discount for siblings attending preschool one day per week on the same day.

### **Tuition Payment Schedule**

Parents are required to pay tuition one month in advance with a five day grace period. **After the fifth day of the grace period, your account will be charged a late fee of \$20.** If no payment has been made by the tenth day, your child will be withdrawn, your tuition will be forfeited, and his/her spot will be filled. If there are extenuating circumstances, please see the director to discuss payment options. Any deviation from the agreed upon payment schedule must be approved by the preschool board of directors.

The tuition payment schedule is as follows:

<b>Month</b>	<b>Date Due</b>	<b>Late After (\$20 late fee)</b>
September Tuition	August 6, 2010	August 11, 2010
October Tuition	September 3, 2010	September 8, 2010
November Tuition	October 1, 2010	October 6, 2010
December Tuition	November 5, 2010	November 10, 2010
January Tuition	December 3, 2010	December 8, 2010
February Tuition	January 7, 2011	January 12, 2011
March Tuition	February 4, 2011	February 9, 2011
April Tuition	March 4, 2011	March 9, 2011
May Tuition	April 1, 2011	April 6, 2011

### **State Assistance for Tuition**

The State of New Mexico offers assistance with tuition to those who qualify. Please check with The Children, Youth, and Families Division to get more information on the application process. The state assistance department can be reached at 841-4800 Monday through Friday. Please let the administration know if we can help you with your application process.

## **Payment Options**

Our school accepts exact cash or check for tuition payments. Please make checks payable to PHUMC Preschool. We assess a \$20 fee for all returned checks. If your check is returned more than two times, we will no longer be able to accept a check. Tuition will have to be paid in cash for the remainder of the year.

## **Withdrawal from Preschool Procedure**

We require (30) thirty days advance notice in writing if your child is no longer going to attend preschool. Tuition must be paid through the thirty day withdrawal period. If you choose to withdraw your child without thirty days notice, your advance monthly tuition will be forfeited. The registration and materials fees are non-refundable.

## **Class Placement**

The administration and staff of the preschool prayerfully consider the best possible placement for each child. Our desire is to place your child with the teacher that will best meet your child's unique developmental needs. We work hard to balance classes while taking into consideration many variables. Thank you for trusting our insight and determination to provide your child a wonderful preschool experience. Please make your class choice wisely. Class changes will only be made under extenuating circumstances at the discretion of the Director at which time a \$25 per child administrative fee will be collected.

## **Preschool Discipline**

It is our desire to provide children with a safe and loving environment where children flourish. We work on helping the children use their words and make good choices in the classroom. We believe that preschool children should be held accountable for their behavior and be shown how to be good citizens in their learning community through teacher modeling. Sometimes it is necessary for children to sit in a chair and think about their behavior if the child is not improving after the initial correction. The teacher talks with the child after they have thought about their behavior and guides them through the process of making amends. We believe that children should tell the one they have hurt that they are sorry and ask for forgiveness. This is building good character and helping the children recognize that better choices need to be made.

### **Dismissal from Preschool due to behavior**

Sometimes we find that children are not ready for the preschool experience. It is our desire for the preschool experience to be positive and sometimes children are not ready for the structured learning environment. We do our best to work on issues with parents in order to find the best solution for each child. In most cases we are able to develop a behavior plan that will help a child be successful at preschool. Unfortunately, not all situations work.

We have a three strike policy for behavior issues in which other children are placed in danger. If a child harms another child in a violent manner, that is equal to a strike. If a child receives three strikes they are asked to leave the preschool.

Our school also reserves the right to withdraw a child on a case-by-case basis. Grounds for immediate expulsion are at the discretion of the Director.

### **Attendance**

Please sign your child in and out with his/her teacher each day. The sign in sheet has space provided for any special information that we need to know for the day and a space for contact information. The teacher or the administration will also write notes to parents on the sign in sheet.

Please call the school if your child is sick and unable to come to attend so we can inform their teachers. Let us know if your child has come down with any contagious illness so we can inform parents of symptoms to watch for in their children. Examples include but are not limited to the following: pink eye, fifth disease, strep throat, and influenza. We also appreciate being notified so we are able to sterilize the toys that were used on the day your child last attended. Thank you for your help in keeping all the preschool children healthy.

### **Illness**

Children who have been ill should not attend the preschool unless they have been free of all symptoms for at least 24 hours. Please wait until your child is completely well before they attend school. Children who are not completely over an illness will not enjoy their day and will have difficulty handling the activities. **If your child is too ill to go outside during recess then your child is too ill to be at school and should be kept home.**

### **Injury at School**

Parents are notified by phone or note if their child is injured at the preschool. If the child falls on the playground and skins his/her knee, the teacher will send a note home explaining what happened. However, if the child receives a more serious injury the parents will be called immediately. The preschool will call 911 immediately if the injury is life threatening and notify the parents.

## **Medication**

Parents of children who require medication must have authorization forms on file with the preschool office. These forms must be signed by the child's pediatrician and parents/guardians. Please make sure the office has all medication and required forms before the first day of school. Medication can only be administered by the preschool administration. If a child requires medication during the preschool day, the parents will be notified by phone. Medication will be administered according to physician instructions. The dosage and time will be recorded in the child's file.

## **Toy Cleaning**

We frequently clean toys in order to cut down on the spread of germs at the preschool. Please let the administration know if you would like to volunteer to clean toys. Toys can be taken home for cleaning or cleaned at the preschool.

## **Lunch and Snacks**

We have a very active and fun day at preschool. Because of this, our children need to be refueled. Parents will need to provide a healthy, nut-free snack for their child each school day. Please place your child's snack in a large zip-lock bag that is labeled with the child's first and last name. Snacks should consist of a drink that is 100% fruit juice or boxed milk that does not need to be refrigerated, and should also contain a healthy and nut-free finger food item.

**Our school is a NUT FREE zone.** We ask that you not bring anything for snack or lunches that contain nut products. This includes all nut butter products including soy nut butter, almond butter, sunflower seed butter, and Nutella. The label is the best indication.

Please remember that we can only serve 100% fruit juice or whole OR 2% milk. We are unable to serve soy milk to the whole class. If your child prefers soy milk, you may provide an individual serving for your child. Due to state regulations we are unable to serve milk or juice that has already been opened. Please bring new containers with the seal in place.

Due to the length of the school day, parents are required to provide a sack lunch for their child. We recommend that lunches be packed in an insulated bag with ice to keep food cool. Unfortunately, we do not have the facilities to place student lunches in refrigerators or to heat up lunches. We ask that you send a nutritious lunch with a minimal amount of sugar. Please **DO NOT** send any supplements in your child's lunch i.e.: vitamins, Tums, or anything of this nature. **REMEMBER: NO NUT PRODUCTS!**

### **Meet The Teacher**

All parents and students are invited to a Meet the Teacher Day tentative scheduled on August 27, 2010. Monday/Wednesday families are scheduled from 9:30 am – 10:15 am, Friday families 10:30 am – 11:15 am, and Tuesday/Thursday families from 11:30 am – 12:15 pm. The teachers will be in the classrooms on this day to meet families and answer questions. Each teacher will provide an information packet about their class which will give parents a better understanding of the class structure. This will be the only opportunity to meet the teacher before school starts.

### **Expectations for Parent Involvement**

We encourage you to be involved in your child's class. The teachers are always happy to have parent help during the school day. We appreciate and recognize the wealth of experience our parents bring to our school and value parental involvement. There are many ways to get involved.

The teachers often need help in their classes with special projects or committees. Feel free to talk to your child's teacher to see how you can help. However, due to the state regulations, we are unable to accommodate any extra children in the classroom (including siblings) who are not enrolled in our school.

Volunteering directly in the classroom will begin in October. This will allow us time to establish classroom routines and allow the children time to get acquainted with each other.

### **Appropriate Dress**

Playing and learning here at preschool provide a wide variety of experiences, including those which are both active and messy! Clothes will get soiled and sometimes paint may end up on clothes. Also keep in mind that we go outside everyday unless it is raining. Please dress your child appropriately. It is important to clearly label all your child's belongings (including lunch boxes and backpacks) to avoid confusion and loss.

Parents are asked to bring an extra set of clothes for their child. Children still have accidents and this makes it easier on our staff if your child has an extra set of his/her clothes.

## **Holidays and Birthdays**

Here at preschool we celebrate all holidays with the exception of Halloween. We celebrate Thanksgiving, Christmas, Groundhog Day, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Easter, Mother's Day, and Father's Day.

Birthdays here at preschool can be celebrated by bringing in a special snack such as cookies, Rice Crispy Treats, Popsicles, individual ice cream cups, or pudding cups). Please do not bring anything with icing as it seems to get on the carpet and is hard to clean up. Please do not bring balloons or ask to decorate the classroom. Thank you for your help in this area.

## **Field Trips**

The preschool only participates in field trips that are within walking distance to the school. Our options are limited to the Post Office, the Canine Country Club, Petroglyph Elementary School, and a city park. Parents are notified well in advance of all field trips. We need each child to have a permission form signed by the parents and we also need parent volunteers for the trips.

The church sponsors a Pumpkin Patch in October each year in the parking lot for the community. All the preschool classes visit the pumpkin patch for story time and each child is able to purchase a pumpkin at that time. Parents are always welcome to attend our field trips.

## **School Pictures**

One of a Kind Photography by Kim Jew takes our class and individual pictures each year. This year the pictures are scheduled for March. Parents have the opportunity to choose from several package options. Re-takes are also available at the studio for those who are not satisfied with the original picture. One of a Kind does a wonderful job each year for the preschool.

## **Fundraiser**

We ask parents to participate in one large fundraiser during the school year. The money for the fundraiser goes toward the expansion of programs in the school. We appreciate those who are able to participate in this effort and thank you for your support to the preschool. Packets for the annual fundraiser will be distributed during the Meet the Teacher day in August. Specific deadlines will be noted in the fundraiser packets.

## **Potty Training**

Children in our two year old class do not have to be potty trained. We recognize that children in this age group need time to understand the process and get excited about using the toilet. Please let us know how we can assist you in this process. Potty training is a team effort and we want to reinforce what you as parents are working on at home.

Children in our three and four year old pre-k classes must be potty trained by the start of school. We recognize that sometimes accidents happen at school and we are very understanding, supportive and sensitive. However, if accidents are occurring every class day then the child probably needs more time to learn the process. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns with potty training your child.

## **Confidentiality**

State law mandates that we are not allowed to give out any information that we have. This includes phone numbers or addresses. Please do not ask us for this kind of information for party purposes. Our staff has signed a document that states they can be terminated for giving out this information so please do not ask.

In matters of safety, such as a restraining order, the appropriate staff members will be notified in order to maintain building safety. However, this information is not available for the public.

## **Documentation of Legal Status**

If there are extenuating circumstances concerning legal issues with parents, it must be documented and given to the director. Examples of legal status, but not limited to are restraining orders, guardianship, powers of attorney, court orders, custody by child's protective services etc. A copy of these documents must be given to the director at time of registration. These documents must be clear as to who is or is not permitted to remove said child from PHUMC Preschool in order for us to enforce such requests.

## **Snow Days**

We follow the Albuquerque Public School System in regards to weather related decisions. If APS schools are **closed** or **delayed** due to weather, our school will be **closed**. The days that the school is closed due to weather will not be made up at a later time.

## **Sample Schedules**

### Two Year Old Class

9:30-10:15	Self-Selection
10:15-10:25	Circle Time/Music and Movement
10:25-11:10	Recess
11:10-11:30	Bathroom/Diaper Changing
11:30-11:50	Lunch
11:50-12:10	Circle Time/Music and Movement
12:10-12:30	Craft/Learning Activity
12:30-1:00	Self-Selection
1:00-1:15	Bathroom/Diaper Changing
1:15-1:30	Snack

### Three and Four Year Old Class

9:30 – 10:00	Circle Time
10:00 – 10:15	Restrooms
10:15 – 11:00	Center/ Free Selection
11:00 – 11:30	Outside Time
11:30 – 11:40	Restrooms
11:40 –12:00	Lunch
12:00 – 12:45	Craft/ Learning Activity
12:45 – 1:00	Self-Selection
1:05 – 1:20	Music and Movement/ Closing
1:20 – 1:30	Snack

Please Note: Each schedule is unique to the particular class. This is just a sample of what the day might look like for your child. Your child's teacher will be able to give you the actual schedule.

## **Building Security**

Our building remains locked during school hours. Individuals who need access to the preschool must ring the doorbell during school hours in order to gain entry. We ask that parents not answer the door if the doorbell rings. The preschool administration will take care of the door. The teachers are also not authorized to answer the door so please be patient if you are waiting to be admitted to the building.

**Please note:** Every effort will be made to assure your child's safety but you need to be aware that we share this building with the church. Church members, church staff, as well as guests who have reserved a room in the church building will have access to our facility during the school day.

### **Building Lock Down**

The preschool will be completely locked down in the event of a security concern. All doors will be monitored by the administration and no one will be admitted to the building. There are no exceptions. If necessary, police will be called to handle the situation.

### **Building Evacuation**

The children will be taken to Petroglyph Elementary School if a situation occurs in which the students must be evacuated from the building. Parents will be notified and asked to pick up their children from the Elementary School. We will make every effort to contact each parent in this situation. We thank you for always keeping your cell phone on during the school day so we can contact you.

### **Director Information:**

The Director is Michelle Anderson and she has been working at the preschool since April of 2004. Michelle has a Bachelors of Science Degree in Education from the University Of New Mexico. She has taught elementary school in the Albuquerque Public Schools, Hope Christian School and Jemez Valley Public Schools. Michelle is also a certified trainer for the State of New Mexico in early childhood education. Michelle maintains a current National Administrators Credential and is currently pursuing a Masters Degree in Early Childhood Education.

The Assistant Director is Theresa Sanchez. Theresa has been an employee of the preschool since December 2004. She has a Child Development Associates Degree in Early Childhood Education and maintains a current National Administrators Credential. Theresa is also a certified trainer for the State of New Mexico in early childhood education.

Both directors can be reached at the preschool at 505-899-0956 or you can send a numeric page between the hours of 9 and 2 at 968-1452.

Our desire is to make this year a wonderful experience for you and your child. Please let us know how we can assist you. It is our joy to serve you and your family this year and in the years to come!