



Teaching our children with the Love of Jesus!

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2024-2025



A ministry of First United Methodist Church Portland

4545 Wildcat Drive, Portland, TX 78374

Phone: 361.643.8093

Email: mds@fumcportlandtx.org

www.fumcportlandtx.org

Updated: August 2024





Welcome to Methodist Day School

Dear Parents,

We are excited to welcome you and your family to the Methodist Day School family, where we are

'Teaching our children with the Love of Jesus.'

We all work hard to create a safe, nurturing, learning environment for your child.

We believe you are your child's first teacher and it is an honor to be a support for your family.

We look forward to being a part of building your child's development, knowledge, language skills, and relationships with others. We will make friends, learn about God and have lots of fun learning & getting messy everyday!

If you have any questions about the policies and procedures of the Methodist Day School, please come by the office, or contact via phone or email.

Sincerely,

Angela McDaniel-Director
Suzanne Gardner -Assistant Director

361-643-8093

mds@fumcportlandtx.org



MDS – 2024/2025 SCHOOL CALENDAR

August						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

6 Open House
8 First Day of School

6-7 Heart Health
Dental Days
13-14 Valentine's Day
17-18 President's Day/
No School
27-28 Western Days

February						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

September						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

2 Labor Day/
No School
9-13 Family Art Week!
17-18 School Pictures*
19-20 Hispanic Heritage
26-27 No School

3-7 Dr. Seuss Week
10-17 Spring Break/
No School
20-31 Pre-Registration

March						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23/30	24	25	26	27	28	29

October						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

2-3 Fire Truck Visit
5 Book-a-Palooza
14 No School
30-31 Fall Festival

• Trunk R Treat

2-3 School Pictures
5 Open Enrollment
7-11 Week of the Young
Child/Trike-A-Thon
16-17 Easter Celebrations
18-21 No School (Good
Friday/Easter)

April						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

November						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

5 No School- Go Vote
11 Veterans Day
18-22 Family Storytelling
Week
25-29 Thanksgiving Break/
No School

8 Spring Program &
PreK-4 Graduation
20-21 Splash Days!
22 Last Day of School/
Noon Dismissal

MEMORIAL DAY

May						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

December						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

12 Christmas Program
23-24 Christmas Holiday
Jan 7 No School

SUMMERTIME

June						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

January						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

8 Welcome Back!
20 MLK Day/No School
16-17 Pajama Days
23-24 100 Days of School

Happy Martin Luther King Day!

04

INDEPENDENCE DAY
JULY

July						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

MDS SUPPLY LIST FOR 2024 – 2025

All children need to bring:

- A backpack
- An extra set of clothing (including socks/underwear/shoes) to keep in their backpacks. Please change out clothing with the seasons and replenish.
- A *small* pillow/blanket or nap mat for rest time that fits in their backpack.
- Children bring their own lunch (go to www.choosemyplate.gov for health and nutrition information).
- If the child is still in diapers/pull-up, please bring with their name on it and wipes.
- A water bottle, with **WATER** only, labeled with their full name.



METHODIST DAY SCHOOL MISSION

Our mission is “Teaching our children with the Love of Jesus”. We believe that the church family is the natural extension of the nuclear family; therefore, the church becomes the logical caregiver for children. As a weekday ministry program, the Methodist Day School helps children to grow in their spiritual and intellectual lives in a loving and accepting atmosphere. Furthermore, the school is a service to children and the community in the following ways:

The Day School is operated by the First United Methodist Church as a part of the weekday ministry to the pre-school children of our church and community.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- A. To provide a warm, loving environment in which each child can grow physically, emotionally, socially, intellectually, and spiritually to the fullest of his/her ability.
- B. To give each child skills to get along with others and to teach the child love, understanding and guidance while at the school.
- C. To focus on learning to be self-reliant, developing a good self-image, and accepting responsibility.
- D. To develop interest and proficiency in the use of equipment and materials that are developmentally appropriate and satisfying to each child.
- E. To help your child gain the skills necessary for individual and group activities.
- F. To provide opportunities for creative self-expression

CHILDREN

Satisfying experiences and loving relationships at church communicate God's love in terms preschoolers can understand. By viewing our program as an avenue of ministry to children, teachers will provide an opportunity to meet the individual, physical, mental, social, and spiritual needs of each child. Our program allows for differences in individual learning styles by presentation of academic materials. It presents these materials in a way that is developmentally appropriate for preschool age children. When we meet these needs as an expression of Christ's love, we are building positive foundation in the lives of children.

COMMUNITY

Our program provides a means of outreach and support to those who are part of our local congregation and to non-members of the church within the community. A program such as the Methodist Day School can be an extension of Christ's love to families, who might not otherwise look to the church for guidance.

PROGRAM

The Day School program has been developed to aid your child in these areas of development that include intellectual, emotional, social and physical growth. Your child will participate in a variety of developmentally appropriate activities. These various activities are not limited to but often include:

- Chapel
- Language/Literacy/Spanish
- Science
- Reading
- Dramatic Play
- Block Play
- Math
- Gross Motor Skills
- Social Studies
- Art
- Fine Motor Skills
- Technology



METHODIST DAY SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Methodist Day School is governed by a Board of Directors composed of First United Methodist Church members and parents who have children enrolled in the Methodist Day School. The Board is responsible for the general policies and operation of the Day School through a Director who oversees the day-to-day administration of the school.

MDS BOARD OF DIRECTORS/TRUSTEE

Pamela Jorgensen

Angela McDaniel

Suzanne Gardner

Pastor Barbara Aziz

Fred Wilkerson

Jimmy Yaklin

Andy Abendshein

Audrey Hagemann

Angela McConnell

Chelsea Swiere

Katie Yaklin

Lynelle Weisz

Megan Hagemann

Rachel Goolsby

Chairperson/Finance Representative

MDS Director

MDS Assistant Director

Senior Pastor

Trustee Chair

Trustee Representative

Trustee Representative

Treasurer

Children's Council Representative

Secretary/Parent Representative

Church Member At Large

Church Member At Large

Parent Representative

Parent Representative

MDS 2024 – 2025 TEACHERS & TEACHER ASSISTANTS

Melissa Aguilar

Gabriella Alaniz

Cory Barton

Linda Carter

Christy Firmin

Stephanie Guajardo

Tara Kidd

Irma Lopez

Angie McConnell

Celina Mendez

Kendal Passmore

Meagan Pustejovsky

Claudia Valderrama

Regina Vanecek

Michelle Ware

Teacher (Pre-K3) MWF Orange Room

Teacher Assistant – Green/Yellow/Aftercare

Substitute

Teacher Assistant – Purple/Blue/Before/Aftercare

Teacher (Pre-K3) Yellow Room

Teacher (Pre-K2) Red Room

Teacher (Pre-K4) MWF Green

Teacher (Pre-K3) T/TH Green

Teacher Assistant – Green/Yellow/Aftercare

Teacher/Trainer (Pre-K4) Purple Room

Teacher Assistant – Pink Room/Aftercare

Teacher – Blue Room

Teacher/Spanish Teacher (Pre-K2) T/TH Orange

Teacher Assistant – Red/Orange/Before Care

Teacher (Toddler) Pink MWF & T/TH



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1. HOURS / DAYS / MONTHS OF OPERATION

The Methodist Day School follows the Gregory-Portland Independent School District calendar. When the students in the public schools are out of school, the Methodist Day School children are out of school also.

HOURS OF OPERATION	Early Care*: 7:15-8:30a.m. 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. After Care*: 2:30 – 4:15 p.m.
DAYS OF OPERATION	Monday – Friday
MONTHS OF OPERATION	August – May

Please refer to the MDS Calendar 2024-2025 for more information on holidays and special events

FEE SCHEDULE

Tuesday / Thursday (PK2 & PK3)	\$315.00 / mo
Monday/Wednesday/Friday	PK2 \$425 / mo PK 3-4 \$370 / mo
Monday – Friday	PK2 \$515 / mo PK 3-4 \$485 / mo

There is an annual \$150 non-refundable registration fee and a \$125 curriculum/supply fee (ACH or money order only)

*EXTENDED CARE

(For children 2 years and older)

\$5.00 for each morning beginning at 7:15 a.m.

\$8.00 for each afternoon from 2:30 – 4:15 p.m. (must sign up before 12:00pm on the day needed)

***Flat rate option before/aftercare option of \$185/mo**



2. POLICY CHANGES

You will be notified via Memo if there are any Policy Changes at the Methodist Day School.



3. TUITION

- Tuition statements will be emailed on the 1st of each month. Payments are auto drafted either the 5th of each month or split 5th/15th. Tuition is to be paid each month regardless of holidays or sickness.
 - *Regarding tuition in the event of an emergency closing; if it is past the 5th of the month, tuition is due as normal for the month. If we are closed into the next month, tuition will not be due and your child's enrollment spot will be held until we open back up. There will not be refunds for closing short term.*
 - *If your child has to be out due to COVID19; tuition will be paid in full.*
- The only method of payment for tuition is automatic bank-draft. ***We no longer accept cash or check for tuition payments.***
- Families with children withdrawing from the program are responsible to provide a minimum of two weeks' notice in writing. You will be responsible for that month's tuition in full. If your notice takes you into the next month, tuition for that month will be due in full. (Example: Notice 11/20/23 would be responsible to pay full tuition for December)
- Tuition for August is pro-rated and to be paid on August 15th, 2024.
- A 10% tuition discount is offered for enrolled siblings. Ex.: If a child's M-F tuition is \$485.00 and their sibling is enrolled M-F, the sibling's tuition would be \$437.00

4. EXTENDED CARE INFORMATION

Extended care is available on a limited basis for enrolled children who are 2 years and older.

Early Care is available daily from 7:15 – 8:30 a.m. **\$5.00 charge per day.**

After Care is available daily from 2:30 -4:15 p.m. **\$8.00 charge per day.**

You sign up for After Care every morning on the clipboard outside your child's class, you may call or email to add your child but it MUST be by 12:00pm on the day needed

5. LATE PICK UP FEE

A late fee of **\$2.00** per minute will be assessed per child if you are late picking your child up.

6. NON-SUFFICIENT FUNDS FEE

A \$30.00 fee will be charged for any returned auto-draft



7. PROCEDURES FOR PARENTAL NOTIFICATIONS

Health Advisory: A Health Advisory will be issued to you within 24 hours of an outbreak of a communicable disease or a serious incident that could be unsafe to the children.

- The form gives information about the type of disease or incident, the time and date it was noted and any special instructions. You may receive informational handouts, if applicable.

Incident/Illness Report: You will review the Incident/Illness Report to sign if your child has been in an incident or illness at school.

Questions / Concerns: If you ever have an issue that needs resolved, please have a discussion with your child's Teacher first. If that doesn't resolve your concern, the Director is always available. You can call or email to set up an appointment. You can share your concern at any time. The door is always open. If you still have a concern after meeting with both the Teacher and the Director, you can send a letter to the MDS Board of Directors to share your concern.

8. ENROLLMENT & WITHDRAWAL POLICY

- Children are enrolled on a first-come basis without regard to race, creed or religion; however, an effort will be made to maintain at least a 1/4 balance of gender in all classes.
 - Enrollment is complete and the child is accepted for care only when all required documents are on file in the Day School's office and applicable fees have been paid.
 - We encourage you to visit the school and meet the teacher before you enroll your child. This promotes a smooth transition for you and your child. Any questions you have can be answered during that time.
 - Three- and four-year-old children must be potty trained prior to enrollment.
 - Each child will have a probationary period to ensure the teacher, child, and environment are right for each other. Should concerns arise such as repeated hitting, disruptive behavior, excessive biting, not following rules, etc., the Teacher/Director will meet with you to discuss possible solutions, services and/or other options for your child.
 - These support steps are established to limit/eliminate the need to discontinue services for your child; however, in the event the negative behavior continues, MDS will do the following:
 - We will work with you to create a **Positive Behavior Plan (please see Discipline and Guidance Policy #15)** to identify the reason(s) for the behavior and focus on creating preventative strategies that can be done at home and in the classroom. The goal will be to develop new skills for your child to express their emotions in a healthy way.
 - If the behavior continues, the Director will discuss relevant options with you such as early dismissal, or having your child evaluated by ECI or the ISD, depending on their age.
 - We recognize we aren't the best fit for all children, if we get to the point where we've decided MDS is not your child's best option, we will work hard to help you identify an early childhood environment that will fit the needs of your child.
(Head Start, PreK in the school district, full time childcare, etc.).
- MDS operates within compliance of all State and Federal Civil rights laws***
- Families with children withdrawing from the program are responsible to provide a minimum of a two week notice in writing. You will be responsible for that month's tuition in full. If your notice takes you into the next month, tuition for that month will be due in full.



9. PRE SCHOOL-TOILET TRAINING POLICY

Children enrolled at Methodist Day School **must be toilet trained prior to entering the PreK3/PreK4 program**. Children must be wearing underwear. A child having accidents daily would not be considered toilet trained. Please note that wearing pull-ups is NOT considered toilet trained.

Why do children have to be toilet trained before they enter the PreK3/PreK4 program?

- There are strict standards for changing and disposing of wet or soiled diapers/pull-ups and our classrooms are not equipped for this.
- When an adult is busy changing a child's soiled clothing, it is taking away from learning time for all students, and it removes one adult from the direct supervision of and interaction with the rest of the class.

We do understand that even toilet trained children will occasionally have accidents. By definition, "accidents" are unusual incidents and should happen infrequently. In these instances, the teachers will help children to change their clothes, encouraging independence as much as possible.

A toilet trained child is a child who can do the following:

- Communicate to the teachers that he/she needs to go to the restroom before they need to go
- Alert him/herself to stop what he/she is doing, to go and use the bathroom
- Pull down his/her clothes and get them back up without assistance
- Wipe him/herself after using the toilet (with minimal assistance for 3-year-olds)
- Get on/off the toilet by him/herself
- Wash and dry hands
 - Postpone going if they must wait for someone who is in the bathroom or if we are away from the classroom
 - Wake up during nap time should they need to use the bathroom

We certainly will ask your child many times throughout the day and before nap time if they need to use the bathroom. A teacher will assist children as needed, but children should be able to complete toileting activities independently. This is an issue which protects all concerned.

It is not uncommon for a child who is fully toilet trained to have a setback when he/she is in a new environment. Methodist Day School staff are aware of this and will assist the children when necessary. Please have your child dressed in clothing that he/she can easily manage independently. Please send a complete change of clothes in the child's backpack that is appropriate for the season including shoes and socks. These items will be left in their backpack at school in case of accidents. Parents will be notified if a child has a toileting accident.

We understand that each child arrives at this milestone differently, therefore we will allow 3 weeks from the first day of school for your child to demonstrate accomplishment of this goal. However, if the situation is not manageable within the classroom environment, we will discuss the issue with the parents and reserve the right to suspend attendance of the child at such time.

A child will not be considered toilet trained for our PreK3/PreK4 program if the child continues to consistently have toileting accidents after the first 3 weeks of school.

After the first 3 weeks of school, the following policies will be in place for children who have accidents:



- If one or two accidents occur in one week, the parents will be notified with the understanding that the issue needs to be addressed and corrected. An action plan will be discussed with the parents.
- If three or more accidents occur in one week, the parent will be notified with the understanding that if the issue is not corrected by the end of the second week the child will have to stay home at least one week or longer until he/she is completely toilet trained. Tuition will continue to be paid while the child is home.
- If multiple accidents occur in one day, the parent will be notified and asked to pick up their child that day; and if not corrected by day three, the child will have to stay home at least one week or longer until he/she is completely toilet trained. Tuition will continue to be paid while the child is home.

Please note that this policy is not in place to shame or punish a child or inconvenience primary caregivers. Rather, cleaning accidents in the preschool setting is time consuming, and the time that teachers spend attending to and cleaning accidents is time they are not interacting with other children. This policy is intended to ensure the safety of children and staff at Methodist Day School.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

PLEASE SIGN AND DATE BELOW INDICATING THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED & REVIEWED THE METHODIST DAY SCHOOL TOILET TRAINING POLICY FOR OUR PREK3/PREK4 PROGRAM.

CHILD'S NAME: _____

PARENT'S SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____



10. PROCEDURES FOR THE RELEASE OF CHILDREN

- Your child must be ***signed-in*** upon arrival via the computer keypad located at the entry of the Day School. You will also initial a sign in sheet in your child's classroom.
- Your child must be ***signed-out*** when leaving the center via the computer keypad located at the entry of the Day School. You will also initial a sign out sheet in your child's classroom.
- The staff ensures your child is released only to you or an adult designated by you. An adult is considered a person 18 years old or older and authorized on your emergency contacts
- No child will be released to anyone whose name does not appear on the Emergency Contact authorizing release to that person, unless you call to authorize the release as well as email.
 - The staff will make a copy of the Driver's License or Department of Public Safety (DPS) Identification Card number and file this information in the child's record.
 - If you want to have your child picked up by someone not on the list, you should call and email the Director at mds@fumcportlandtx.org and communicate with the Teacher. You should include who is picking the child up and what date.
- If you or the person picking up your child appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the staff will notify the proper authorities (*i.e. Police Department of Family & Child Protective Services*) and your child will not be released.
- If a child is not picked up 30 minutes after their scheduled pick-up time and all Emergency Contacts have been attempted then the proper authorities will be contacted (*i.e. Police, Department of Family & Child Protective Services*).

Emergency Contact information will be updated on an annual basis, at the least. Please update your address, phone number or emergency contact information with the Teacher and/or Director immediately if there are changes throughout the year.

10a. DROP OFF & PICK UP POLICIES

- ✓ ***Building security & access:*** MDS has a code to get into the school to ensure the safety of the children, families and staff. You will have access to the code; please do not share it with anyone. If someone different is picking up your child, have them ring the doorbell. During the school day, the double doors in the foyer are locked. If you need to get your child during that time, the Director will give you access or you can ring the doorbell.
- ✓ ***Walking into the school alone:*** Our policy is that children arrive inside with an adult who signs them into their class. We are required to keep attendance and need to know which children are in our care; it is best practice.
- ✓ ***Idling Vehicles are discouraged:*** We discourage idling vehicles in the parking lot unless it's necessary to maintain interior or engine temperatures because of extreme heat or cold.
- ✓ ***Running ahead, down the path from the school to the parking lot:*** Our policy is that children hold an adult's hand/stay with an adult until they reach their vehicle. We do not want anyone to get hurt.
- ✓ ***Unattended in the parking lot:*** The parking lot is very busy during transitions. It is essential that young children hold an adult's hand. Preschool-aged children have absolutely no concept that they could be hit by a car and what that would feel like. They are thinking of where they want to be rather than what could happen if they walk off alone.
- ✓ ***Children left unattended in cars:*** It is extremely dangerous for any child to be left alone in vehicles. There have been so many fatalities where children were left alone in cars; it is against the law and a reportable offence. We believe that it is essential that young children are always supervised. Please let us know if you need help in bringing a preschooler in or out to you if you are unable to do so yourself.



Job. Build the Habit of Good Attendance Early!

DID YOU KNOW:

- Too many absences can cause children to fall behind in school
- Missing 10% of school can make it harder to learn to read
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two every few weeks
- Being late to school may lead to poor attendance
- Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up

Attendance Works

Consistent attendance and prompt arrival are important to help your child create a daily routine. The learning activities for all classes begin at 8:30 a.m. so please have your child arrive no later than that time. We strongly discourage drop off after 11:45AM as many of our students are preparing for rest time and this could be disruptive to the class.

Teachers need time before school to prepare for the daily activities. **Do not enter the classrooms before 8:20 a.m. unless your child is attending Early Care in the 'Big Room.'** In the afternoon, classes will begin dismissal at 2:20 p.m. Any children picked up after 2:30 will be escorted to the big room and will be considered in After Care for that day.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Set a regular bed time and morning routine
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before
- Find out what day school starts and make sure your child has the required shots
- Introduce your child to her teachers and classmates before school starts
- Don't let your child stay home unless he/she is truly sick
- Avoid medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session

Reach out and Read

Handwashing: Keeping Your Family Healthy

Handwashing is an easy, cheap, and effective way to prevent the spread of germs and keep kids and adults healthy. When your family is healthy, you don't have to worry about missing school, work, or other activities.

Help your child develop handwashing skills

Parents and caretakers play an important role in teaching children to wash their hands. Handwashing can become a lifelong healthy habit if you start teaching it at an early age. Teach kids the [five easy steps for handwashing](#)—wet, lather, scrub, rinse, and dry—and the key times to wash hands, such as after using the bathroom or before eating. You can find ways to make it fun, like making up your own handwashing song or turning it into a game.



Lead by example

Young children learn by imitating the behaviors of adults in their lives. When you make handwashing part of your routine, you're setting an example for your children to follow.



LIFE IS BETTER WITH

**CLEAN
HANDS**



www.cdc.gov/handwashing





Handwashing can prevent

1 in 3
cases of diarrhea



1 in 5
respiratory infections,
such as a cold or the flu



Give frequent reminders

Building handwashing skills takes time. At first, your child will need regular reminders of how and when to wash hands. It is especially important to remind children to wash their hands after using the bathroom, before eating, after touching pets, after playing outside, and after coughing, sneezing, or blowing their nose. But once handwashing becomes a habit and a regular part of your child's day, they will practice it throughout their lives.

What if soap and water aren't available?

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that has at least 60% alcohol.

Did you know?

Baby wipes may make your hands look clean, but they're not designed to remove germs from your hands. CDC recommends washing hands with soap and water when possible.



Remember to make handwashing a healthy habit at home, school, and at play!



11. ILLNESS AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Daily Child Health Check

The teachers conduct a Daily Health Check every morning. Staff will be checking for cuts, bumps, bruises, scars, stitches, casts, sores, head lice, drainage from eyes, ears, nose, coughing, wheezing, fever, rash, cleanliness and limping.

Children may not be able to attend class when they are ill. Keep the child at home when they have the following:

- Uncontrolled diarrhea
- 2 or more episodes of vomiting
- Underarm fever of 100 or higher
- Yellowish skin or eyes,
- Pink eye (*eyes red with thick drainage*)
- Unusual spots or rashes
- Infected skin patches or open sores
- Severe itching of body or scalp
- Head lice
- Rash
- Blisters
- Ringworm or other Communicable diseases

*A child who appears ill will not be admitted to the center unless approved by the Director
A child experiencing any of the above symptoms will be sent home*

Head Lice

- The Department of Family and Protective Services Minimum Standards §746.3603 states children with head lice do not have to be excluded from care.
- MDS requires the parent to give their child one medicated shampoo or lotion treatment. A second treatment is recommended to follow in 7-10 days. The child's hair must be free of nits/bugs to prevent the spread of head lice to the entire class.
- The teachers will check all the children's hair daily to determine the presence of head lice, if necessary. If head lice are present, your child will be sent home immediately with a note asking you to clean the child's head before he/she returns to school. The eggs must be removed with a fine tooth comb or handpicked. The eggs hatch in two (2) weeks so a repeated treatment may be necessary.

Return to School Policy

- You must notify the teachers when your child is ready to return to school.
- Staff may require additional information before allowing your child to return.
- When your child has been out because of a communicable illness or an injury, staff may require you to bring a doctor's release.
- Child **MUST** be able to participate in active play and daily activities.
- Accommodations for illness or injury cannot result in a greater need for care than caregivers at MDS can provide without compromising the health, safety and supervision of other children in care.



12. PROCEDURES FOR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

You will be notified immediately following an accident or incident involving your child. If you cannot be reached, staff will contact the individuals on the Admissions form.

- If your child is in need of additional care, we will ask you to pick up your child.
- If your child has suffered a severe injury or illness the staff will call 911.

13. PROCEDURES FOR DISPENSING MEDICATION, including insect repellent and sunscreen

- Medications and any special medical procedures will only be given to your child at the Methodist Day School with a doctor's statement that is signed and dated.
- Any non-prescribed (over-the-counter) medication will be labeled with your child's first and last name and must be dated.
- All medication must be in the original container. The prescription label must have the same name as the child to whom the medication is to be given.
- You must complete a Medication Instruction form prior to any MDS staff dispensing any medication to your child. The medication will be kept in the Director's office in a locked box, inaccessible to children at all time. Please do not leave medication in your child's backpack. Epi Pens or emergency medication will be with the teacher at all times, out of reach of the children. MDS does not have an unassigned Epi Pen on campus.
- Medication will not be used beyond the date of expiration on the container or past the instructions provided by the physician on the medication label.
- If a medication error leads to serious reaction, 911 will be contacted.
- If there are any medication errors (wrong dosage, wrong time, wrong child, wrong route) they will be immediately reported to you. An Incident/Illness Report would then be completed, and Childcare Licensing would be notified of the error.
- The staff are not able to apply either insect repellent and/or sunscreen on your child. If you prefer to have your child use either insect repellent and/or sunscreen at school, please apply it prior to coming to school each day.



Methodist Day School

4545 Wildcat Drive

Portland, Texas 78374

Individualized Emergency Plan

Child's Name: _____ D.O.B.: _____

Parent's Name: _____ Phone: _____

Doctor's Name: _____ Phone: _____

To be filled out completely by the child's doctor:

List Food Allergies or Health Condition(s):
List Medications/ Equipment needed onsite:
Explain symptoms or health concerns to watch for and when to call Parent(s):
Call 911 when the following symptoms occur:

Doctor's Signature: _____ Date: _____
Parent's Signature: _____ Date: _____



14. DISCIPLINE & GUIDANCE / BITING POLICY



Form 1099
September 2023

Operational Discipline and Guidance Policy

This form provides the required information per 26 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) minimum standards Sections 744.501(7), 746.501(a)(7), and 747.501(5).

Directions: Parents will review this policy upon enrolling their child. Employees, household members and volunteers will review this policy at orientation. A copy of the policy is provided in the operational policies.

Discipline and Guidance Policy

Discipline must be:

- 1) individualized and consistent for each child;
- 2) appropriate to the child's level of understanding; and
- 3) directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control and self-direction, which include at least the following:

- 1) using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
- 2) reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
- 3) redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
- 4) using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

- 1) corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;
- 2) punishment associated with food, naps or toilet training;
- 3) grabbing or pulling a child;
- 4) putting anything in or on a child's mouth;
- 5) humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting or yelling at a child;
- 6) subjecting a child to harsh, abusive or profane language;
- 7) placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom or closet;
- 8) placing a child in a restrictive device for time out;
- 9) withholding active play or keeping a child inside as a consequence for behavior, unless the child is exhibiting behavior during active play that requires a brief supervised separation or time out that is consistent with 746.2803(4)(0); and
- 10) requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

Additional Discipline and Guidance Measures

(Only Applies to Before or After School Program (BAP)/Sr:chool/ Age Program (SAP) that Operates under 26 TAC Chapter 744)

A program must take the following steps if it uses disciplinary measures for teaching a skill, talent, ability, expertise or proficiency:

- ensure that the measures are considered commonly accepted teaching or training techniques;
- describe the training and disciplinary measures in writing to parents and employees and include the following information:
 - (A) the disciplinary measures that may be used, such as physical exercise or sparring used in martial arts programs;
 - (B) what behaviors would warrant the use of these measures; and
 - (C) the maximum amount of time the measures would be imposed;
- inform parents that they have the right to ask for additional information; and
- ensure that the disciplinary measures used are not considered abuse, neglect, or exploitation as specified in Texas Family Code Section 261.001 and TAC Chapter 745, Subchapter K, Division 5, of this title (relating to Abuse and Neglect).

Signature

This policy is effective on the following date: 09/01/2023

Signed by: _____

Role: Parent Caregiver or Employee Household Member (CH. 747 only)

Minimum Standards Related to Discipline

- Title 26, Chapter 746 Subchapter L: http://lexreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtacSext_ViewTAC?tac_view=5&i=26&ot=1&ch=746&sch=L&r=Y
- Title 26, Chapter 747 Subchapter L: http://lexreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtacSext_ViewTAC?tac_view=5&i=26&ot=1&ch=747&sch=L&r=Y
- Title 26, Chapter 744 Subchapter G: http://lexreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtacSext_ViewTAC?tac_view=5&i=26&ot=1&ch=744&sch=G&r=Y



Discipline Policy

We believe that children need limits to feel secure about themselves and their environment. The purpose of this policy is to help children learn acceptable behavior, develop self-control and to eliminate and/or eliminate suspension, expulsion or exclusionary measures. The basis for our Discipline Policy is an organized classroom and prepared staff members. **At MDS we strive to develop a positive relationship between teacher, aide, leadership, and child.** We believe that if an interesting and challenging program is offered to the child, then discipline problems will be minimized. If inappropriate behavior does occur, we begin with a positive behavior approach.

For more on minimum standards Discipline and Guidance Policy please see above form

The MDS staff has prime responsibilities when dealing with inappropriate behavior:

1. Redirection-encourage and recognize good behavior.
2. Think Time within their area:
 - a. If a problem exists and redirection is not working, the child is removed from the situation and is encouraged to play in another area of the classroom or playground.
 - b. If behavior continues the child will be given a “think time,” one minute away from activity per age of the child (staff will set a timer). In the think area; a child will be given something to do to help calm down, ex. book, manipulable, coloring sheet.
 - c. “Think Time” is defined as an area away from the group but within the child’s natural area (classrooms all have calm down/think corners)
 - d. After “think time” a MDS staff member will help the child identify his/her unacceptable behavior and work on alternative ways to handle anger/frustrations, a Daily Report via Class Dojo will be sent to parent/guardian.
 - e. The child will always be allowed to return to the group and the teacher will encourage the return if the child seems nervous/worried etc.....
 - f. **IF** redirection and “think time” periods are not sufficient, staff members will intervene to prevent physical or emotional injury, an Observation Form will be filled out, filed, and parent/guardian will be notified.
3. Think Time away from group (child will always be supervised)
 - a. Occurs if the child continues the inappropriate behavior.
 - b. And/or the “Think time” within the area become either inappropriate or ineffective, an Observation Form will be filled out, parent/guardian will be notified.
4. Incident Form/Behavior Report filled out, signed by parent/guardian, and filed.



- a. If the child's behavior continues to be inappropriate
 - b. OR the severity denotes an un-resolved problem.
5. Behavior Intervention Meeting
- a. If the child's behavior continues to be inappropriate, a behavior intervention meeting will take place and a **Positive Behavior Support Plan will be created.**
 - b. Those in attendance will be the parent(s)/guardian, teacher and/or the Director or Assistant Director
 - c. This may be called by any of the individuals listed above.
6. Sending a child home
- a. When the child becomes unsafe to self or others (physically, verbally and/or emotionally)
 - b. When the child fails to respond to the measures taken by the MDS Team and the plan set in place based off the Behavior Intervention Meeting and a **Positive Support Plan.**
 - c. This is at the discretion of the Director and/or Assistant Director
7. Removal
- a. Three written behavioral reports within a nine-week period constitutes the child being removed from MDS for a one-week period
 - b. During this time, the parent/guardian, teacher, and/or Directors/Assistant Director will meet to determine if the child is capable of changing behavior to allow their return to school. **This is a mandatory meeting.**
 - c. Tuition will continue to be paid for the current month.
 - d. If the child does continue in the program and receives a fourth behavioral report within a 30-day period, then MDS reserves the right to help find alternative childcare arrangements for the family.
 - e. **Exclusionary measures are not considered until all possible interventions have been exhausted, and it is determined that exclusion is in the best interest of the child and program.**

In addition to the above, MDS will use three methods to track behavior and communicate with parents.

1. **Daily Reports**-Parent/Teacher communication via Class Dojo that does not count as a written behavior report. IF the teacher deems necessary, a copy of the correspondence will be printed and kept in the students file.
2. **Observation Form**-Documentation will be kept to monitor behaviors by teacher/staff. These may be used anytime for the sole purpose of tracking behavior patterns. They will be turned in daily to Director for filing.
3. **Incident Form/Behavior Report**-this is filed in the child's file and a copy is given to the parent. These are signed by the Director and will count as one of the three reports that would result in removal for the week or permanently.



*Methodist Day School expects parental/guardian involvement and cooperation in all aspects of discipline. Failure to comply can warrant child's removal. We reserve the right to discontinue work with any child/parent/guardian whose needs we cannot meet. The key to effective discipline is consistency. We try to be as consistent as possible in all areas. We strive to provide children with a warm and loving atmosphere in which to grow and learn.

Biting Policy

Biting is unfortunately, not unexpected among young children. Some children communicate through this behavior. However, it can be VERY harmful to those that are bitten, and this policy aims to protect those individuals. MDS will do everything in its power to deter biting from occurring, however, in those instances where it does occur the following procedures will be followed:

When biting does occur the staff member will strongly discourage the behavior and give a more appropriate coping skill to the child. We will encourage the use of language to express wants and needs.

The child who was bitten will be comforted and the wound will be cleaned. An incident report will be filled out for both children involved, and parents of both children will be notified. Confidentiality of the one who was bitten, and the biter will be kept.

Step 1: Moving forward if the child bites again within a 5-day period, a staff member will shadow to help prevent another incident from occurring and to help identify what may have caused the biting. If the child bites twice in one day the parents will be notified, and the parent will be asked to pick up the child for the remainder of the day. Additionally, an incident report will be filled out, signed by parent, Director and placed in child's file.

Step 2: After observation, if a child inflicts two bites over the next **2 days**, a conference will be held with the child's parents. (If two bites occur in one day, the child's parents will be called, and the child will be picked up for the remainder of the day)

If Steps 1 and 2 have not been successful and the child bites 2 times over another **2-day period, after the parent conference, then the child will be removed for a one-week period.**

Finally, if the child continues to bite after all the above steps have been exhausted then alternative childcare arrangements will need to be made for the child.



Why do young children bite?

Some children bite instinctively because they have not developed self-control. For example, when 3-year-old Marcus grabs a doll from his 2-year-old sister Gina, her first response is to bite him and grab the doll. She doesn't stop to think about other ways to act or the result of her actions. But there are many other reasons why children may bite.

A child might bite to:

- Relieve pain from teething.
- Explore cause and effect (“What happens when I bite?”).
- Experience the sensation of biting.
- Satisfy a need for oral-motor stimulation.
- Imitate other children and adults.
- Feel strong and in control.
- Get attention.
- Act in self-defense.
- Communicate needs and desires, such as hunger or fatigue.
- Communicate or express difficult feelings, such as frustration, anger, confusion, or fear (“There are too many people here and I feel cramped”).

What can families do to prevent biting?

There are a variety of things that families can do to prevent biting. It helps to:

- Have age-appropriate expectations for your child's behavior based on his or her current skills and abilities.
- Make sure your child's schedule, routines, and transitions are predictable and consistent. At meal and bedtimes, try to do things in the same way and at the same times. Young children thrive when they know what will happen next.
- Offer activities and materials that allow your child to relax and release tension. Some children like yoga or deep breathing. Offer playdough, foam balls, bubbles, soft music, and other stress-reducing items.
- Use positive guidance strategies to help your child develop self-control. For example, offer gentle reminders, phrased in a way that tells them what behaviors are expected. “Be sure to hang up your coat on the hook.” “You can each have a bucket to use in the sandbox.” “Put a small dot of toothpaste on your brush. You won't need much to get your teeth clean.”
- Provide items to bite, such as teething rings or clean, wet, cold washcloths stored in the refrigerator. This helps children learn what they can bite safely, without hurting anyone else.



How should I respond when my child bites?

While every situation is different, here are some general guidelines for responding when a child bites.

Infants

Infants learn about the world around them by exploring it with their hands, eyes, and mouths. But infants often need help to learn what they should and shouldn't bite.

If your infant takes an experimental bite on grandpa's shoulder or mom's arm, stay calm and use clear signals to communicate that it is not okay for one person to bite another. A firm "no" or "no biting!" is an appropriate response.

Toddlers and Preschoolers

Toddlers have many strong emotions that they are just learning to manage. Toddlers may bite to express anger or frustration or because they lack the language skills needed to express their feelings.

Biting is less common in preschoolers than toddlers. When a preschooler bites, it may be due to something at home or at their childcare program that is causing the child to be upset, frustrated, confused, or afraid. A preschooler may also bite to get attention or to act in self-defense.

Follow the steps below with both toddlers and preschoolers.

1. If you see the biting incident, move quickly to the scene and get down to children's level. Respond to the child who did the biting. In a serious, firm tone make a strong statement: "No biting. Biting hurts. I can't let you hurt Josie or anyone else." Next, offer a choice: "You can help make Josie feel better, or you can sit quietly until I can talk with you." Help the child follow through on the choice if necessary.
2. Respond to the child who was hurt by offering comfort through words and actions: "I'm sorry you are hurting. Let's get some ice." Perform first aid if necessary. The child who did the biting can help comfort the bitten child—if both parties agree. Help the child who was hurt find something to do.
3. Finally, talk to the child who did the biting. Maintain eye contact and speak in simple words using a calm, firm tone of voice. Try to find out what happened that led to the incident. Restate the rule, "Biting is not allowed." Model the use of words that describe feelings: "Kim took your ball. You felt angry. You bit Kim. I can't let you hurt Kim. No biting." Discuss how the child can respond in similar situations in the future.



What strategies can I use to help my child overcome a habit of biting?

Here are some strategies for addressing a child's biting habit.

- Observe your child to learn where, when, and in what situations biting occurs. Sometimes an adult may need to stay close to the child to prevent biting.
- Pay attention to signals. Stay close and step in if your child seems ready to bite.
- Suggest acceptable ways to express strong feelings. Help your child learn to communicate her wants and needs (“Amy, tell your sister you were still playing with the truck”).
- Use a reminder system to help your child learn to express strong feelings with appropriate words and actions (“Tell Manuel that you don’t like it when he gets that close to you”).
- Reinforce positive behavior by acknowledging child’s appropriate words and actions (“You didn’t like being tickled so you used your words to ask me to stop”).
- Provide opportunities for your child to make choices and feel empowered.
- Be sure your behavior expectations are age-appropriate and individually appropriate for your child. Expecting a child to do something he or she is not able to do can cause children to feel stress. Stress can lead to biting.
- Offer foods with a variety of textures to meet your child’s sensory needs.
- Teach your child words for setting limits, such as “no,” “stop,” or “that’s mine.”

For further reading

The Center on Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL). “Responding to Your Child’s Bite.” www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/documents/biting-parenting_tool.pdf.

University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies. “Ouch! That hurts! – Biting.” (Growing ideas tip sheet). <http://umaine.edu/ccids/files/2009/12/biting120309.pdf>.

Zero to Three. “Why Do Toddlers Bite? Finding the Right Response.” www.zerotothree.org/child-development/challenging-behavior/chew-on-this-resources-on-biting.html.



Teachers Guidelines

Teachers Always:

- ✓ Demonstrate a cheerful and positive attitude with children
- ✓ Act as a positive role-model for children
- ✓ Communicate with children in a respectful manner (Excuse Me, Pardon me)
- ✓ Establish a nurturing and trusting relationship with each child and their family
- ✓ Provide a safe environment, free of harm and danger to children
- ✓ Maintain an environment that fosters children's creative self-expression
- ✓ Provide appropriate supervision at all times. This requires the teacher to see and hear the children at all times, including nap time. When the preschoolers go into the hallway to get their backpacks and lunch, the Teacher will check on them regularly to make sure they are safe and on task.

The Teachers use Positive Guidance techniques, such as praise, encouragement, and positive redirection to encourage self-esteem, self-control and self-direction for each child.

If necessary, your child may need to take a moment to regain control of their choices through a short period of time apart from their friends; however, the time away from the group is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

Classroom Environment

The classroom staff engages in positive redirection and praises children for good behavior. The environment is child friendly to encourage children to explore and manipulate materials in his/her environment with limited adult assistance. A few examples are as follows:

- ✓ All classrooms are arranged based on developmentally age-appropriate practices.
- ✓ Lesson plans and classroom schedules are followed daily, but flexible to meet children's needs.
- ✓ Activities are age and developmentally appropriate, appealing, and interesting.
- ✓ Room Labeling—cubbies and personal items will be labeled with the child's name. Learning Centers and other items in the room will be labeled with words and pictures using dual language (when applicable) so children can easily locate and return items to the appropriate locations.

15. CURRICULUM GOALS

MDS values the importance of a strong early learning environment for young children. We have chosen to adopt a valid, research-based curriculum that is developmentally appropriate for your child.

- The 18 month – 3-year-old classes use **Creative Curriculum and Frog Street**
- The Pre-K4 classes use **DLM Curriculum and Frog Street**



ASSESSMENTS

The teachers conduct observation-based assessments on every child throughout the year, using the **Frog Street assessment tool**. The Teachers use the results of the assessments to guide the lesson planning process. There are beginning of the year, mid-year, and end of year assessment results you can request at any time. You are welcome to ask the Teacher/Director about how the assessment process will meet your child's needs. MDS staff are trained in **Frog Street** at least once a year either in person or online.

LESSON PLANS

Every classroom has a lesson plan that correlates with the curriculum and/or developmentally appropriate practices being taught in the classroom. The lesson plan is updated weekly and is posted in the classroom for your review at any time.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

The Teachers may schedule a Fall and Spring Parent Conference with each child's family to review the beginning and end of year assessment results; however, you are able to request a Parent/Teacher Conference at any time.

16. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY / LIMITED SCREEN TIME

MDS recognizes all children need enough active playtime throughout each day to develop and to practice gross motor and movement skills appropriate for their age. Active play includes moderate to vigorous activities such as rolling, crawling, scooting, running, climbing, dancing, hopping, galloping, skipping, and jumping.

- ✓ The benefits of physical activity and outdoor play are linked to motor development, literacy, brain development & overall health,
- ✓ Children play outside every day (weather-permitting), for a minimum of 45 minutes.
- ✓ Children participate in physical activity indoors during yoga, stretching, dancing and transition activities such as walking & jumping.
- ✓ Teachers lead 2 or more structured games/activities per day to support gross motor and movement skills. There are also materials provided for unstructured, children-led play such as bikes, balls, basketball, gardening, dancing, and balancing.
- ✓ We encourage you to bring your child to school in closed-toe shoes to keep their feet safe and minimize accidents on the playground. Children should wear clothing and shoes that are comfortable for playing outside and working with a variety of art materials. Clothing should also be easily managed by your child. Restroom accidents are more common when buckles and buttons are too difficult for children to manipulate.
 - An extra change of clothes should be kept in your child's backpack. All personal belongings must be labeled and fit in the cubby.
- ✓ On extreme weather days, we will still go outside if it's safe! If we can't go outside, we will have indoor play.
- ✓ Outdoor play time is not withheld from children based on behavior. Screen time, whether via movies or computers, are limited to special events or specific curriculum-based goals.



PARENT ONLINE RESOURCES

- **National Association for the Education of Young Children: www.naeyc.org**
 - There is a Family tab that gives information about programs, family engagement, play at home, etc.
- **Zero to Three: www.zerotothree.org**
 - This website is full of research based information for children who are zero to three years old. Topics such as brain development, milestones and challenging behaviors are available.
- **CDC Developmental Milestones: www.cdc.gov**
 - This website gives you developmental milestones from ages 2 months old until 5 years old. There is even a Milestone Tracker App for your phone!
- **Texas Child Care Solutions: <https://texaschildcaresolutions.org/>**
 - This website connects Texas parents with up-to-date parenting information, ideas and on the ground resources.
- **Texas Health & Human Services:**
http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Search_Texas_Child_Care/default.asp
 - This website allows you to search Child Care centers across Texas
- **US Department of Education:**
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/inclusion/resources-for-families.html>
 - This website offers resources for families for Early Learning & Inclusion. It includes a variety of different links to early childhood websites to support learning and development.
- **Birth to 5: Watch me Thrive - Families**
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/child-health-development/watch-me-thrive/families>
 - This website is from the Office of the Administration for Children & Families, Early Childhood Development. It has links to screenings, milestones, positive parenting, behavioral screenings and resources for families.
- **CDC: Coronavirus (COVID19): www.cdc.gov/COVID19**
 - This website gives facts on what COVID19 is, how to protect yourself & your family and latest updates.



17. DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

All children develop at their own pace.

If you are concerned about your child's development, talk to your child's health care provider.

18 – 24 MONTH OLDS

PHYSICAL AND MOTOR SKILL MARKERS

- Is able to control the muscles used to urinate and have bowel movements, but may not be ready to use the toilet
- Can build a tower of 2 to 4 blocks
- Can use a spoon and cup with help to feed self
- Imitates scribbling
- Can turn 2 or 3 pages of a book at a time

SENSORY AND COGNITIVE MARKERS

- Shows affection
- Has separation anxiety
- Listens to a story or looks at pictures
- Can say 10 or more words when asked
- Identifies 1 or more parts of the body
- Understands and is able to point to and identify common objects
- Begins to feel a sense of ownership, identifying people and objects by saying "my"

PLAY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Encourage and provide the necessary space for physical activity.
- Encourage play that involves building and creativity.
- Use a transitional object to help with separation anxiety.
- **Read together.**
- Encourage play dates with children the same age.
- Avoid television and other screen time before 2
- Play simple games together, such as puzzles and shape sorting.

2 YEAR OLDS

PHYSICAL AND MOTOR SKILL MARKERS

- Can look through a book turning one page at a time
- Can kick a ball without losing balance
- Can pick up objects while standing, without losing balance (This often occurs by 15 months. It is a cause for concern if not seen by 2 years.)
- Should have the first 16 teeth (The actual number of teeth can vary widely.)
- At 2 yrs. old, will reach about half final adult height

SENSORY AND COGNITIVE MARKERS

- Able to put on simple clothes without help (The child is often better at removing clothes than putting them on.)
- Able to communicate needs such as thirst, hunger, need to go to the bathroom
- Can organize phrases of 2 - 3 words
- Vocabulary has increased to about 50 - 300 words (Healthy children's vocabulary can vary widely.)
- May be ready for toilet training

PLAY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Allow the child to help around the house and take part in the daily family chores.
- Encourage active play and provide enough space for healthy physical activity.
- Provide safe copies of adult tools and equipment. Many children like to mimic activities such as cutting the grass or sweeping the floor.
- **Read together.**
- Try to avoid television watching at this age (recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics).
- Control both the content and quantity of television viewing. Limit screen time to less than 3 hours per day. One hour or less is better. Avoid programming with violent content. Redirect the child to reading or play activities.
- Control the type of games the child plays.



3 YEAR OLDS

PHYSICAL AND MOTOR SKILL MARKERS

- Has improved balance
- Has improved vision (20/30)
- Has all 20 primary teeth
- Needs 11 - 13 hours of sleep a day
- Can briefly balance and hop on one foot
- Can easily place small objects in a small opening
- Can copy a circle
- Can pedal a tricycle

SENSORY AND COGNITIVE MARKERS

- Has a vocabulary of several hundred words
- Speaks in sentences of three words that's understood by others
- Counts three objects
- Often asks questions
- Can dress self, only needing help with shoelaces, buttons, and other fasteners in awkward places
- Acts out social encounters through play activities
- Knows own name, age, and gender (boy/girl)
- Starts to share

PLAY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide a safe play area and constant supervision.
- Help your child take part in -- and learn the rules of -- sports and games.
- Limit both the time and content of television and computer viewing.
- Visit local areas of interest.
- Encourage your child to help with small household chores, such as helping set the table or picking up toys.
- Encourage play with other children
- Encourage creative play.
- **Read together.**
- Encourage your child to learn by answering his or her questions.
- Provide activities related to your child's interests.
- Encourage your child to use words to express feelings (rather than acting out).

4 YEAR OLDS

PHYSICAL AND MOTOR SKILL MARKERS

- Has 20/20 vision
- Sleeps 11 to 13 hours at night, usually without a daytime nap
- Shows improved balance
- Hops on 1 foot without losing balance
- Throws a ball overhand with coordination
- Can cut out a picture using scissors
- May still wet the bed

SENSORY AND COGNITIVE MARKERS

- Has a vocabulary of more than 1,000 words
- Easily puts together sentences of 4 or 5 words
- Can use the past tense
- Will be curious and ask a lot of questions
- Tries to be very independent
- May show increased aggressive behavior
- Talks about personal family matters to others
- Is able to tell the difference between 2 objects based on things like size and weight
- Lacks moral concepts of right and wrong
- Rebels if too much is expected of them

PLAY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Encourage and provide space for physical activity.
- Show your child how to participate in and follow the rules of sporting activities.
- Encourage creative play.
- Expose your child to different stimuli by visiting local areas of interest.
- Encourage play and sharing with other children.
- Teach your child to do small chores, such as setting the table.
- **Read together.**
- Limit screen time (television and other media) to 2 hours a day of quality programs.

Temper tantrums are common at this age. Children who have tantrums that often last for more than 15 minutes or that occur more than three times a day should be seen by a health care provider



18. MEALS & FOOD SERVICE PRACTICES

MDS is not responsible for the nutritional value of the children's meals & snacks since parents bring meals & snacks everyday. MDS will always have water available during meals and on the playground. Your child will eat in the classroom, with their friends in an unhurried manner. We pray before we eat, and each child is encouraged to open their own snack/lunch items. The teachers always step in and help when needed. Mealtimes are used as an opportunity to develop fine motor skills, self-help skills, language, and social skills through conversation. The teachers talk with the children about what they are eating, what they did the day before, what some of their favorite things are, etc. Sometimes the Teachers will read a favorite book or tell the children a story. Food is never used as a reward and/or punishment.

Mid-Morning Snacks

You will be asked to provide a healthy mid-morning snack at some point throughout the year. Your child's teacher will send a Snack Calendar home to let you know what day(s) you will bring the snack. Water will be offered with the snack and available throughout the day.

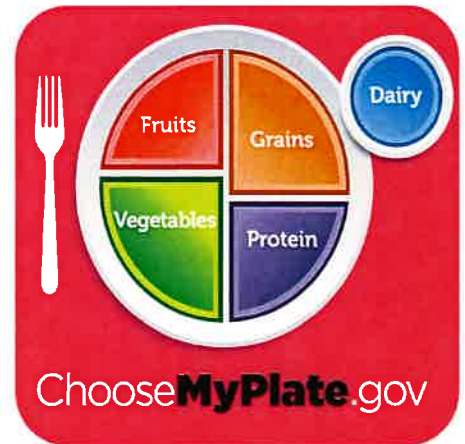
Only store-bought items may be brought into MDS, this includes birthday celebrations.

Lunch

You will be responsible for packing your child's lunch each day. Please keep in mind, lunch should be healthy and nutritious. Sugary drinks such as soda, Hawaiian punch, etc. is strongly discouraged. Please do not bring anything that needs to be kept in a refrigerator or heated up by microwave or oven.

After Care Snacks

MDS will provide a snack during After Care in the afternoon. The After Care Snack schedule will be posted outside the Big Room (109A) monthly.



Birthdays

Children are welcome to share their birthdays with the class. Please notify the teacher ahead of time. We prefer mini cupcakes for the child's birthday celebration. No gifts will be exchanged. Birthday celebrations will be limited to regular snack time and will not interfere with scheduled classroom activities. Birthday invitations for parties away from the Day School may be distributed if all children are invited.

Only store-bought items may be brought into MDS, this includes birthday celebrations.

Special Dietary Needs

If your child has special dietary needs (allergic, religious beliefs, etc.) please let the teacher and Director know immediately. We have a form the Doctor needs to fill out for food allergies.

Based on the needs of children at our school, we may implement a **Nut-Free Classroom and/or School**. Please do not bring items containing nuts for snacks, birthday, or holiday celebrations.

Please talk with your teacher about the specific needs of the classroom.

Healthy ^{for} Eating preschoolers

Daily Food Plan



Use this Plan as a general guide.

• These food plans are based on average needs. Do not be concerned if your child does not eat the exact amounts suggested. Your child may need more or less than average. For example, food needs increase during growth spurts.

• Children's appetites vary from day to day. Some days they may eat less than these amounts; other days they may want more. Offer these amounts and let your child decide how much to eat.

Food group	2 year olds	3 year olds	4 and 5 year olds	What counts as:
Fruits 	1 cup	1 - 1½ cups	1 - 1½ cups	½ cup of fruit? ½ cup mashed, sliced, or chopped fruit ½ cup 100% fruit juice ½ medium banana 4-5 large strawberries
Vegetables 	1 cup	1½ cups	1½ - 2 cups	½ cup of veggies? ½ cup mashed, sliced, or chopped vegetables 1 cup raw leafy greens ½ cup vegetable juice 1 small ear of corn
Grains Make half your grains whole 	3 ounces	4 - 5 ounces	4 - 5 ounces	1 ounce of grains? 1 slice bread 1 cup ready-to-eat cereal flakes ½ cup cooked rice or pasta 1 tortilla (6" across)
Protein Foods 	2 ounces	3 - 4 ounces	3 - 5 ounces	1 ounce of protein foods? 1 ounce cooked meat, poultry, or seafood 1 egg 1 Tablespoon peanut butter ¼ cup cooked beans or peas (kidney, pinto, lentils)
Dairy Choose low-fat or fat-free 	2 cups	2 cups	2½ cups	½ cup of dairy? ½ cup milk 4 ounces yogurt ¾ ounce cheese 1 string cheese

Some foods are easy for your child to choke on while eating. Skip hard, small, whole foods, such as popcorn, nuts, seeds, and hard candy. Cut up foods such as hot dogs, grapes, and raw carrots into pieces smaller than the size of your child's throat—about the size of a ritzel.

There are many ways to divide the Daily Food Plan into meals and snacks. View the "Meal and Snack Patterns and Ideas" to see how these amounts might look on your preschooler's plate at www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers.html





19. IMMUNIZATION / TB REQUIREMENTS

Each child attending the Methodist Day School must have all vaccinations required by the Texas Department of Health.

- ✓ If your child is not up to date on his/her immunizations, he/she will not be allowed to attend school until they are current.
- ✓ If you have chosen not to immunize your child, you must submit a notarized Affidavit.
- ✓ If your child is under immunized and a vaccine-preventable disease occurs at the preschool, your child will not be able to come to school for their safety until it's clear.
- ✓ San Patricio County does not require TB testing at this time.

The Methodist Day School protects the children in our care from vaccine-preventable diseases by providing staff with a copy of the Recommended Adult Immunization Schedule from the CDC and encouraging them to follow up with their doctor for recommended vaccines. There are no immunizations that MDS has required staff to receive.

The MDS teachers will use protective medical equipment, including gloves and masks when necessary, in order to protect the well-being of the children at the Methodist Day School.

20. HEARING & VISION SCREENING

All four-year old children need to have their hearing and vision screenings completed within the first 90 days of school.

21. TRANSPORTATION/ FIELD TRIPS

Field Trip Notices will be posted by the classroom at least 48 hours before a field trip. The only classes able to participate in field trips are the children who are four-years old by September 1st.

Transportation for field trips will be provided by parents. All drivers transporting children other than their own must complete transportation training as required by Minimum Standards for Child Care.

22. WATER ACTIVITIES

Water play activities will only consist of the use of sprinklers away from hard, slippery surfaces. Equipment will be stored away from children when not in use. For the safety of the children and staff, additional volunteers are encouraged during water play. Children are always supervised. Children must always wear appropriate clothing and shoes when engaging in water play activities. You are responsible for applying sunscreen on the days children are engaged in water play activities.

23. ANIMALS

The Methodist Day School has a fish tank in Pink Room. If any other type of animal were to be at the Day School, all guidelines specified in Minimum Standards would be followed and families will be notified.



24. BREASTFEEDING

If you are nursing, please feel comfortable to use the Nurse room (light blue class) or break room at the end of the hall as needed. MDS does not have an infant class, but parents are encouraged to have infants sleep on their back. FMI visit <https://safetosleep.nichd.nih.gov/>

25. GANG FREE ZONE

As per law, information regarding a gang free zone is posted on the bulletin board outside the Directors office. Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1,000 feet of a child care center is a gang free zone; where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activities are subject to a harsher penalty. The Methodist Day School is a gang free zone.

26. VIOLENCE POLICY

Violence against Methodist Day School staff or any other person on FUMC premises is strictly prohibited. All employees, parents, volunteers, and other visitors to the premises are expected to conduct themselves in a courteous manner at all times.

- ✓ Any person (employees, parents, volunteers, and other visitors) who exhibits violent behavior, verbally or physically, or who threatens the well-being of any other person, or any person who is accused of such acts will be immediately suspended until a thorough investigation is completed. Upon completion of the investigation, the offender may be subject to actions up to and including permanent exclusion from all premises (parents, volunteers, and other visitors) and/or up to and including termination (staff).
- ✓ Law enforcement will be called if at any time the staff perceives a violent event is occurring.
- ✓ Any person who is deemed to have assaulted any other person on MDS premises will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.
- ✓ In the event law enforcement officials are called to MDS premises due to a violent occurrence, parents will be sent a Parent Advisory notice.

27. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

The teachers and children participate in monthly fire drills to allow for practice in case of an emergency. When the alarm sounds, classes use the closest exit to go to their meeting point under the portico at the Worship Center. The teachers take their 'Grab & Go' file that includes emergency contact information, daily attendance and special needs (food allergies, allergens).

The teachers and children also participate in quarterly severe weather and lock down drills. These drills are required by Child Care Licensing.

In the event of a severe weather emergency, fire or any other emergency that requires evacuation, we will relocate all employees, children and people in the building to the main building of the church, FUMC Worship Center at 4545 Wildcat Dr. Staff will help children who require special assistance and Teacher Aides will be available to carry young children who have limited mobility. You will be notified by phone, text messaging and/or email immediately

If school is delayed or cancelled due to inclement weather, we follow GPISD's lead in decisions. You should check the news to see what GP is doing; that is what MDS will do. We will send text messages, CLASS DOJO alerts and/or emails to let you know the final decision.



28. TEXAS RISING STAR

The Texas Rising Star Provider Certification Guidelines are used by the Workforce Development Board and childcare contractor staff to assess and provide technical assistance to providers pursuing Texas Rising Star provider certification. The certification guidelines contain criteria for director and staff qualifications and training, caregiver-child interactions, curriculum, nutrition and indoor/outdoor activities, and parent involvement and education. MDS always strives for excellence and is a Texas Rising Star Accredited school.

29. NAEYC Accreditation

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is a professional membership organization that works to promote high-quality early learning for all young children, birth through age 8, by connecting early childhood practice, policy, and research.

We advance a diverse, dynamic early childhood profession and support all who care for, educate, and work on behalf of young children. The association comprises nearly 60,000 individual members of the early childhood community and more than 50 Affiliates, all committed to delivering on the promise of high-quality early learning. Together, we work to achieve a collective vision: that all young children thrive and learn in a society dedicated to ensuring they reach their full potential.

These standards were created with input from experts and educators from around the country. The standards define what NAEYC—the world’s largest organization of early childhood professionals—believes all early learning programs should provide. According to these standards, all NAEYC-Accredited programs must:

1. Promote positive relationships for all children and adults to encourage each child’s sense of individual worth.
2. Implement a curriculum that fosters all areas of child development: cognitive, emotional, language, physical, and social.
3. Use developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and effective teaching practices.
4. Provide ongoing systematic, formal, and informal assessment tools to provide information on children’s learning and development.
5. Promote the nutrition and health of children and protect children and staff from illness and injury.
6. Employ and support a teaching staff with the educational qualifications, knowledge, and professional commitment necessary to promote children’s learning and development and to support families’ diverse needs and interests.
7. Establish and maintain collaborative relationships with each child’s family to foster children’s development in all settings.
8. Establish relationships with and use the resources of the children’s communities to support the achievement of program goals.
9. Provide a safe and healthy physical environment.
10. Implement policies, procedures, and systems that support stable staff and strong personnel, and fiscally responsible program management so all children, families, and staff have high-quality experiences.

As of now, Methodist Day School is the only Nationally Accredited Preschool program on this side of the bridge. There are only a handful of programs across the Coastal Bend. We have worked hard over the past thirty years to be a strong advocate for high quality early childhood environments, and we continue to choose to align our program with strength-based philosophies that support the needs of children and families. You can learn more about NAEYC at www.naeyc.org



30. COMMUNITY RESOURCES

If you or your family needs any type of community assistance or support and you're not sure where to call; you can call **2-1-1** and they will link you with the agency in your area that can help.



- ✓ **Coastal Bend Food Bank:** 361.887.6291
 - **Portland Area Food Pantry Support:** Joe Garza 361.229-3609

- ✓ **Workforce Solutions of the Coastal Bend:** 361.882.7491 x1932
 - We are a contractor for childcare services with Workforce; if you need assistance paying for childcare, call this number to apply.

 - If you are seeking employment, visit <http://www.workforcesolutionscb.org/>

- ✓ **Portland Police Department:** 361.777.4444

- ✓ **Bell-Whittington Public Library:** 361.777.0921 2400 Memorial Pkwy. Portland

- ✓ **Gregory Housing Authority:** 361.643.5014

- ✓ **Amistad Community Health Center:** 361.884.2242 1533 S. Brownlee Blvd. CC, TX

- ✓ **Early Childhood Intervention- Project Niños:** 361.661.1192
 - Children with suspected disabilities from birth to three years old

- ✓ **Gregory Portland ISD Special Education Dept.:** 361.777.4048
 - Children with suspected disabilities from 3 years old and up

- ✓ **San Patricio County Health Dept.:** 361.587.3525 313 N. Rachal Ave. Sinton, TX



31. CHILD CARE LICENSING AND FAMILY PROTECTIVE SERVICES INFORMATION

Communication with Child Care Licensing

The Methodist Day School is regulated and licensed by the Texas Health & Human Services Commission (HHSC). You are welcomed and encouraged to contact HHSC anytime you have questions or concerns regarding child care licensing or compliance. The agency's website is <http://dfps.state.tx.us>. The number to the central office in Austin is 512-834-3426. The local office is located at 5155 Flynn Parkway, Corpus Christi, TX. 78411. They can be reached by phone at (361) 878-3451.

A copy of the Child Care Licensing Minimum Standards can be found in the Directors office and online at http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/child_care/

The most recent Licensing inspection report can be found on the bulletin board outside the Director's office.

32. HOW TO RECOGNIZE & REPORT CHILD ABUSE / NEGLECT

If you suspect a child is being neglected or abused, you must, in good faith, make the report to the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services within 48 hours. The contact information is:

1(800)-252-5400

~OR~

www.txabusehotline.org

If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, and you do not make a report, it is a Class B misdemeanor and is punishable by a \$2,000 fine and/or 180 days in jail.

Every year, all MDS employees are trained in preventing, identifying and reporting suspected child abuse and neglect. If a staff member is accused of Child Abuse and/or Neglect, confidentiality is honored at all times; however, the employee may be put on a leave of absence until CPS has completed their investigation in order to protect the employee and the children.

Know the signs of abuse

Children who are abused may show physical and behavioral signs, or they may show sudden changes in their behavior or school performance. These signs don't prove that children are being abused, but they could be a signal that the children or their families need help.

When children talk about being abused, take them seriously.

Take steps to get help!



33. What is Child Abuse?

To help prevent child abuse, you need to understand what it is. It's any mistreatment of a child that results in harm or injury. There are four basic types of child abuse, though children often experience more than one kind of abuse.



Physical abuse

Physical abuse includes actions such as beating, burning, or punching a child.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse may involve criticizing, insulting, rejecting, or withholding love from a child.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse includes rape, touching or fondling, or involving a child in pornography.

Neglect

Neglect includes failure to provide for a child's basic physical, medical, emotional, or educational needs. Leaving a young child home alone or failing to provide needed medical care may also be considered neglect.

General Signs of Abuse	Signs of Physical abuse	Signs of Sexual abuse
<p>Abused children may seem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nervous around adults or afraid of certain adults • Reluctant to go home (coming to school early or staying late, for example) • Very passive and withdrawn- or aggressive and disruptive • Tired a lot, or they may complain of nightmares or not sleeping well • Fearful and anxious 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained burns, bruises, black eyes or other injuries • Apparent fear of a parent or caretaker • Faded bruises or healing injuries after missing school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty walking or sitting, or other indications of injury in the genital area • Sexual knowledge or behavior beyond what is normal for the child's age • Running away from home
	<p>Signs of Emotional abuse</p>	<p>Signs of Neglect</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting overly mature or immature for the child's age • Extreme changes in behavior • Delays in physical or emotional development • Attempted suicide • Lack of emotional attachment to the parent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing school a lot • Begging for or stealing money or food • Lacking needed medical or dental care • Being frequently dirty • Using alcohol or other drugs • Saying there is no one at home to take care of him or her



34. PROCEDURES FOR PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Open Door Policy

The Methodist Day School has an open-door policy. This means you are welcome to drop by and spend time with your child at any time without providing advance notice to the teachers. When you come to volunteer, be sure sign in at the front office and then wash your hands before you come into the classroom!

In the classroom, the children are the teacher's first priority; if you have any questions regarding your child's progress, please schedule a Parent Conference.

Remember that children are impacted by life events going on at home. Let us know of the joyous happenings, the upsetting experiences and important changes going on at home that might affect your child's behavior. The information you share is confidential and will be honored.

Please do not use your cell phones when dropping off or picking up your child to facilitate better communication between you and the teacher.

Regular Volunteer Classroom Requirements:



- ✓ Be at least 18 years old to volunteer in the classroom
- ✓ A volunteer must have a sincere interest in children, be sympathetic and understanding of their problems, and honestly enjoy their companionship.
- ✓ A volunteer must be in good general health and free from any communicable diseases. The volunteer must have the physical strength and stamina to work actively with parents, staff and children.
- ✓ Show negative TB test results to volunteer in the classroom.
- ✓ Provide a signed and notarized affidavit attesting to no previous or pending felony or misdemeanor charges (classroom volunteers)
- ✓ Consent to a criminal background check (Volunteers in the classroom must have a clear record)
- ✓ Participate in orientation of Minimum Standards, the program's childcare policies and procedures, discipline and guidance, the release of children, the procedures to follow in handling emergencies, and the use and location of fire extinguishers.
- ✓ Volunteers are supervised by staff
- ✓ Must possess Food Handlers training



35. Methodist Day School values Parents!

MDS has a group of parents who work together to make special events a success! There are many ways for you to be involved in planning events, teacher luncheons and fundraising. As a parent leader, you help make a lasting imprint on the children and school community. We will have Parent Meetings for you to sign up to help wherever you feel you can make a difference. I hope to see you there!

(e)Mpower is a group of MDS moms who want to make new friends, share the joys of parenting and have a cup of (uninterrupted!) coffee ☺ **The class meets Bi-weekly and childcare will be provided.**

Room Parent: You can sign up to be a Room Parent to help the teacher coordinate special events; classroom activities; and special projects throughout the year.

Fundraising Committee: Parents decide and organize any fundraising activities at MDS and decide on what the funds will go toward.

Fall Festival: Parents organize the MDS Fall Festival, held around Halloween. The children can dress up in a (not-scary) costume; there are different games for the children to play; music; and parent volunteers are needed.

Book-a-Palooza: MDS is a tent sponsor; design and plan a theme based on a children's book and an activity for the children to do when they get to your tent. This is a community event and held on a Saturday

Christmas & Spring Program: The Programs are for the 3 & 4 year old classrooms only. Parents can sign up to bring 2 dozen cookies for the Program and/or two dozen juice boxes or water bottles. When the children are finished singing, they will be released one class at a time. There will be cookies & punch afterwards!

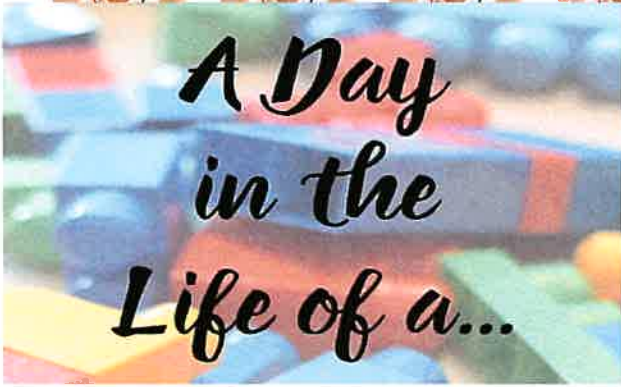
Western Days: Celebrating Texas Independence Day and includes bringing in cowboy items, a petting zoo (sometimes), making cowboy cookies, roping/saddling and western day relay. We need parent volunteers.

Pre-Registration: For the next school year, currently enrolled families can register early. All documents and registration fees must be turned in before Open Enrollment

Open Registration: Will be the first week in April (or near it) for the community. New families can register for the next school year.

Week of the Young Child: A week celebrating children! Every year is different, but the last two days are reserved for our Annual St. Jude Trike-a-Thon where we raise money for the Children's Hospital

Splash Day! The last days of school the children play in wading pools, sprinklers, kiddie car washes, water slides, etc.



So, what do the MDS children do all day??

Here is a basic schedule to give you an idea of all the fun things the children at MDS do throughout their day at school....

This is only a general schedule, each class will have their own specific schedule to go by for the year.

8:20 – 8:30 a.m.	Drop Off
8:30-8:40 a.m.	Table Activities (Writing their name, Play Doh, Puzzles, Coloring, etc.)
8:45 – 9:00 a.m.	Circle Time (Welcome, Story, Song, Bible Verse, Transition to Centers)
9:05 – 9:35 a.m.	Center Play and Small Group Instruction with the Teacher
9:40 – 9:55 a.m.	Specials: Spanish or Chapel Time
9:55 – 10:30 a.m.	Washing Hands & Snack Time and Reading a short story
10:30 – 11:15 a.m.	Playground Time
11:15 – 11:50 a.m.	Center Time and Small Group Instruction with the Teacher
12:00 – 12:30 p.m.	Washing Hands & Lunch Time
12:30-1:30 p.m.	Nap Time/ Rest Time
1:30 – 2:15 p.m.	Center Time and Small Group Instruction with the Teacher
2:15 – 2:30 p.m.	Circle Time (What did we learn today, Story, Song)
2:30 p.m.	Dismissal

During Center Time & Small Group Instruction, the children are actively engaged in learning through play. The centers are designed as Science, Math & Manipulatives, Writing, Art, Blocks, Library & Dramatic Play and the materials in each center reflects what the children are learning that week. During small group instruction, the Teachers will be working individually with children to help support their learning and conducting their observations of what children can do for their ongoing assessments throughout the year.

This basic schedule gives you an idea of what your child will be doing throughout their day at MDS. See your Teacher for the schedule for your child’s specific class.



*Are you worried about your little one starting school? Are you nervous about leaving them with someone you may or may not know very well? You're not alone, most parents feel the same way you feel! We will be here & have tissues readily accessible ☺
Here are a few ways to help during this transition into preschool,
if you have any other questions, please ask!*

10 Ways to Ease Your Child's Preschool Separation Anxiety (and Yours)

By Hope Reeves

September 11, 2013

Like so many parents, I fretted about my preschoolers' first days of class. Will he think I'm abandoning him? Will he be scarred for life? ("That's right, Dr. Therapist, she left me there with strangers for three hours every single morning!")

.... "We can forget that our deep sadness about separation ('My child is growing up so quickly') is also tinged with guilt ('What kind of parent am I to be leaving my children?') and maybe fear about trusting them to the care of others, while our children's feelings are a lot less complicated and thus more easily assuaged." Dr. Reiss echoed the "don't confuse your child with yourself" message.

"As parents, we have to be watchful of bringing our own stuff to the table," she said. "If school beginnings were wonderful for you, you'll see your child's upcoming experience as an exciting opportunity. If you dreaded school every year, you'll assume your child does, too." As for my mother, the card-carrying member of the "why do parents these days need all this touchy-feely hand-holding when we got by just fine on our own?" club — of course parents can handle the school transition alone, Dr. Reiss said. But why not get help?

So I did. Here's what I learned:

1. **Never sneak out of the room.** Your child won't be happy when he figures out you're gone. (I learned that teachers hate this tactic.)
2. **Never make promises or bargains you can't keep.** Don't say you'll be sitting on the bench outside if you won't.
3. **Keep things stable.** Don't introduce any other new thing into the routine.
4. **Expect regression.** Your child might be great the first week and drag her heels the second, or she might be completely potty trained but start having accidents.
5. **Don't put words in her mouth.** Don't say, "I know you hate school." Reflect instead: "I hear you saying you feel sad."
6. **Connect with old friends.** Make a play date with a friend from last year.
7. **Remind your child that he is an expert at mastering new places.** Say something like, "Remember how afraid you were of the zoo? Now you love it!"
8. **Introduce your child to the school and new teachers before the first day.** Take pictures of the front of the building, the teachers' faces and the new cubby, and show him a few times before school starts.
9. **Let her take a small transitional object to school.** Maybe a note from you or a stuffed animal (but not an absolute favorite; ask teachers).
10. **Most of all, shake, shake, shake off the guilt.** Your child will stop crying a lot sooner than you think.

They, you, we, all of us, will be fine.



36. FUMC Ministries

*Methodist Day School is a ministry of First United Methodist Church Portland;
here are a few ministries of the church you may not know about:*

Area Food Pantry: We support the Taft UMC and Salvation Army Food Bank in Portland. It is located on 7th Street. They help meet the needs of the working poor, elderly and others in need in our community.

Build-A-Home: This is an annual mission project at FUMC Portland during Spring Break. Each fall, money is raised through our W.C. Andrews Memorial Golf Tournament. Those funds, alongside additional donations, enable us to build a home for a family in the Rio Grande Valley.

Operation Christmas Child: This ministry works with other local churches to deliver shoeboxes filled with gifts and share the life-changing Good news of Jesus Christ. It represents an opportunity for us to invite children in over 130 countries into a deeper relationship with Jesus.

Pregnancy Center of the Coastal Bend: The Portland location opened in March 2016. They work to meet the needs of pregnant women through emotional, spiritual and material support.

Wednesday Night Recharge & Kids Connect: This is a mid-week ministry for families. We have dinner at 5:30p.m. followed by a short service and then Bible studies available for all ages. Kids Connect meets from 6:30-7:30 p.m. after the service for PreK – 5th graders from September-March each year. It focuses on developing a relationship with Jesus, including bible study, Family Time dinner, Recreation and Worship skills.

Vacation Bible School: Through bible stories, crafts, games, music, snacks and special activities, children come to know the love of God. VBS is a week-long ministry in the summer for children ages 3 years – 5th grade.

Pumpkin Patch: FUMC Portland offers a wide range of various sized pumpkins and gourds, along with photo-shoot opportunities and activities for the whole community. All proceeds benefit our Build-A-Home Ministry!

Shepherding: This ministry supports those facing illness, bereavement, family crisis or other difficulties. For questions or assistance please contact Vicki Wilkerson at shepherding@fumcportlandtx.org



PRESCHOOL PRAYER

Dear Jesus,
Please show me how to spend this day
Sharing your LOVE in every way
Help me to be kind to everyone
To play and laugh and have lots of fun
Shining your light and giving your grace
Sharing your JOY with a smile on my face!



stepinthejourney.com