

North Raleigh United Methodist Church Preschool (NRUMP)  
Parent Handbook  
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## HISTORY

North Raleigh United Methodist Preschool (NRUMP) was established in March, 1986. It began as a community outreach mission in the form of a Children's Morning Out program. In 1988 preschool classes for two, three and four-year-olds were added. NRUMP is currently a highly sought after Christian based preschool program educating children ages two through five. In addition to the daily curriculum, we offer a variety of special programs that may include Chapel, Music, Movement, Spanish and Science/Discovery.

## MISSION STATEMENT

North Raleigh United Methodist Preschool is a ministry of North Raleigh United Methodist Church (NRUMC). Our mission is to provide quality Christian based preschool education and nurturing care to children. Our goals include fostering closer relationships with God by offering this program to families of NRUMC and extending God's love by sharing our preschool ministry with the community.

## PHILOSOPHY

Regarding Students and Learning we believe that:

- 1) All children deserve a happy and safe educational experience.
- 2) All children are special creations of God and deserve the opportunity to grow spiritually, physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually.
- 3) All children deserve to be treated with the utmost respect.
- 4) A loving, small group setting is the best environment to foster children's development.
- 5) Children learn God's love for them by seeing that love in their caregivers and through a curriculum based on Christian values.
- 6) Our program is designed to encourage children to learn through hands-on experiences and play. Creativity, exploration and manipulation are encouraged.
- 7) Children are naturally curious; therefore, experiences are offered which allow them to touch, hear, see, taste and smell.

Regarding Staff we believe that:

- 1) Teaching is a very important profession, a profession that requires talented individuals who are committed to ongoing professional growth.
- 2) A positive and healthy self-image enhances a staff member's ability to help students.
- 3) The protection and enhancement of a child's self-esteem will be matters of continuing concern for all staff members.
- 4) Children should be guided and directed with love toward acceptable behavior.

Regarding Parents we believe that:

1) The Preschool Staff, Preschool Board and Preschool Parents share the responsibility of educating and nurturing children.

## FINANCIAL AND STARTUP POLICIES

### REGISTRATION

Students must be the age for their registered class by August 31.

Registration occurs in late January and early February. Registration packets are sent home with currently enrolled students prior to the beginning of registration. Forms may also be obtained from the Preschool Office, the NRUMC Office, or downloaded from the NRUMC website ([http://www.nrumc.org/preschool/preschool\\_forms.html](http://www.nrumc.org/preschool/preschool_forms.html)). Enrollment is done by lottery in the following order of priority (within each enrollment group, NRUMC members are given first priority):

1. Children already enrolled in classes at NRUMP
2. Siblings of children already enrolled at NRUMP
3. General public

All registration materials should be placed in the designated registration container on the specified day. A registration fee equal to one month's tuition is to accompany the registration form. Families of currently enrolled children must be current with tuition payments in order to register for the upcoming year. Registration fees are non-refundable unless your child is placed on a waiting list or you move out of town.

Registration forms will be chosen by lottery from each enrollment group and numbered in sequence. Enrollment decisions will be made without regard to race, color, national origin, religion or gender. If a child has registered for a class which is full, the Director will establish a waiting list for that class. As vacancies occur within a particular class that is full, registrants on the waiting list will be notified and enrolled in the order their registration was chosen.

Medical information and emergency contact information forms are provided to families as part of the registration packet. These forms are not required to be turned in at registration, but must be submitted prior to the beginning of the school year for which the child is registered.

### TUITION

Tuition is approved annually by NRUMP's Board. When setting tuition, it is the goal of the Board to remain competitive with other area preschools while maintaining a balanced budget. Tuition for the current year is listed on the parent attachment.

Tuition fees are paid nine times on a monthly basis. Payments are made one full month in advance, and are due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month (e.g. November tuition is due by October 15). Tuition for September is due by the preceding May 15. The entire month's tuition is to be paid even if your child is absent days during the month. Payments should be paid by check, made out to North Raleigh United Methodist Preschool (NRUMP), and placed in the tuition box located downstairs in the Education Building or mailed to the preschool. Please put the name of your child on the memo line on the check. Please do NOT send tuition in your child's tote bag.

A \$20 late charge may be assessed if payment is not received by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. There will be a \$25 charge for checks returned for insufficient funds. When payment is delinquent 30 days from the due date, your child may no longer be allowed to attend the preschool. All tuition and late fees must be paid in full within 30 days of the due date for the child to be allowed to reenter the program. Families of currently enrolled students must be current with tuition payments in order to register for the next school year.

Annual tuition statements identifying payments made during the calendar year are available upon request in January of each year for tax filing purposes.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

The North Raleigh United Methodist Preschool Board has established a scholarship fund as part of the annual budget for the preschool. Scholarships are based on financial need by a scholarship subcommittee of the board and last the duration of the need, up to one year. Requests for financial assistance are to be made annually by the last day of the preceding preschool year. Application forms are available from the preschool director and may be requested in person or in writing. All information regarding applicants and recipients will remain confidential. Recipients will be notified in writing when scholarships are awarded.

## WITHDRAWAL

Please provide a thirty day written notice for withdrawal so that the vacancy may be filled. No refunds will be made on tuition already paid, for guardian requested withdrawals.

NRUMP reserves the right to ask for a child's withdrawal, if after appropriate consultation with parents/guardians, it is determined that the preschool is unable to adequately meet the behavioral, emotional, or physical needs of a child. The preschool may also ask for a child's withdrawal if it is necessary to maintain a safe and appropriate environment. If a child is asked to leave the program and the spot is filled immediately, the monthly tuition payment may be refunded in full; otherwise, the monthly tuition payment will be prorated and refunded accordingly.

## RAISING FUNDS OUTSIDE OF TUITION

Preschool tuition is intended to cover the cost of operating NRUMP. During the year, there may be additional events which raise funds for Preschool use. Some of these events are tied to parent and child services, such as individual and class photos or family nights out at local restaurants. The primary purpose of events such as these is the service, and funds raised from them are a by-product rather than the primary purpose of the event.

All events which raise funds for the preschool must be reviewed and approved by the Preschool Board on an annual basis. So that our preschool does not become a fund-raising organization, there are no blanket carryover fund raisers. The number of fund-raising events will be determined by the special needs of the preschool in a given year, such as increasing the scholarship fund or replacing playground equipment. A list of fund-raisers will be published at the beginning of the year along with the planned use of the funds raised from each project.

## GENERAL OPERATING POLICIES

### HOURS OF OPERATION

The hours for each school day are from 9:15 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. For transition purposes, all two year old children will attend from 9:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. for up to two weeks, after which time their class hours will be 9:15 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The shortened day schedule for each year is included in the school calendar.

### ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Parents and children should enter through the front doors and exit through the back doors. All children must be escorted to the classroom door by a parent or adult bringing them to school. All children must be picked up promptly at the close of the day at the classroom door by their parent or a pre-designated adult. Staff may dismiss children to someone other than the parent only if notified in writing by the parent. If this person is not known by the teacher, a picture ID will be required before the child will be released to this person. Please be sure this pre-designated person is aware of this policy so he/she will be prepared with a picture ID. After 1:05 p.m., a late charge of \$10.00 is to be paid to either the child's teacher or the director.

### INCLEMENT WEATHER

Our inclement weather policy follows that of the Wake County School System. If public schools are closed due to inclement weather, the preschool will be closed. If the schools open one or two hours late due to inclement weather, the preschool will open at 10:30 a.m. If the public schools have early release due to inclement weather, the preschool will close at 12:00. Of course,

parents are always allowed to pick up children early. Follow local radio and TV announcements for Wake County Public Schools regarding inclement weather.

The preschool will make up the first two days missed due to inclement weather closings. If Wake County schools remain closed for an indefinite period of time, the preschool will resume classes as soon as possible.

## BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Positive guidance is an important key to a successful program. At NRUMP, discipline means guiding and directing children toward acceptable behavior. Our goal is to help children gain personal control and help them learn the end results of their actions. Teachers use a variety of approaches to guide children's behavior based on their knowledge of the particular child and the particular situation. Some possible approaches include:

- Anticipate possible situations and plan ahead so problem situations may be avoided.
- Watch for restlessness in children, knowing when to rearrange the classroom, change materials in centers, add new activities, etc.
- Look for reasons why a child is misbehaving
- Help children use problem-solving skills to find their own solutions to problems (e.g. sharing, following directions, etc.)
- Explain other choices that are available or re-direct a child's focus.

If the teachers have exhausted all options to guide a child toward acceptable behavior, the teachers will follow a plan of action in order to resolve the situation while doing what is best for the child and the entire class. In these rare situations, the following plan of action should be followed:

1. The teacher will keep written dated observations of the child's undesired behavior and the teacher's approaches to establish acceptable behavior.
2. Teachers will talk to parents, by phone or in person, explaining the undesired behavior and the teacher's approaches to establish acceptable behavior. Teachers will ask the parents for strategies they feel could help the child in the classroom setting.
3. If parental suggestions are not successful, a conference will be requested. The teacher, teacher's assistant, parents and Director will meet to discuss alternative approaches to the situation. Outside consultants (e.g. Project Enlightenment, etc.) may also be called upon to provide suggestions, conduct observations, and /or offer strategies that will help the child, parents, and teachers.

4. If all attempts at resolving the situation are unsuccessful, the Preschool Director (with the support of the Preschool Board), may ask the parents to keep the child home from preschool for one week or more to address the particular behavior. If the short term removal is unsuccessful, the child may be asked not to return to the preschool for the remainder of the school year.

Kicking and hitting of other children or staff, or other aggressive behaviors cannot be tolerated. NRUMP will never allow a single child to jeopardize the safety or well being of other students or staff. We strive to provide a process of helping children develop behaviors that are positive and constructive.

## COMMUNICATION

A preschool monthly newsletter is produced by the Director. This is distributed in the tote bags of the individual children. Each class also has a monthly newsletter that is distributed in the tote bags.

## LUNCH AND SNACKS

Healthy snacks are served in all classes each day. (Examples: graham crackers and vanilla wafers with peanut butter, cheese, fruit, trail mix). Parents are invited to provide nutritional snacks for the class. Teachers will have a sign-up sheet and more information about this and will post a snack menu outside their classroom.

**WE ARE NOT AN ALLERGY FREE PRESCHOOL.** Parents of children with food allergies or dietary restrictions should contact the Director. No medication will be administered by the staff to students, except in the case of a child with asthma and/or severe food or other allergy which requires immediate action by the Director. If your child has a severe food allergy, please make sure that the teacher and the Director are aware.

Parents are responsible for their child's lunch. Please mark your child's lunch box clearly on the front and also any containers within the lunch box. We do not have a refrigerator for bottles and perishable items nor are we equipped to heat lunches. Please include a beverage with your child's lunch. Include foods you know your child will eat and items they can feed themselves. Children choke easily on nuts and popcorn; consequently, we ask that you not include these items in your child's lunch or if you are providing snack for the class. If you send grapes, please cut them up.

Contact your child's teacher if you wish to bring special refreshments for birthdays or other occasions. Please be certain that you bring enough for all children in the class.

## TOTE BAGS

We ask that each child bring an open tote bag to preschool each day. NRUMP tote bags are available at a reasonable cost. Please include a change of clothes including socks and shoes in your child's tote bag. Please do not allow your child to bring toys from home to school. There will be specific days for "Show and Tell" when items of interest may be brought from home.

## DRESS

We do lots of fun and messy activities. Please dress your child in clothes that you do not mind getting messed up. We want each child to be comfortable in joining our activities. In addition, please dress them so they can go to the bathroom without too much help from the teachers. Coats and sweaters should be worn whenever the temperatures require them. For safety reasons, we recommend avoiding clothing that has a hood with drawstrings. We do have outdoor play each day except in rainy or extremely cold weather. Tennis shoes are the most appropriate shoes for preschool. Please do not send the child to school in sandals or flip flops. Each child's name should be on all clothing or personal items such as coats and sweaters. Please include a change of clothes including socks and shoes in your child's tote bag.

## POTTY TRAINING

All three, four and five year old children must be completely potty trained before participating in the preschool program. If there is concern, please contact the Director. Accidents happen, so please include a change of clothes including socks and shoes in your child's tote bag. For children that are two, please bring an adequate number of diapers and wipes.

## MONEY AND NOTES

Please place money for items other than tuition such as books, special activities, etc., and notes for the teacher in an envelope with his/her name on the envelope and give it to the teacher.

## SHOW AND TELL

Your child's teachers will communicate with you if they are going to have Show and Tell. Please discourage your child from bringing toys or interesting items from home unless it has been requested or permitted by the teachers. Sharing is difficult at these ages and toys might get broken or lost. Make sure each item is marked and placed in a bag to avoid mix-ups with classroom toys. Do not send breakable items. If a child wishes to bring a pet, please talk with the teacher ahead of time. We ask that the children not bring weapons to school such as guns, knives, bow & arrows, missiles and swords.

## BIRTHDAYS

Contact your child's teacher if you wish to bring special refreshments for birthdays or other occasions. Please be certain that you bring enough for all children in the class. Summer birthdays may be celebrated any time. Invitations which are delivered at school are to include all children in that class.

## SPECIAL DAYS/PROJECTS

Christian as well as secular holidays will be observed with recognition in the curriculum. Along with our regular daily programs, the preschool will sometimes include other activities during the school year. Some of these special events may include Construction Day, Fire Safety Day, Oktoberfest, a Christmas Program, Visits from the Natural Science Museum, Winter Wonderland, Week of the Young Child, Music and Movement celebration, etc. These activities are coordinated by parent committees, staff, outside businesses, and members of the community. While the exact programs and themes may change from year to year, the sense of community, learning, and fun are always the foundation of our preschool community activities.

## TEACHER/STUDENT RATIO AND CLASS SIZE

Overall student:teacher ratios for the school should not be greater than 7:1. Based on student age, space, student composition, etc. the Director may determine the correct size of a particular class. No class may exceed 14 children. These guidelines fall within the NAEYC Teacher-Child Ratios Accreditation Criteria. The Director determines appropriate class placement.

## STUDENT ASSESSMENTS

Formal student assessments will be done twice each year. The fall assessment will be used as a tool for planning class activities throughout the year and as a benchmark used alongside the second semester assessment to determine a child's progress since the start of the year. Teachers will assess each child on fine and gross motor, social/emotional, language, and cognitive skills. Informal assessments are done on a daily basis just by observing and working with the children. All assessment information is documented in each child's file and is communicated to parents so as to avoid surprises at parent/teacher conferences.

## PROJECT ENLIGHTENMENT

Project Enlightenment is the Early Childhood arm of Wake County Public Schools. Project staff serves children birth through Kindergarten. Project Enlightenment provides teachers and families with help in many different areas. The Director communicates with Project staff and

Project staff is available to come in and observe children upon request from the parent or teacher, with signed permission by the parent. All observations are shared with the parent and remain confidential. Project Enlightenment also offers parent talk-line, parent and teacher classes, observation groups for children, demonstration preschool, and a wonderful resource area with books, pamphlets, videos and activities. There are also specialists who provide services for children with special needs and support for their families.

## SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

Children with special needs may be admitted to NRUMP at the discretion of the Director, with support from the Preschool Board and the NRUMC Special Needs Committee. Before such enrollment is approved, the Director may meet with the parents, the prospective teacher, and other individuals familiar with the child's needs (e.g. special area teachers, therapists, etc.) to determine whether NRUMP can successfully meet the needs of the child. If a child with special needs is enrolled, it will be with the understanding that the preschool has the option to dismiss the child if the preschool feels that the child's individual needs or the needs of other students in the class are not being met successfully.

## CONFERENCES

Parent/Teacher conferences will be scheduled each year and the dates will be noted on the NRUMP calendar parents receive in the parent attachment. Teachers will notify parents of classroom conference dates and have a sign up sheet for available 15 to 20 minute conference times. Teachers may use this time to discuss their assessments of the child and/or any other topics related to the child they feel will be of use to the parents. Teachers may also use a developmental checklist during the conference to share developmental skills that the child is mastering. The checklist may assist parents and teachers in supporting the child's individual development. Conferences may be scheduled at other times during the year by teachers, parents or the Director. We discourage conferences being held at the classroom door at the opening or dismissal of the school day.

## PROGRAMS

NRUMP curriculum is designed to meet the developmental stage of each age group. The general program includes the areas of gross and fine motor development, cognitive development (knowledge and reasoning), expressive and receptive language, and social and emotional development. We believe that preschoolers learn best by play and offer an enjoyable program that encourages creativity and a love of learning. All children in the preschool receive Music and Movement once or twice a week. Along with Music and Movement, our four and five year olds receive Spanish, Discovery, and Chapel each week.

## RECORDS

Please provide in writing to the Director any change to personal information so that we may maintain up to date records.

## PRESCHOOL SAFETY

### SAFE SANCTUARIES

Safe Sanctuaries is a program of the United Methodist Church which assists local churches in establishing policies and procedures to protect children and youth from abuse. We at NRUMC are in the process of developing a Safe Sanctuaries plan which reflects our commitment to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, employees and volunteers who participate in our ministries. All employees will receive training on the Safe Sanctuaries plan as part of its implementation.

### INSURANCE

The preschool has a basic accident policy that covers each child for accidents incurred while participating in preschool activities.

### SAFE ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

All employees and parents are expected to drive carefully through the NRUMC parking lot, obeying the one-way traffic signs (entering on the south side of the facility, nearest Falls of Neuse Road), driving slowly, and watching for pedestrians crossing the parking lots. Park only in marked parking spaces. Children should never be left unattended in parked vehicles for any reason.

### PLAYGROUND SAFETY

We are delighted that you and your children enjoy the playground at NRUMP. When the children are on the playground during preschool hours they follow these rules. We ask that you follow these same guidelines when you are on the playground.

1. Closely supervise children at all times.
2. Take turns
3. Feet first down the slides
4. Stairs are for climbing
5. Slides are for sliding
6. Keep clear of moving things
7. Sit in the swings; children are to be pushed by adults

8. Play on equipment that is age appropriate (toddler area is for 2 and under)
9. Discourage climbing on the fence, guardrails and playhouse roofs.

Children are required to wear tennis shoes or shoes with traction on the bottom.

## FIELD TRIPS

Class field trips are organized for the four year old classes. They are taken with the supervision of the teachers and the parents who accompany them. Parental permission is necessary for children to attend the field trips. Parents wishing to drive on field trips must complete a field trip Parent driver form. A notarized Field Trip & Emergency Medical Form is required for students to attend the field trip. The form will accompany all students on all field trips. These forms are available on the preschool website ([http://www.nrumc.org/preschool/preschool\\_forms.html](http://www.nrumc.org/preschool/preschool_forms.html)). Parents will be given details about the outings by the teachers. All children are required to use a car seat as stipulated by law.

If an emergency occurs on a field trip, the teacher will:

- Attend to medical emergencies, calling 9-1-1 if necessary.
- Contact the Director.
- Contact parent or, if unavailable, the emergency contact person.

## HEALTH EDUCATION

The Director and all staff are required to be certified in CPR and Basic First Aid.

## ACCIDENTS

Any accident or safety hazard must be reported to the Director immediately. If a child has an accident, only soap and water can be used to clean the wound. Band Aids can be used to cover the wound. Parents are informed by phone or at the end of the day of accidents.

A medical emergency exists if a child is injured such that it is deemed necessary that the child receive medical treatment other than the use of soap and water, the application of ice, and/or covering of the wound. The following steps will be taken:

- In life threatening instances, 911 will be called immediately.
- In other instances, the Director will be contacted. Then the parent will immediately be contacted when medical attention is needed or may be needed. The parent will make that decision.
- If the parent is not available, the emergency person listed on the child's emergency medical form will be contacted.

## ILLNESS

When a child becomes ill at school, the parent will be contacted. If the parent cannot be reached, the person listed as the emergency contact will be called to pick up the child. Should the contact person not be reachable, the child will be isolated from the other children to prevent the spread of an illness. It is the responsibility of the parents to call the child's physician to clarify if the child's condition is contagious to others. Teachers will notify parents when their children have been exposed to a contagious disease. We have adopted the recommendations from the Committee on Control of Infectious Diseases for the American Academy of Pediatrics as guidelines. Children should be kept at home if any evidence of the following is present:

1. Fever, any oral temperature over 100, rectal temperature over 102 or ancillary temperature over 99, currently or within the previous 24 hours. Child must be free and clear of fever for 24 hours.
2. Vomiting or Diarrhea within 24 hours.
3. Common cold – runny nose with yellow/green discharge which may represent infection or nasal drip when one cannot be sure.
4. Sore throat
5. Croup
6. Any unexplained rash
7. Any symptom of childhood disease: i.e. scarlet fever, measles, mumps, chicken pox or whooping cough
8. Any skin infection – impetigo, boils, ringworm
9. Eye infection – Pink eye or drainage

Sometimes a child may simply not feel well and exhibit listlessness. This may be a warning that your child is getting sick. These children should be kept at home for rest and protection from other illnesses. The staff would greatly appreciate the parents calling the school to let us know that your child will not be in attendance. If we do not hear from you, we will make every effort to call you. If your child is taking any medications during the year, please inform the teacher. Behaviors and toilet needs often change as a result of medication.

No medication will be administered by the staff to students, except in the case of a medical emergency requiring immediate action.

## ALLERGIES, MEDICAL CONDITIONS AND PARENTAL CONCERNS

Each child's application, medical examination form and emergency contact information form will be reviewed at the beginning of the school year by the Director and classroom teacher. This will alert the staff to any parent concerns or medical conditions of which we must be aware. Each parent is to submit a copy of his or her child's medical examination which has been completed

within the same year as registration prior to the beginning of school. No child will be permitted to attend school without all necessary forms being submitted. If your child has a medical condition (such as allergies, asthma, diabetes) potentially requiring preschool staff intervention, we must have a written notarized action plan from the parent as well as emergency medication instructions. No medication will be administered by the staff to students, except in the case of a medical emergency requiring immediate action.

#### FIRE SAFETY

Fire drills will be conducted monthly to develop prompt and orderly evacuation procedures.

#### OTHER EMERGENCIES (WEATHER, LOCK-DOWN, ETC.)

The Director will designate a day each year for a weather alert drill.

When a lock-down is necessary for safety purposes – as notified by the church office, police or other public safety officers, or other informed adult, the Preschool Director will have responsibility for locking the building's exterior doors. Teachers will gather their students in one area in the classroom which is not visible from the door or from exterior windows. First floor window blinds will be closed by the classroom teachers. The building will remain in lockdown until the Preschool Director is notified by the church office or public safety officers that the emergency situation is concluded. Following a lockdown procedure, written notice will be sent home with each child explaining the lockdown event.