

**NEWPORT CENTER
UNITED METHODIST PRESCHOOL
2022-23**

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PARENT HANDBOOK

WELCOME/HISTORY

Welcome to Newport Center United Methodist Preschool. Thank you for sharing your child with us. We are a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to excellence in the field of early childhood education. We are licensed by the State of California's Department of Social Services.

Newport Center United Methodist Preschool was founded by Lee Mason, Director in 1967. The school first opened its doors to the community on January 3, 1967 with three small classrooms licensed to serve 39 children per day.

The school was originally located on Balboa Island at the Balboa Island Community Methodist Church. The school moved to its present location on February 13, 1974 with a license capacity of 114 children per session.

The success of the preschool over the years is due in large part to the loving dedication of its directors: Sally Allison, Anne Field, Marilyn Walker and Donna Brower.

PHILOSOPHY/PURPOSE

We believe in offering a warm, loving environment in which children are free to learn without pressure. All children, their families, and staff members are respected as unique and special individuals and are free to be themselves. It is our purpose to create an atmosphere of love, understanding and Christian nurture for children and their families; to provide a program of physical, emotional, social, language, intellectual, and spiritual growth; to provide developmentally appropriate activities for preschool children under the supervision of trained personnel; to promote education for parents with regard to preschool children.

We believe that young children need to develop a positive concept of themselves and others. We believe that these positive concepts form a pattern of feeling that will underlie all of their later experiences. This is why we believe that our school must be a place where a child reaffirms that life is well worth living. This foundation will support children as they learn to respect the rights of others.

We believe in an open environment in which children are free to experiment and investigate, free to have individual ideas, and free to carry them out in an environment that is designed for them to master. Learning through planned, guided play is central to our program.

We believe in the setting of limits for children, but those limits must be of benefit to the child and not simply for the convenience of adults. We believe that these limits will help children learn about safety, the value of property, and respect for the rights of others.

We do not attempt to bring about quick changes in surface behavior. Rather we concentrate on those healthy, positive learning experiences that result in firm, slow, quiet, and subtle growth.

GOALS/ELIGIBILITY

Our program is designed to meet the following goals:

To give the child time to grow.

To help children develop a strong sense of self – to allow them to “blossom from within.”

Present an environment rich in equipment and materials where experiences are direct and concrete in order to build the foundation for later and more abstract experiences.

Present an atmosphere and curriculum that nurtures physical, emotional, social, language, intellectual, and spiritual growth for our preschool community.

To help children learn about the physical world through their five senses.

To help each child experience the love, support, and acceptance of Christian fellowship.

To help children develop the habit of success.

The school is open to all children regardless of race, nationality, or creed who may benefit from our type of program. We welcome any child who is 2 to 6 years old and toilet trained. The school is nonprofit, nondenominational, and nonpolitical.

All we expect of the child is that the child come to school and be “himself” or “herself.” What we expect of **parents** is that you read and abide by the operational procedures outlined in this handbook and in the supplemental notes and newsletters that we send home to you from time to time. We also hope that you will consider yourself to be a part of the school, offering suggestions, comments, and constructive criticisms, as well as financial and moral support.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

We believe that offering a quality, total program to young children and supporting growth in positive self-esteem is the essence of our Christian education program.

We are a ministry of Newport Center United Methodist Church education department. We are a Christian school; therefore, an integral part of our school day is the communication to each child as to what it is to love and be loved. We believe this is the primary way in which children learn about the Christian way of life. In addition to the underlying attitude that “God is Love,” we also offer the following activities:

- Regular children’s chapel time
- Daily grace before snacks and meals
- Songs and stories supporting Christian morals

All activities are NONDENOMINATIONAL AND NONEVANGELISTIC.

We also support the celebrations of other world religions represented in the preschool population. We ask parents to share and to help us in supporting their child in his/her particular religion. We believe in diversity and support all people as members of the family of God.

ATTENDANCE/LATE PICK UP

Attendance records are vital to the safety of your children. The State of California requires that children be escorted to and from the classroom and be signed in and out by an adult 18 years of age or older.

Please inform the preschool as soon as possible when you are aware of any illness, vacations or any other absences.

Occasionally, we are asked if a visiting young friend or relative is allowed to stay for the day. Due to State Licensing and insurance, we are unable to honor these requests.

Our preschool sessions end promptly at 12 noon and 2:00PM. Children **MUST** be picked up on time! Please remember that we are a child development center, not a day-care facility. Unlike elementary school, where children are released at the end of the day, we must keep close and constant watch upon the little ones until they are picked up. Young children experience fear and anxiety when they are the only ones remaining after their classmates have gone home. We must also remember that teachers and staff members have other obligations that we must respect. In cases where a parent picks up a child late, the school will assess a baby-sitting fee. You will be charged \$10.00 for the first 15 minutes (or any portion thereof) that you are late. Thereafter, you will be charged \$5.00 for every 5 minutes. You may pay this late fee at the time you pick up your child or remit payment within 30 days. Please call the Preschool Office at 644-0740 immediately if there are extenuating circumstances.

SCHOOL YEAR/HOURS OF OPERATION/FEES & TUITION

We open school late August. Two weeks prior to the opening of school, teachers are actively engaged in in-service training and classroom preparation.

We close school the first week of June.

After school closes, all staff are involved in cleaning, organizing, taking inventory, ordering, and preparing for summer school.

We observe the holiday schedule of Newport Mesa Unified School District. At the beginning of each school year, parents are given a calendar of events for the school year. Changes in the events calendar will be announced in advance through email.

To receive a list of current tuition charges and explanation of payment, please ask the front office for the current Student Enrollment Contract.

DISMISSAL/INSPECTION AUTHORIZATION/REGISTRATION/STAFF

Newport Center United Methodist Preschool reserves the right to dismiss any child and/or family from any program at any time for any reason without prior notice.

“Inspection Authority”: We are licensed by the State of California, Department of Social Services. This agency has the right at any time to visit our Preschool and interview children without prior notice. (Section 101200 Title 22)

Early registration for fall programs starts the preceding spring, though children may register at any time for the current program if space is available. Enrolled students have registration priority for the following year. All fees and a Physician’s Report with verified immunization records must accompany the registration materials. Remember to update your child’s records in the office as necessary if you have a change in address, phone number, doctor, transportation, or emergency numbers. Please alert us to any family change, such as death, divorce, new home, new baby, or any unusual change in your child’s behavior or health status.

All staff members are mature, experienced early childhood educators and participate in ongoing professional development. They are members in the National, California, and Orange County Associations for the Education of Young Children as well as the Church Related Early Childhood Education Fellowship. Teachers attend conferences and workshops offered by these organizations in order to remain alert to the ever-changing needs of today’s families and to the findings of current research.

Unfortunately, requests for teachers and/or classroom assignments can not be accommodated.

We will be addressing the staff as Miss, Mrs., Ms., or Mr. in order to support the professionalism of our early childhood educators.

CURRICULUM/TOILETING/DISCIPLINE/CLOTHES

Our curriculum goals support individualized learning, encouraging exploration, experimentation, and discovery. As each child passes through our school, they are guided to reach their maximum potential. Materials and activities appropriate to the child’s age and stage of development are continuously introduced to support the children as they construct their own knowledge in an atmosphere of fun-filled discovery. Our learning objectives are based on the State of California Developmental Profile Standards and on the Criteria and Standards supported by the National Association for the Education for Young Children and implemented through the use of Houghton Mifflin and the Handwriting Without Tears Curriculums. Houghton Mifflin is a hands-on, minds-on curriculum that is developmentally appropriate based on scientific research. It provides children with foundational skills in oral language, vocabulary development, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, and concept development.

All children must be toilet trained before attending Preschool. Toileting at school is handled with patience and understanding, allowing children to handle their own needs. Hand washing is strictly enforced! Accidental wet pants are dealt with matter-of-factly. However, a parent will be called to come and change a child if a bowel movement has occurred.

Our purpose is to affirm a child's values even when his/her behavior is inappropriate. Teachers use **positive redirection** methods to help children learn: sharing, taking turns, cooperation and the development of problem-solving techniques. Children are encouraged to identify and accept their own feelings and work cooperatively when they become tired, frustrated or generally out-of-sorts. They are given help in choosing another activity if needed. Children feel secure when they can trust adults to ensure fair play and support them while they are developing the social skills necessary for group interactions. Discipline **NEVER** includes spanking, shaming or withholding food.

Please clothe your child so that he/she may enjoy the creative use of our facility. Label sweaters and jackets with a permanent marker. Please provide a change of clothes for your child keep in their cubby.

ILLNESS/EMERGENCY CARE

For the protection of your own child and that of the other children too, please keep your child home if there are any symptoms of illness. There will be an informal health check of children when they arrive for their session. In case you have overlooked any symptoms, we will call you to come and pick up your child. Remember to err on the side of caution and keep your child home:

- If your child has flu like symptoms (fever, headache, muscle ache, cough, runny nose)
- If your child has a fever or has had one during the previous 24-hour period
- Your child must be 24 hours free from a fever before returning to school
- If your child has a cold.
- If your child has a heavy nasal discharge.
- If your child has a constant cough.
- If your child has the symptoms of a possible communicable disease such as sniffles, reddened eyes, sore throat, headache and/or lower abdominal pain and fever. (Please notify the school at once if your child DOES have a communicable disease.)

A child who has been absent from school for a simple cold may be readmitted to school with the approval of a teacher or the Director. Following an extended illness accompanied by a fever, a child must be excluded from school until the temperature has remained at "normal" for 24 hours. A doctor's release may be requested in some cases.

There will be no tuition discount for absences. If you want to maintain your child's space in the school, you must continue to pay your tuition. Minor injuries sustained at school will be handled by Preschool Staff who are First Aid certified. Soap, water, Band-Aids, and/or "icy bump bags" will be used. A parent will be notified by phone if further attention is needed.

Paramedics will be called in case of emergencies and parents will be notified immediately.

The emergency consent form that is signed and on file here for each child will be used only in the event that a parent cannot be reached. Hoag Hospital is our designated emergency hospital.

We would like to assure parents that we are prepared to take care of children for up to 3 days in the event of a major earthquake or other disaster. We have food, water, clothes, blankets, and medical supplies stored on the school grounds. All teachers and staff are trained in First Aid and CPR.

NUTRITION

Preschool parents are asked to provide classroom nutrition according to the schedules sent home by the teachers. Nutrition consists of 1% milk or 100% juice, a healthy snack, cups, and napkins. We suggest low-sugar foods such as vegetables, fruit and cheese. Candy and chewing gum are not allowed at school. **For the safety of our children, we do not serve hotdogs, nuts, peanuts or popcorn for snack, lunch, or parties. We are a peanut/nut-free school.**

Parents will receive a reminder to replace the nutrition supplies or submit \$20.00 when they forget to provide scheduled nutrition. Please label the replacement with your child's name and room number and leave it in the preschool office.

We request that you call the preschool if your child is ill on their scheduled nutrition day.

Please discuss any allergies with your child's teacher. If your child has food allergies, you may need to furnish special nutrition.

CONFERENCES/PARENT INVOLVEMENT/GIFTS & TRUSTS

We implement a balanced approach to our assessment process that involves teachers and parents in the process so that children's abilities and behaviors can be understood in different contexts and environments. Our assessment plan is culturally sensitive as well as sensitive to children's abilities and disabilities. The assessment of young children is an ongoing process that allows the development of an effective curriculum to

support the growth of each child. The information gained through the assessment process is confidential and allow us to evaluate our program needs and plan an appropriate curriculum. Each school year there will be two Parent/Teacher Conferences for every child. School is closed for two days to offer parents an opportunity to have private conferences with their child's teacher. Parents are always welcome to schedule a time before or after school with the teacher to talk over any special needs, feelings or concerns.

Parents are welcome to observe their child's classroom anytime but must sign in at the office to be escorted to the observation room by a member of the administrative staff.

In order to give parents an opportunity to be involved in the program at Newport Center United Methodist Preschool, we offer the following activities:

Parent Orientation Night	Parent Conferences
Parent Council	Child Observation
Family Fun Day	Chapel
Room Parents	Sing-A-Longs
Kindergarten Readiness Presentation	Open House
End-Of-Year Social	

There are many opportunities for parent involvement within our classroom curriculum. You can contact your child's teacher for more information. The parent board also offers many opportunities for family involvement in the community.

While we welcome parents' help in classroom activities, due to insurance and licensing regulations, siblings or other children may not accompany parents during this time. To ensure a quality experience for you and your preschooler, please make sibling care arrangements ahead of time.

Newport Center United Methodist Preschool, like all private schools, operates on a limited budget supplied by monthly tuition payments. The operating budget does not cover a long-range development plan; therefore, we depend upon gifts and trusts to implement major development of the facility and equipment. If you believe in the philosophy of our school, we would appreciate your consideration when planning your charitable expenditures. Please see the Director, a Board Member or a Parent Council Representative for more information. Thank you!