



McKendree UMC
PRESCHOOL

Having a hoot of a time since 1988!

**McKendree UMC
Preschool and
Kindergarten
Parent Handbook
2023-2024**



HELLO FROM THE DIRECTORS

Welcome all new and returning families!

We are excited about another school year at McKendree UMC Preschool.

For those of you who don't know us, we are known as the Admin Team. We are here to help you with the process of returning or joining our program.

Ann Perras is our Preschool Director. Ann presides over education, staff and our S.P.R.O.U.T.S program and has a background in Special Education.

aperras@mckendreeumc.org

Michelle Balise is our Director of Preschool Operations. Michelle handles all things tuition, registration, general preschool enquiries and admin.

mbalise@mckendreeumc.org

Mary Beth Patterson is our Assistant Director and our Music Teacher. Mary Beth helps the Directors keep the Preschool and staff up to speed along with her many musical talents and also assists with our S.P.R.O.U.T.S program.

mbpatterson@mckendreeumc.org

Please refer to your letter from your teacher on when to join us for Parent Orientation and Open House, also refer to our website for updated information regarding Covid or other important information.

mckendreeumc.com/preschool

Follow us on Facebook "[Friends of McKendree UMC Preschool](#)" for all fun things related to us.

We pray that your upcoming school year is a successful and happy one! We look forward to seeing all your kiddos after the summer.

Warmest wishes,
The Admin Team.



Dear Preschool family,

Welcome to McKendree United Methodist Church! We are honored that your child will be part of this excellent preschool. We are proud of the preschool ministry and thankful for the amazing people who make it one of the top preschools in the area. We can't wait for you to get to know the teachers, administrators, supportive parents and grandparents, and church volunteers. So many people are dedicated to making this a nurturing community where children develop intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally—all while emphasizing that they are loved by God.

If you do not have a church home, I hope you will consider McKendree UMC as your home. Know that you are invited to every church and community event. We welcome children at both worship services (9:30 contemporary and 11:00 traditional). We know that God put the wiggle in children; don't worry about having to suppress it in God's house! We especially want children to know that they are welcome and appreciated for who they are.

I hope you will consider being part of a Raise 'Em Up group. We all need others to learn with (and vent with!) There are two groups that meet on Wednesdays, at 9:30 am and 6:30 pm (after the Wednesday night supper). You can find out more at raiseemup@mckendreeumc.org.

All of this is to say that we hope the year ahead is one of blessing for both your preschooler and you. The preschool staff is available to you should you have any questions or concerns about your children's learning or development. You and your child are also important to the church, and we hope that you will let us know how we can be part of your spiritual journey.

In Christ's love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pastor Cyndi". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned below the text "In Christ's love,".

Cyndi McDonald, Phd
Senior Pastor
McKendree United Methodist Church

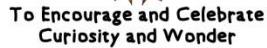
Purpose

As a ministry of McKendree UMC our purpose is to provide a developmentally appropriate, high quality educational experience for all children in our program.

We strive to maintain an inclusive environment founded in Christian values that acknowledges and respects the needs of all of our children, families and staff

We aim to provide a positive, safe, learning community, with a welcoming atmosphere that creates a sense of belonging. [OO]

THE PURPOSE OF PRESCHOOL



General Information

McKendree UMC Preschool follows the certification guidelines for the North Georgia Conference Preschool Association and Bright from the Start.

McKendree UMC Preschool is a private preschool and is not a state-licensed care facility; however, we still fall under the mandates of our state's DECAL program. Because of this, it is required that each child will attend no more than 4 hours per day, and not to exceed 20 hours per week for our 2-year-old through kindergarten students. 1 Year old students are not to exceed eight hours per week.

Contact Information



Office Hours*

M – Th 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Friday 8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Preschool Office

770-339-7040

E-Mail: Director of Education

aperras@mckendreeumc.org

Director of Operations

mbalise@mckendreeumc.org

Assistant Director

mbpatterson@mckendreeumc.org

Church Office

770-339-9801

Please call the office for information about drop-off, pick-up and tours. Tours are on an appointment basis only.

Please remember you must pick up your child within 15 minutes if they are ill. There are 5 phone numbers that can contact you. If the first 6 digits are 770- 339 - **** please answer the phone.

*Summer hours (Mid-May – August) vary. Most weeks we will be here 9:00 a.m. – 12 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday.

Parent Orientation and Open House

Please be sure to visit us on Parent Orientation Night. Things are always evolving here at MUMCP, so even if you have had a child go through our preschool before, the information we give you this evening is current and most up to date. Your child's teacher will be handing out information packets, including a class calendar and newsletter.

You can also visit and register with our **extra curriculars** who will be present.

Open house is more for your child. It's a chance to get to meet their teacher and new friends and have their first experience in their new class.

Keep up to date with what's going on at Preschool

For the most up to date information including weather closings, payments, or what's coming up next on the calendar, join us on these platforms.



Friends of McKendree UMC Preschool



Remind is a text notification for all reminders.

Even if you have signed up in the past, **you must re-sign** up for the current year as previous years are archived.

Text 81010

In the message box type @6f3eg8

Year at a Glance 2023-2024

Mon 7th - Friday 18th Aug	1st month's tuition and activity fee payment due. (Act fee 2's and up only)
Tues 29th Aug	Parent Orientation 6.30pm (2A and 2B refer to your teacher letter that was mailed to you for your exact time)
Weds 30th Aug or Thurs 31st Aug	Open House (refer to your letter for time & date)
Tues 5th Sept	First day of Preschool
Weds 13th Sept	Room Mom Meeting @ 9.15am and Auction Committee Meeting @ 10am
Thurs 5th - Mon 9th Oct	NO SCHOOL - Fall Break
Mon 30th & Tues 31st Oct	Halloween Celebrations (refer to your child's calendar)
Sat 28th Oct	Trunk or Treat (Church Event)
Mon 23rd - Fri 27th Oct	Auction items to be turned in
Mon 20th Oct - Thurs 2nd Nov	Auction Basket Prep
Fri 3rd Nov	Auction goes live.
Fri 10th Nov	Auction ends
Sun 12th Nov	Auction winners pick up 10.30-1pm
Weds 15th & Thurs 16th Nov	Thanksgiving Feasts (refer to your child's calendar for date)
Mon 20th - Friday 24th Nov	NO SCHOOL - Thanksgiving Break
Sat 2nd Dec	Walk Through Bethlehem (Church Event)
Thurs 7th & Fri 8th Dec	Secret Santa Shop
Sun 10th Dec	Cantata (Church Event)
Tues 12th Dec	Christmas program (3's, 4's and K only) 6.30pm
Weds 13th Dec	Jingle Mingle (Church Family Event) 5pm
Weds 13th & Thurs 14th Dec	Class Christmas Celebrations (refer to your child's calendar)
Mon 18th Dec - Weds 3rd Jan	NO SCHOOL - Christmas Break
Thurs 4th Jan	Back to school
Mon 15th Jan	NO SCHOOL - MLK Day
Mon 12th & Tues 13th Feb	Current Student Registration 2024/2025
Weds 14th Feb	Public & Church Member Registration 2024/2025
Thurs 15th - Monday 19th Feb	NO SCHOOL - GCPS holiday
Fri 1st Mar	NO SCHOOL - Georgia Preschool Conference
Mon 11th - Fri 16th Mar	Teacher Appreciation Week
Weds 13th Mar	Teacher Appreciation Luncheon
Weds 13th & Thurs 14th Mar	Class Pictures
Thurs 7th & Fri 8th Mar	Inflatable Zoo (in house field trip)
Tues Mar 12 th	No school Election day
Mon 18th & Tues 19th Mar	Easter Bunny visit/Breakfast
Fri 29 th Mar - 5th April	NO SCHOOL - Spring Break
Thurs 16th May	Last day of school / Pre-K Graduation

Please refer to our website mckendreeumc.com/preschool or our facebook page "[friends of mckendree umc preschool](#)" for more current information.
Some dates are subject to change.

Entrance Requirements

Program	Age Requirement
Little Me	1 years old on or before Dec. 31
MMO	Must turn 2 between Sept. 2 & June 30th
2-Year-Old Program	2 years old on or before Sept. 1
3-Year-Old Program	3 years old on or before Sept. 1
4-Year-Old Program	4 years old on or before Sept. 1
Kindergarten	5 years old on or before Sept. 1

All students are required to submit a copy of your child's birth certificate and a current immunization record or a letter from your doctor if your child is unvaccinated.

Tuition/Registration Fee

Tuition is due on the 15th of each month. Your annual tuition is divided into ten payments, one of which is the registration fee and then 9 months of tuition.

Tuition is prepaid and due **August 15th April 15th**.

For your convenience, a specially marked tuition envelope will be sent Home at the beginning of the month. Please hand the envelope to a staff member or let your child's teacher know it is in their book bag.

To hold your child's space, each of the nine monthly payments must be received even though circumstances may require a child to be absent. No refunds will be made. One month's notice is required to withdraw your child.

Due Date	- 15 th of each month
Late Fee	- \$20.00 per child if paid after the 15 th
Checks Payable to	- McKendree UMC Preschool
Return Check Fee	- \$25.00

Activity Fee

A \$60.00 activity fee is collected from all students (excluding LM & MMO). This year's funds cover the cost of in-house programs, activities, special projects as well as student book bag tags.

Immunization Guidelines

immunizations



Georgia law requires all children who attend childcare or enroll in school to be protected against these vaccine-preventable diseases: diphtheria, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, Hib, measles, mumps, rubella, pertussis, tetanus, varicella (chickenpox), polio, pneumococcal, and meningococcal disease.

Please click on the link below if you require more information
[Georgia Immunization Guidelines](#)

How can I pay my Tuition?



Tuition is due by the 15th of every month. A late fee is charged after the 20th of every month. Most parents pay by cash or check. An envelope will be sent home with your child in their folder around the beginning of every month. You are welcome to put the cash (you will receive a written receipt) or check into the envelope provided and return it in your child's folder to be brought to the office.

You can also pay via your checking account as an online payment. Just set up recurring payments like you would a utility bill. Please put your child's name and class in the memo line for reference. **There is no fee.**

However, if you would like to pay by credit card, please follow these instructions. There is a **3% fee** for all credit card payments. Please include this fee with your payment.

I have provided the amount in red for your convenience

Go to mckendreeumc.com
Go to the preschool page
Go to "Make a payment"

PLEASE PAY THIS AMOUNT IF USING A CREDIT CARD

If your tuition is: Your payment including fee will be:

\$135.00	\$139.05
\$200.00	\$206.00
\$225.00	\$231.75
\$250.00	\$257.50
\$275.00	\$283.25
\$310.00	\$319.30

As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call Michelle Balise at 770-339-7040 or email mbalise@mckendreeumc.org

First & Last Day of School



Our first day of school for each age group is as follows:

Tuesday, September 5th, 2023	Wednesday, September 6th, 2023
MMO B	Little Me
2A, 2C & 2D	MMO A
3A, 3B, 3C & 3D	2B
4A, 4B & 4C	
Kindergarten	

The last day of school is May 15th or May 16th, 2024.



School Hours

- Our school day is from 9:00 am until 1:00 pm.
- We follow the Gwinnett County School Calendar for holidays, and inclement weather.
- During inclement weather, be sure to check your local news for school closings.
- If Gwinnett County Schools are closed, we will be closed also. We will not make up snow days unless otherwise specified by the Directors.
- If Gwinnett County Schools are delayed, we will make every effort to open on time as long as we have enough staff. You will be informed via REMIND, FACEBOOK and your class teacher, so please be sure to check these platforms for updates
- GCPS has built in Digital Days. McKendree will have preschool in person on those scheduled Digital Days. However, if GCPS calls for a Digital Day due to inclement weather, the Preschool will be closed.

Class Size

The Directors reserve the right to adjust any class size during the school year. All classes will have two teachers, a Lead Teacher and an Assistant Teacher. Boy/Girl ratios will be maintained as evenly as our enrollment permits. Our goal for class sizes is as follows:

MMO two days 10 children

Two-year-old 12 children

Three-year-old three or four day 12 children

Three-year-old five day 16 children

Pre-K four or five days 16 -18 children

Kindergarten five days up to 16 children

Arrival and Pick-up

Arrival begins at 9:00 a.m. and ends at 9:15 a.m. If you arrive after



The doors have been closed, please call the office to make arrangements. Our teachers will be in class and will not be able to come get your child.

Therefore, please be prepared to wait with your child until an administrator is available to bring your child to their class.

It is critical that kids arrive on time to prevent disruptions in the Classroom. The structure and routine of your child's day is very important.

Dismissal begins at 1:00pm and ends at 1:15pm.

Please call the office if you will be later than 1:15 to make arrangements for pick up.

Late fees: \$10 for the first 15 minutes; \$1 for each additional minute.






The Preschool follows the Gwinnett County Public School System calendar for weather closings and holidays. However, we are closed on Good Friday. Please note that we do not make up inclement weather days.



CARPOOL

Our goal is to create a safe environment and to keep our carpool from becoming congested.

Please help us by following these procedures:

-  Everyone should use carpool. This encourages children to become independent and helps to ease their separation anxieties.
-  **PLEASE REFRAIN FROM USING CELL PHONES.** Our carpool line is a **NO CELL PHONE ZONE.**
-  Follow the arrows according to your carpool tag color –**RED, BLUE, GREEN**
-  Please watch the carpool video on our website and refer to the carpool map
-  Morning times are 9:00am -9:15am. Afternoon 1:00pm-1:15pm




Most children adjust quickly to the preschool routine so when a student is consistently late, it can be unsettling for them and the rest of the class. Please help your child have a positive start to their day by arriving on time in the morning.


MORNING: If, for some reason you are late, please try to let us know by calling the office 770 339 7040.


Come to the front of the building and ring the video doorbell when you arrive.

Miss Janice at the front desk, will inform the office and you will wait with your child until someone is available to escort them to class.

AFTERNOON: Please call the office as soon as you know you are going to be late. If you are later than 1.20pm your child will be brought to the office and you will need to come into the building to pick them up and pay a late fee. \$10 for the first 15mins, \$1 for each additional minute


 In the afternoon, we also ask that you wait to open backpacks, administer snacks or change clothes until you are out of the carpool line. Our goal is to clear the line as quickly as possible each day.

 Carpool is not the time for conferencing with your child's teacher. If you have any questions or concerns, contact your teacher via phone call or email.

 By law every child must travel in a car seat or booster seat.
Please do not get out of your car in carpool line.

AM- While waiting in line please unbuckle your child and a teacher will take them out of the car

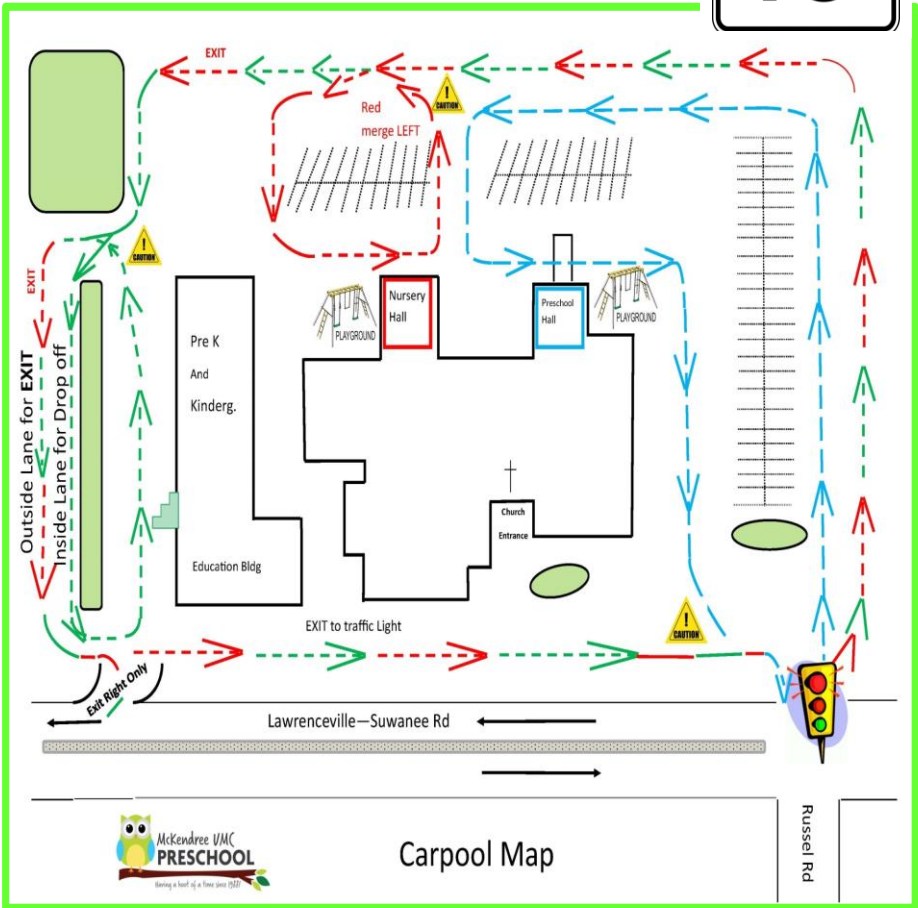
PM- Insurance does not allow staff to buckle children into their car seats. Please pull over safely into a parking spot away from the carpool line to buckle your child in.

 **Who can pick up your child?**

- If your child is to be picked up by anyone other than a regular carpool driver **as indicated on their carpool form**, we must have written permission from you. You may send a note with your child informing us of exceptions. It is your responsibility to inform the school about transportation changes. If you do not send in a note and an unauthorized person comes to pick up your child, your child will not be released to them until we have contacted you. They must have your carpool tag **or** an ID to pick up your child.
- If you have an emergency and cannot get to school on time to pick up your child, call the office at 770-339-7040 to let us know. If someone else will be picking up your child, he/she must provide identification. In this instance late fees will not apply.

There are 3 dropoff/pickup points. Preschool Hall – Blue Nursery hall – Red Education building – Green
Follow the arrows according to the color of your large carpool tag.

By law the speed limit in GCPS parking lots is 10 mph
Do not speed
NEVER overtake a car in line



Carpool Map

Russel Rd

School Supplies

In addition to the following class teachers will provide you with a class supply list specific to your class. These will also be posted online.

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS MUST BE CLEARLY LABELED.

Every day each child should bring to school:

A full-size backpack – no roller bags

A water bottle

A snack (separate from lunch and clearly labeled)

A lunch box containing lunch items that are healthy and easy for your child to eat

Appropriate clothing for outside play according to the weather

A complete change of clothes including socks (remember to change out with the seasons)



A note about lunch

At McKendree we view lunch and snack as important teaching opportunities for independence and socialization.

Teachers will offer the appropriate level of assistance according to your child's developmental abilities. However, the fundamental expectations include

- Learning lunch time routines – set up, clean up
- Staying seated while eating
- Awareness of basic table manners and mealtime conversation skills

Please help us by sending in preferred healthy foods that you know your child likes to eat.

We will gently encourage but never force a child to eat.

Celebrations and Parties

Our three big celebrations for the year are



Christmas

Class party -Parents will be invited to contribute and attend. Each class organizes their parties slightly differently so make sure you read newsletters and check in with your class teacher.

Christmas program – MMO and twos will share a Christmas music time with you on the day of their party. Threes and fours and Kindergarten will take part in a Christmas program which will be held on Tuesday 13th December at 6.30pm followed by light refreshments in the fellowship hall.



Easter

Celebrations will take place in the form of an Easter egg hunt and class party.

End of year

Classes will have an end of year celebration in the form of a party or family picnic.

Individual classes have their own small events to celebrate other holidays such as Halloween, Valentines, St Patrick's day and parent and family days.

Birthdays

Refer to your class information packs or talk to your class teacher to find out how birthdays are celebrated in your class. You are welcome to send in a special treat for the class. Please check with the class teacher for food allergies.



Field Trips



Off Site

Classes for three-year-olds and above may organize off-site field trips during the year. We do not have school transport, so parents are required to drive and accompany their child for the duration of the trip. There is usually an extra charge for these activities. There will be no school on that day for children who do not wish to attend.



In House

Several in-house field trips are organized throughout the year.

Information will be sent home prior to each activity taking place. Some of

these will be open to parents to attend if they wish but this is not required. Payment is included in your activity fee



CURRICULUM

PLAY, LEARN, AND GROW TOGETHER



Curriculum



Our curriculum at McKendree is guided by the Georgia Early Learning and Developmental Standards (GELDS). This is a very detailed and comprehensive set of standards and guidelines that we use to inform our planning and teaching.

We aim to be child centered and devise our schedules and activities to meet the needs of the individual child - developmentally, socially, spiritually, and culturally.

What is a Child-Centered Curriculum?

A child-centered curriculum:

- Is planned and implemented with a focus on children learning through play
- Is designed to build on the unique needs, interests, disposition and strengths of each child
- Reflects a range and variety of teaching methods and experiences to cater for children's needs.
- Is where teachers constantly observe children and use this information to adapt and respond with a relevant curriculum
- Provides opportunities for choice and decision-making
- Recognizes the child's "voice" and their learning style
- Uses many opportunities to develop self- help skills, independence and responsibility
- Is sufficiently flexible to permit changes initiated by teachers and children working together
- Reflects the interests and diversity of the children and the expertise of the educators
- Recognizes the importance of a positive working relationship between school and families
 - Is inclusive and responsive to diversity

Value of Play

In order to provide a child-centered curriculum, it is necessary to understand the importance of play.

'Early childhood educators take on many roles in play with children and use a range of strategies to support learning. They engage in sustained, shared conversations with children to extend their thinking. They provide a balance between child led, child initiated, and educator supported learning. They create learning environments that



encourage children to explore, solve problems, create and construct. Educators interact with babies and children to build attachment. They use routines and play experiences to do this. They also recognize spontaneous teachable moments as they occur, and use them to build on children's learning (EYLF, 2009, p15)

Teachers aim to support and extend children's play. This can be achieved by sensitive observation and appropriate intervention, being aware that it is sometimes important not to interrupt when children are deeply involved in their learning through play. Allowing children to be spontaneous and to direct their own play experiences and then sometimes joining them, but on their terms (not taking over and directing), requires experience, along with trust in the children themselves and in the teachers own knowledge base. That knowledge base is a mixture of personal and professional life experience, knowledge from training/study, mentors, reading books, use of online resources and sharing ideas with colleagues etc. It is also informed from learning from the children and families

Curriculum Goals

The following are the basic goals for the children who are in our care:

Emotional:

- to become independent and learn to be in control of their emotions
- to be able to express and deal with the emotions they have
- to learn how others express and deal with emotions
- to develop empathy with others

Social:

- to be able to interact effectively with others, regardless of perceived differences
- to be able to respect others and the property of others
- to be able to function well in a group setting
- to be able to understand why they should cooperate with others
- to be able to develop meaningful friendships

Physical:

- to develop large and small motor skills
- to learn the importance of good nutrition and good hygiene
- to develop lifelong, healthy habits

Intellectual:

- to develop a lifetime love of learning
- to learn observation and discussion skills
- to build a love for reading
- to build upon natural curiosity
- to develop the foundation needed to advance in the primary grades

Spiritual

- To provide a happy, loving, safe environment founded in Christian values
- To learn to talk to God through prayer
- To foster interest and excitement about Jesus through stories and music



Children at McKendree
Preschool are encouraged to be
children; we do not believe they
are small adults. The individual
progress, growth, and
development of every child is
important to us. The
environment at McKendree

promotes learning while having fun during the process. Through a mixture of hands-on experiences, group activities, and individual play, our children develop the emotional, social, physical intellectual and spiritual skills necessary for all aspects of life.

Parent comments and suggestions are encouraged and are taken into serious consideration as we continually adapt to new challenges. The children are not the only ones who are engaged in the learning experience - all of our staff and parents also learn from the children.

Chapel - is held once a week on Wednesday mornings in the sanctuary
Music - Children attend music class once a week with Miss Mary Beth
Extracurricular Activities for 3 and up - Playball, Choi Kwang Do, Piano and Ballet are offered independently of the Preschool, after school. A separate fee applies. Information in your welcome packet or contact the office



Progress Reports (Not Report cards!)

The aim of the Progress Report is to provide you with a written record that gives some indication as to how your child has progressed through the recommended developmental milestones for their age group. With this in mind children develop at very different rates and stages, especially in the early years, so to reduce their progress to a series of ticks and crosses would be an injustice. There is no pass or fail in preschool. The children are on an adventure of discovery and figuring out their place in the world. Our job is to provide them with knowledge, tools, experience and guidance so that they can practice in preschool without judgement and be prepared for the future. Teachers will take benchmark assessments at the beginning of the year and progress reports will be sent home in February and May for 2's 3's and 4's and just one time in May for the MMO class

Conferences

You are welcome to request a conference at any time during the school year. Likewise, if teachers think that a meeting would be useful at any time, they will let you know.

Conferences at the time of progress reports are not mandatory. If your teacher does not request a conference at this time, you may do so by signing the form that will be sent home with the Progress Report and returning it to school. Your teacher will then contact you to arrange a time to meet.

We encourage open and regular communication with parents. Never hesitate to call, email or request a meeting with the class staff or the Directors if you have any questions or concerns at any time.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten at McKendree

Kindergarten at McKendree UMC strives to build a life-long love of learning for all our students and is guided by the Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) developed by Gwinnett County. Foundational skills are taught and developed through different play-based and multi-sensory methods that keep the students actively engaged. Having the flexibility to explore different techniques to teach core standards is what sets us apart from schools that are tied to formal assessments and strict programs that need to be taught linearly. We meet students where they are and build their confidence in themselves as learners, while ensuring that they are ready, when they leave us, for First Grade.

Kindergarten Progress Reports

While preschool serves as an introduction to school, playing with others and listening to the rules, kindergarten is more structured and generally takes a more direct approach to learning and meeting educational milestones.

Progress reports will be sent home in October and Report Cards in January and May





What is SPROUT?

SPROUT is an initiative created at McKendree preschool for children with specific needs. The SPROUT team includes children, parents, teachers, therapists and other professionals. Our aim is to ensure every child is allowed to function and develop in a typical preschool environment.

Sprout Vision

Our vision is to expand the SPROUT program so that we can welcome all children regardless of their specific learning and developmental needs.

SUPPORT for your child - By providing extra funding and resources we are able to provide **Support** for children, parents and staff

PARENT partnership - We work in **Partnership** with parents to ensure that children's needs are being met

RECOGNIZE Child's needs - We **Recognize** the need to be child centered and strive to adapt our program and practice as necessary to meet the needs of all children.

OUTSIDE resources as needed - We welcome the inclusion of **Outside** agencies, both public and private in our school. We work collaboratively with Gwinnett county and private therapeutic services. We have visiting therapists and teachers who work with our staff in the classroom. In addition, dedicated rooms where they can work on specific skills with individuals and small groups as necessary.

UNDERSTAND your child's development -Staff training focuses on **Understanding** child development. Our teachers are prepared to adapt and change in order to meet the needs of the children.

TEAM effort - None of this can be successfully achieved without a **Team** effort. Communication and collaboration between parents, teachers, and all those involved in working with a child, are essential to achieve the best possible outcome.



SPROUT benefits everyone not just those with special needs

From birth to age 5, a child's brain develops more than at any other time. Early brain development has a lasting impact on a child's ability to learn and succeed in school and in life.

Milestones and norms can be very daunting; especially for first time parents worried that their child is on task and keeping up.

Preschoolers develop and progress at very different levels and it is up to us to meet the child where they are and not just where they are expected to be.

Most children struggle with something for all kinds of reasons, be it speech, motor skills, or grasping new concepts for the first time. Whatever the issue, the sooner we recognize it and step in, the more likely children are to be successful later on.

At our inclusive preschool we are constantly working together as a staff to improve the educational and social experience for all of our children.

Everyone benefits from inclusion.

How does SPROUT work?

- If a class teacher has concerns about a child, they will consult with the education Director Ann Perras.
- Observations will subsequently be carried out in a variety of situations by Ann and or the assistant Director Mary Beth Patterson.
- The first step will be to suggest strategies and resources that may help the child overcome any issues with minimal support. For example, simple room or group management change, creative use of language and materials, or short-term extra staff support to guide a child through something they find challenging. Staff will work together to develop interventions to support the child.
- If there are still concerns, we will ask for a meeting with parents to learn more about the child.
- Through conversation, and by sharing our knowledge and experiences, we work on a plan together to help the child adjust. This may require us to have a member of the SPROUT team join the class for a specified period of time. Progress will be monitored and reviewed regularly.
- Sometimes children will require specialized support beyond the scope and resources of the Preschool. In this instance we will call for a meeting with parents to discuss the variety of options available, including service providers who are prepared to work with your child in class or in pullout sessions as needed.



Useful Information

Always consult your pediatrician if you have any questions or concerns regarding your child's development,

Babies Can't Wait (BCW) is a free early intervention program in Georgia that offers a variety of coordinated services for infants and toddlers with special needs and their families from birth until their 3rd birthday.

<https://dph.georgia.gov/babies-cant-wait>

If your child receives services from Babies Can't Wait, they will automatically be transferred to GCPS at age 3 if necessary.

Gwinnett County Public Schools Special Education Early Childhood Program
For 3,4,5 yr. olds. Parent referral line: **(678) 301-7211**

There are a number of **private therapy services** available in the community who are generally happy to work with your medical insurance.

Our preschool has an ongoing relationship with Brook Todd of **Children's Therapy Group Inc.** Her company provides speech and occupational therapy services both here at McKendree or at her clinic.

<https://www.ctgteletherapy.com/>

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns. We will do our best to ensure the success of your child in school to the extent that our resources will allow, and to connect you with the appropriate agencies and help guide you through the process when extra support is required.

aperras@mckendreeumc.org

Preschool office 770 339 7040





**BEHAVIOR
MANAGEMENT**

Behavior Management

McKendree UMC Preschool is committed to providing a safe, happy, and nurturing environment for the children in our care.

Each child potentially presents a unique behavioral challenge, and we deal with each situation and circumstance individually. The techniques we use are designed to help the child take responsibility for their actions by teaching appropriate behaviors and, when the child acts inappropriately, using positive redirection and reinforcement.

Harsh, humiliating, and shaming techniques are counter-productive and will not be used.

Positive Discipline Strategies

In circumstances where discipline is necessary, positive techniques of guidance will be used, including redirection, encouragement, and positive reinforcement, rather than competition, comparison, and criticism. When age-appropriate expectations and guidelines are in place the need for discipline is minimized.

1. Age-appropriate limits that protect children's health and safety, teach self-control, and are meaningful. Teachers set limits and boundaries firmly, positively, and with respect.

2. Consistent and fair rules help children control their own behavior. Rules are kept simple, few in number, truly necessary, and reasonable for the age of the child.

3. Minor misbehavior will often be ignored. Children often misbehave because they are seeking attention. Teachers endeavor to find out why and encourage more acceptable behavior. This strategy takes time before results are felt, but the result is well worth the effort and time.

4. Distract or redirect children from potential problems. Teachers step in to shift a child's attention or add a new activity to divert a problem before it gets out of control and change something about the problem situation e.g., if a child is yelling, whisper something in his/her ear. If two children are fighting over a toy, offer another toy. Teachers support children to resolve conflict and model appropriate behavior

5. Suggestions phrased as a request or question whenever possible. This enables the child to actively consider alternatives to the behavior. "Instead of hitting your friend when she takes your toy, what could you do?"

6. Use "no choice" statements when expecting a child to do something. "When you clean up your area, we will be ready to go outside."

7. Deliver logical consequences. Gives the child a choice, teacher accepts the choice and communicates her acceptance. e.g.: While on the playground, a child takes off his shoes and gets up to play. Teacher says, "You can either put your shoes on and play with your friends, or you may sit here so you won't hurt your feet." If the child chooses to sit, the teacher says, "I see you want to sit. Please make sure you don't get up without your shoes on."

8. Remove the child from the group only when necessary. When a child continues to make unwise choices and refuses to follow directions after all other guidance techniques have been attempted, children may be asked to sit apart from the group for a short period at another table, in “the quiet area” or the “thinking chair”, depending on the age of the child. The teacher will explain to the child that when he/she has gained self-control, he/she may return to the group. When a child asks to return to play, teachers will ask 3 questions:

- “Do you know why I asked you to take a break?”
- “What were you doing?” (“Throwing blocks.”)
- “What are you going to do now?” (“Build with the blocks.”)

9. Remove the child from the environment only when necessary. When a child is hurting him or herself, others, or things and cannot be redirected, teachers will call for additional help and intervention. The administrator will decide if the child needs to be removed from the room for a short period.



Sending a child home for inappropriate behavior

Administrators will make the decision to send a child home for the rest of the day if necessary. This does not happen very often. Every day at McKendree starts with a clean slate!

Exclusion

We have never excluded a child from our program. If a child is having extreme difficulty for whatever reason, we work in partnership with families and outside agencies when appropriate to seek the support and resources necessary to help the child be successful. If we are unable to provide the educational and or behavioral support that the child ultimately needs, we work with families through the transition process until a more suitable placement can be found.

Biting Policy



Biting is not uncommon in a preschool setting. It is always upsetting when children are bitten. While biting is never the right thing for toddlers to do, we know they bite for a variety of reasons. Most of these reasons are not related to behavior problems. Our program does not focus on punishment for biting, but on effective techniques that address the specific reason for the biting. Names of children involved in the biting will be held in strict confidence. This is to avoid labeling and to give our teachers the opportunity to use their time and energy to help the child stop biting. Our teachers express strong disapproval of biting. They work to keep children safe and to help the child who bites learn different more appropriate behavior. We do not and will not use any response that harms a child or is known to be ineffective.

Bitten Child

- Immediate attention is given to the child.
- Ice is put on the bite if the child is willing.
- The wound is cleaned with soap and water.
- The teacher will talk with the child and tell them to use the following words when they are bitten - "No." "Stop." "That hurts."
- The child's parent will be called to be made aware of the situation, whether the skin is broken or not.
- A Bite report will be sent home to the parents.

Biting Child

- The teacher will use these phrases such as "No bite!" "Teeth hurt!" "We don't bite our friends." to talk with the biter.
- The teacher will redirect the child to bite a teething toy or a cold washcloth if the child is biting because of teething.
- The child's parent will be made aware of the situation



Potty Training Policy

At McKendree UMC Preschool we will never turn away a child because they are not potty trained.

Potty training should begin at home as soon as the child is ready. The American Academy of Pediatrics states that potty training “should always be based on the child’s development level rather than the child’s age.”

According to the Mayo Clinic, children can start showing an interest in potty training as early as 18 months, but others may not be ready until they are 3 years old.

More important than age are the developmental milestones that need to be reached before children are ready to potty train. Please make sure

- Can sit on a toilet
- Can attempt to **push** down their pants and **pull** them up again.
- Can stay dry for an extended period
- Can understand and follow basic directions
- Can demonstrate or communicate signs when they need to go.

PLEASE NOTE – If your child is not actively potty training and cannot push down and pull up pants, please do not send them to school in pull ups.

We request that the following guidelines are followed when children are potty training:

- Wear loose fitting clothing that is easy for the child to pull up or push down.
- NO overalls, pants that require the use of a belt, T-shirts with snaps between the legs, or pants with snaps and zippers that the child cannot get in and out of.
- A change of clothing, underwear, socks and shoes that are kept in your child’s backpack. Remember to change out clothes when the weather changes.
- We do not have the facilities to rinse out or wash soiled clothing so any clothing that becomes soiled will be placed in a plastic bag and sent home.

Parent Involvement





Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year! The McKendree Parent Teacher Association (MPTA) is an active part of your child’s education at McKendree. Very similar to those of public schools, our MPTA’s mission is to support staff, help with classroom/school needs, and meet the needs of our community through scholarships and mission projects.

We hold several events throughout the year to meet our mission. The MPTA would love your support in one of two ways. First, financially, by donating below at a cost of **\$10 per child made payable to McKendree PTA. Second**, to take part in our various events. We have multiple opportunities for you to choose from to help enrich your child’s education:

**PRESCHOOL SILENT AUCTION
SECRET SANTA
TEACHER APPRECIATION LUNCHEON**

Our MPTA board is always available to answer questions or help in any way they can. Please feel free to contact us at any time.

Please fill out the form below and let us know how you would like to help. You will only be contacted if you’re interested in volunteering. Thanks, and we look forward to another great year at McKendree!

Parent Name: _____ Child’s Name
_____ Class _____

Phone Number: _____ Email:

- I have donated my \$10 towards the McKendree PTA
- I am interested in volunteering for
 - Preschool Silent Auction
 - Secret Santa
 - Teacher Appreciation Luncheon

*Complete this form with your \$ before or on Parent night and you will be entered to win A **FREE** activity fee (worth \$60)*



Raise 'Em Up is an uplifting weekly parent survival group for raising today's kids.

Meetings in Room 316 in the Education Building.

- **Wednesday mornings 9:30-10:30 AM**
Nursery available for 4 and under.
- **Wednesday evenings from 6:30-7:30 PM**
Activities available K-12 and nursery available for 4 and under.

All are invited and welcome to attend at any time!

Both sessions will cover the same topics and discussions. We plan to have a mixture of literature, videos, discussions, guest speakers, fun activities, community service projects, and as always, wonderful fellowship with other parents.

This year we are utilizing a study by Dr. Joshua Straub and Christi Straub:

Homegrown: Cultivating Kids in the Fruit of the Spirit

“Raising great kids is less about our own parenting skills and more about God’s power. When the Holy Spirit lives through us, we model the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—for our children.”

Questions?

Contact: Crystal Cox or Sarah Brown at
raiseemup@mckendreeumc.org

We are also on Facebook - “Raise 'Em Up Parent Support Group”

Substitutes

We are always in need of substitute teachers to cover for absence. This is a good way to get to know our school and to be involved. If you are interested, please stop by the office and ask for an application.

All substitute staff will be required to undergo a background check and meet with The Education Director for basic training before starting work.



Keeping Our School Safe and Healthy



HEALTH

If your child has any of the following symptoms, please keep them home. They are welcomed back to school once they are fever free and/or medicine free for 24 hours.

I need to stay home if...



I'VE HAD
FEVER
OVER 100
IN THE
LAST 24
HOURS
**WITHOUT
TYLENOL
OR
MOTRIN**



I'VE
VOMITED
IN THE
LAST 24
HOURS



I'VE HAD
DIARRHEA
IN THE
PAST 24
HOURS



I HAVE
ANY KIND
OF RASH
ON MY
BODY



I HAVE
LICE OR
NITS IN
MY HAIR



I HAVE
RED,
ITCHY OR
CRUSTY
EYES OR
DRAINAGE
FROM MY
EYE

The Preschool staff cannot administer medication unless lifesaving. If your child has a specific medical condition (i.e., Diabetes, EPI pen) that requires treatment while at school, please inform the administrative staff so that we can meet with you to discuss strategies that need to be put in place.

It is vital that parents make us aware of any medical condition/allergies a child may have.

All staff members are certified in First Aid and CPR.

Every class has recess every day. Our playgrounds are well-maintained with safe, quality, age-appropriate equipment. We also have indoor areas for days when we are unable to go outside due to bad weather.

SAFETY

Child Abuse

We are required by law to report **any suspected** child abuse, neglect, exploitation or deprivation to the Department of Family and Children's Services.

Custody

Parents must notify the school of any custody situation involving their child/children. **All children will be released to either parent unless otherwise stated in writing by the custodial parent/guardian or by a court issued statement.** If a custodial change occurs during the school year, please inform the front office immediately.

All doors remain locked during preschool hours.

Our facility meets all fire, safety and building regulations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PLEASE PRINT THIS SHEET AND BRING IT WITH YOU TO PARENT ORIENTATION OR OPEN HOUSE – IF YOU DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO A PRINTER, PLEASE ASK THE OFFICE TO PROVIDE YOU WITH A COPY TO SIGN.

I, hereby acknowledge that I have read and understood the policies and procedures of McKendree UMC Preschool parent handbook.

Signature _____

Date _____

