

Carrollton First Methodist Church

First School

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July 10, 2023

Dear First School Families,

Welcome to Carrollton First Methodist Church's Weekday Preschool Program, *First School*. As Jesus welcomed the little children into his arms, we welcome your child to our Preschool Ministry. We truly believe children are a blessing from God and we thank you for sharing your little blessings with us. It is our purpose to provide a program in a warm, loving, Christ-centered environment, which promotes spiritual, social, emotional, intellectual and physical growth.

As we enter into our third school year at *First School* we are especially grateful for the support of our preschool families and Church members. Our qualified, loving, and dedicated teaching staff join me in welcoming the children, and look forward to celebrating the many growths they will achieve this year. We take the trust that you have for us seriously, and we are so grateful that you have chosen *First School* as a partner in caring for your child.

With Blessings,

Melanie Adams

Melanie Adams
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Director of Preschool
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Mission

Our mission at Carrollton First Methodist Church *First School* is to provide a safe nurturing environment where children are able to explore and learn about God's world while they develop spiritually, socially, emotionally, cognitively, and physically.

Philosophy

Carrollton First Methodist Church and the *First School* believe that every child is a unique child of God and we do our best to nurture the intrinsic God given gifts that each one brings and shares with us. In response to the call of Christ to reach out in love to meet the needs of families and children, we are committed to a weekday preschool ministry based upon the principles of the Christian faith as taught by Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, "let the children come to me," (Mark 10:13-16).

First School's youngest learners are curious, strong and competent. Fostering each child's natural interests, teachers challenge students through hands-on, play-based activities to build a foundation for learning in a loving environment. We also believe that what truly makes a difference in a child's life, beneath the method, materials, and curriculum, is a teacher who cares about each child and who teaches from the heart.

Objectives

- To provide a spiritual foundation for children
- To encourage the development of children spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually
- To help children know themselves as unique individuals
- To help children develop trusting and responsible relationships with other children and adults
- To provide developmentally appropriate curriculum
- To provide time for social interaction with other children
- To provide activities designed to develop large and small motor skills

- To provide opportunities for children to develop basic learning skills for pre-reading, pre-writing, math and science integrated throughout the day's activities
- To provide opportunities for children to succeed at the tasks suitable to their developmental level

First School is a member of The National Association for the Education of Young Children, The Georgia Association for the Education of Young Children and the Georgia Preschool Association.

We are not a licensed program, and are not required to be, therefore we hold a Bright from the Start Exemption License.

First School OPERATIONS

Admission Policies/Preschool Fees

Children will be enrolled in *First School* based on space availability. The child enrolled must turn the appropriate age **by September 1st** to be enrolled in the current school year.

A non-refundable registration fee of \$150.00 is required to secure a child's placement in the preschool program. **Children entering the 3 year old and 4 year old classes must be potty trained.**

The monthly tuition for the Weekday Preschool is as follows.

Butterfly (12-24 months old)	M/W or T/Th	\$180
2-year-old/2 day	T/Th	\$180
2-year-old/3 day	MWF	\$210
2-year-old/5 day	M-F	\$250
3-year-old/3 day	MWF	\$210
3-year-old/5 day	M-F	\$250
4-year-old/5 day	M-F	\$260

Registration

All new and returning children will pay a registration fee. Space will be reserved for returning children and their siblings after parents have completed a registration form and paid the registration fee. Registration begins in February for those currently enrolled in the program and members of Carrollton FMC. A waiting list begins when a class fills. Registration fees are non-refundable and must be paid directly to the preschool office along with the registration form. **If the Pre-K 4 Class has a registration of current students that goes beyond the allowed admittance number, a lottery will occur for this class.**

Monthly Tuition

Once registration is received and confirmed, you will be emailed a link to our “brightwheel” site that will allow you to pay monthly tuition through the app. This will occur around the first of August.

Monthly Tuition payments are due the 1st day of each month, September 1st through May 1st. **If your payment is received after the 5th day of the month, a \$20 late fee will be added. If a check is returned to us, a \$30 processing fee will be charged.** Credit Card and Checking Account (ACH) Payments are accepted through our “brightwheel” app. There is a 2.95% fee applied for credit card or a .6%, \$0.25 min., \$2.00 max. charge applied for ACH payments. Checks may be made payable to CFMC. Checks or cash should be given to the Director or Assistant Director, not placed in book bags.

If you must withdraw your child from *First School*, please give the Preschool Director written notice. After the school year begins, one month’s written notice is required before a child may be withdrawn. Without written notice, the parent is responsible for the next month’s tuition fee.

No refunds or discounts will be made for short or long absences due to vacation, illness, or family schedules.

School Hours – Drop-off and Pick-Up

Morning car line drop-off starts at 8:00 and ends at 8:15. Please make every effort to drop your child off at the proper time. Afternoon pick-up car line for Butterflies and 2 year old’s begins at 11:30 and ends at 11:40. **All 3 and 4 year old classes will dismiss at 11:45, please do not get in line prior to 11:40.**

If you arrive later than 8:15, you will need to park in one of the parking lots and walk your child to the preschool wing entrance (First School sign) and ring the

doorbell. A staff member will give you access inside. Car line drop off doors will be closed and locked at 8:15.

Children in the Butterfly class will have a modified drop off and pick up schedule for the first two weeks of school.

If you are going to be late picking up your child, please notify us as soon as possible. There will be a late fee of five dollars for every five minutes you are late.

It is our goal to make drop-off and pick-up as safe and organized as possible. Car tags will be given out at the beginning of the school year and are to be placed on your rearview mirror for drop off and pick up. We must have written notification from you if your child is being picked up by anyone other than yourself or their regular caregiver. Identification will be required.

Cell phone use in the morning and afternoon car line is prohibited. Our goal is to make the safest environment for the children and staff of *First School* therefore, we will not allow cell phone use while in the car line.

School Calendar/Inclement Weather

Please refer to our annual calendar, located on the website. *First School* begins the day after Labor Day.

In the case of inclement weather or other emergency situations we will follow the Carrollton City Schools closings. Also, you will be notified via “brightwheel” of any changes to the day.

In the case of a National or State Emergency, our program will be closed. Discounts or refunds will be determined by the Preschool Director based on length of closure.

Curriculum

A well-rounded, developmentally appropriate curriculum is used at *First School*. A Christian environment provides the setting for our early childhood learning environment, which offers opportunities for each child to grow in the awareness of God’s love. Our preschool follows the Georgia Early Learning Standards, using the Gospel Light, Handwriting Without Tears, and Scholastic’s My Big World curriculums.

Each day is structured to allow a balance of busy, active play and quiet activities.

Curriculum Goals

- *Spiritual*: to help children be aware that they are a child of God and therefore worthy of love, acceptance, and support
- *Social*: to help children feel comfortable in a school setting, trust their new environment, make friends, and feel like they are part of a group
- *Emotional*: to help children experience pride and self-confidence, develop independence and self-control, and have a positive attitude toward life
- *Cognitive*: to help children become confident learners by letting them try out their own ideas and experience success, and by helping them acquire learning skills such as the ability to solve problems, ask questions, and use words to describe their ideas, observations and feelings
- *Physical*: to help children increase their large and small motor skills and feel confident about what their bodies can do

Chapel

Chapel is a special time for special people. Jesus said “*Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.*” (Matthew 19:14 NRSV) All people are loved by God, and it is important to talk with them about God on their level and within their own experiences.

Chapel time is a time to help the children come to know they are people whom God loves and that they are part of God’s kingdom. The clergy of the church, the Preschool Director, parents, and church volunteers will lead Chapel time.

Music

First School children attend music with their class weekly. The music classes build on a child’s natural love of music, encouraging children to explore their musical abilities and include music in their development and growth. In music, children sing, dance, play instruments, and move to a variety of styles of music. The children are exposed to simple music concepts such as fast/slow, high/low, loud/soft, rhythm, and musical instruments. Music is used to reinforce what children are learning in their classrooms with songs about Nursery Rhymes, Bible stories, body parts, counting, letters, seasons, holidays, and more.

Spanish

A Spanish instructor will come to the 3 and 4 year old classrooms weekly, for Spanish lessons.

Playground

Please dress your child ready for play! Comfortable, seasonally appropriate, and practical play clothes and shoes are recommended. Outside play is a part of each day, weather permitting. Even if weather is cold, the classes go outside. Therefore, send your child to school with warm, removable outerwear during cold months. Please include hats, gloves or mittens. **Children are encouraged to wear closed-toe shoes.** It is preferred that children not wear open-toe sandals, cowboy boots, or other foot wear that would hinder their outdoor activities.

Story Time

Throughout the school year, family members and friends of *First School* will be invited to visit the classroom as Guest Readers. This will be scheduled in advance with the classroom teacher.

Children with Special Needs

The *First School* staff cooperates with the planning of individual education plans for children with special needs. When necessary, we refer parents who seek additional services for their child. We believe strongly in the effectiveness of Early Intervention. When there are concerns about the progress of a child, we may suggest that parents seek assessment from other professionals in order to be sure that special intervention is not warranted, for example Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy or Psychological Evaluation. With your permission, we make every effort to cooperate with other professionals who may provide services to your child.

Every attempt will be made to accommodate children with special needs in our program. However, our program may not be able to best serve every child's needs. If it is determined that a child is having difficulty adjusting to school, is frustrated with the learning environment, or if the health, safety, and welfare of a special needs child or other children/staff are at risk, the Director will be called to observe. A conference will be called to meet with the parents, teacher and Director to discuss the observations. It may be necessary to make modifications within the classroom environment, call in additional outside service, or make alternate provisions that best suit the child's needs.

DISCIPLINE

Procedures

One of the primary goals of *First School* is to help young children learn to live and grow in their relationships with others. Skills such as sharing, taking turns and cooperation provide an important foundation for a successful educational future. *Discipline* is derived from the word *disciple* meaning to teach.

We do not think of discipline as punishment but rather as teaching self-control and the expressing of feelings in socially acceptable ways. Discipline is a necessary and positive part of our program.

Discipline will focus on the positive behaviors that are expected. Simple and clear rules will be established in each classroom. Review of the rules will occur daily. Children will be treated in a positive manner with gentle reminders of the rules. Discipline measures are directed toward teaching children appropriate behavior and self-control, based upon what is reasonable for their age and developmental level. Redirection, logical consequences and time-out may be utilized as a consequence for misconduct. Corporal punishment will not be used under any circumstances.

We are committed to assisting the children in their emotional, social and cognitive development. There may be times, however, when a child's behavior can affect the atmosphere of the classroom. Behaviors that can be disruptive to a classroom may include aggression, defiance, disobedience or disrespect. We want every child to have a fun and safe experience at school and not feel threatened by other children. If these behaviors occur, teachers will assist the child by:

- helping the child use appropriate words to resolve conflict.
- praising and/or rewarding kind behavior.
- providing natural consequences for undesirable behavior.
- working with the parents to provide consistency both at home and at school.

Should a child's behavior continue to become severe enough that he/she interferes with the overall atmosphere of the classroom, the following steps will be taken:

1. A conference with the parents, teacher and the Preschool Director will be called to discuss the behavior. The parents and teacher will work together to come up with recommendations to resolve the issue, while keeping foremost the best interests of the child and the classmates.
2. Parents may be required to pick up their child from school if an undesirable behavior becomes harmful to their child and others or if the problem is

detrimental to the atmosphere of the classroom. These behaviors may include, but are not limited to, hurting or endangering themselves or other children, aggression, defiance, disobedience, and/or disrespect. When the child returns to school, they will be welcomed with open arms and love, knowing all is forgiven and forgotten.

3. Continuation in the preschool program shall be determined by periodic reviews and parent conferences with the Preschool Director and the teaching staff. The best interests of the child and the preschool program shall be the final determining factors in continued enrollment.

Biting Policy

Biting causes more upset feelings than any other behavior in preschool programs. Because it seems so primitive, we tend to react differently to biting than to hitting, grabbing or other aggressive acts. Biting is upsetting and potentially dangerous. The following policy on biting has been developed for the benefit of the biter and the safety of the other children in the preschool program.

Teachers respond to biting as follows:

- When a child bites another child, the teacher will offer large doses of TLC and ice to the injured child. They will give the injured child the words to use should this happen again. The teacher will encourage the child to say, "Ouch, don't bite!"
- Next, the teacher will take the biter aside and get down to their eye level and tell the child that biting hurts and that they may not hurt their friends.
- The teacher will try to determine whether the bite was out of frustration, territorialism, inquisitiveness or provocation. The teacher will then try to give the child the words to use in a future situation. "I know that Billy was too close to you and it bothered you. Next time say, 'Billy, please move'."
- The parents will be informed when a child has bitten or has been bitten; however, names will not be disclosed. The teacher will record the biting incident on the appropriate form.

Repeated biting by a child may reflect a child's inability to function in a group setting. It may be necessary to remove persistent biters from the program for the benefit of the biter and the safety of the other children in the program. Periodic reviews and parent conferences with the Preschool Director and teaching staff will help determine whether continued enrollment is in the best interest of the child and the program.

Crying Child Policy

It is normal for little ones to cry when a parent leaves. This does not usually last long and separation becomes easier as you develop regular attendance routines. The following will be done to comfort a crying child:

- Change Diaper (depending on age)
- Offer a Drink
- Comfort (pick up, hold, rock)
- Attempt to engage child in an activity (toys, looking out the window, etc.)
- Older children will be given a visual schedule to see the activities of the day and when a parent will arrive for pick-up.

If a child has not stopped crying after 20 minutes, the Director or Assistant Director will be notified, who will call the child's parents and discuss any suggestions the parent may have. If a crying child has cried consistently for one hour the parent will be contacted to pick their child up. We understand that this is not always convenient for parents, but is in the best interest for each child in the classroom including the upset child.

If necessary a temporary modified attendance schedule for the crying child may be implemented to help his/her adjustment to preschool.

Dismissal Policy

It is the goal of the Preschool at Carrollton First Methodist Church to provide each child with a well-rounded, Christian educational program in a safe and healthy environment. However, for different reasons some children or parents may not find a favorable match with our program. If this is the instance, the following may apply:

- The child is not ready for school: Children adapt to new experiences at their own pace. It has been our experience that most children will adapt to the preschool structure within 3 weeks. If, however, after this time a child remains unhappy or distressed by our environment, we may offer an agreement between parent and director to remove the child from the program until a later date.
- The child displays socially unacceptable behavior: Children who exhibit very aggressive or threatening behavior, i.e. biting, punching, or kicking, endanger the safety of other children. In these instances, we will work with both the child and parents to turn this behavior around. If there is no significant progress made as a result of these efforts, we will have to withdraw the child from the program. Every effort will be made to try and put the child back in the program at a later date if an opening occurs.
- Failure to follow preschool policies and guidelines: The preschool operates under specific guidelines and policies set by CFMC. In order for our program to be successful, it is important for everyone, both parents and children, to observe these policies and guidelines. Should either the parents or the child demonstrate a consistent difficulty in observing these

policies and guidelines, we reserve the right to drop the child from enrollment at *First School*.

- Failure to pay tuition: Notices are sent out and late fees are charged when a student's tuition is not paid on time. If a student's tuition is not getting paid after repeated notices the Director will dismiss the student from the preschool.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Health Records/Immunizations

State law requires the verification of immunizations of all children enrolled. Immunization forms must be updated and kept current during the school year in order for a child to remain in school. This form (DHR Form 3231 * GA Department of Human Resources Certificate of Immunization) is provided by your pediatrician. This form **MUST** include the following: child's name, date of birth, expiration date and the doctor's signature. Failure to comply with this policy will result in your child's dismissal from the preschool until such form is present. **All forms must be received by August 31st.**

Illness

A child's health must allow him/her to participate fully in all group activities, including outside play. Please keep your child home from school if he/she is sick. We make every effort possible to protect the health of all children and staff.

If your child becomes ill during the day, we will call you. If you are unavailable, we will call one of your emergency numbers. Please keep all phone numbers (cell, home and office) current.

Please let us know ASAP if your child contracts a CONTAGIOUS or COMMUNICABLE disease (such as COVID, Hand Foot and Mouth, Strep Throat, pink eye, lice, viral infections, or fifth's disease) and we will confidentially notify other parents as necessary.

SICK CHILDREN—

In order to promote the health and wellness of all children, if your child has experienced any of the following symptoms in the last 24 hours they will not be admitted or allowed to stay at the preschool:

- a temperature of 101 or greater
- signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as a cough, nasal discharge, shortness of breath, sore throat, or fever
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- difficulty breathing
- unexplained or contagious skin rash
- bleeding/wet diaper rash
- chronic cough
- pink eye or undiagnosed eye discharge
- parasites (nits, lice, mites, ring worm, etc.)

Children who have been sick with fever, diarrhea, and/or vomiting may return 24 hours AFTER symptoms of the illness end without the aid of medications.

A child who has had any communicable condition may return to school only after the following procedures have been met:

- Hand Foot and Mouth Disease (HFMD) - A child can return to school when the mouth sores and open blisters on the body have healed/dried up and there is no fever for 24 hours without the aid of medication.
- Adenovirus – Child may not return until the doctor clears them.
- Flu – Return after 24 hours fever free.
- Infectious Hepatitis - Return after 7 days; a note from the doctor is needed. Call the school when anyone in the family has been diagnosed.
- Strep Throat - The child may return to school only after receiving an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- Meningitis - Child may not return until the doctor clears them.
- Head Lice, Scabies - Return with proof of treatment.
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella - Return after 7 days with a note from doctor.
- Chicken Pox - When all areas have dried, the child may return.
- Scarlet Fever - Note from doctor is needed.
- Whooping Cough - Return after two weeks with a note from doctor.
- Conjunctivitis - Must be on medication for 24 hours.
- Ringworm, Impetigo - Note from the doctor is needed.
- COVID - May return after 5 days

***Your child must be free of these symptoms without the aid/use of medicine for 24 hours before returning back to preschool.**

Allergies

WE ARE A NUT FREE SCHOOL.

Please notify us in writing if your child has an allergy of any kind. Explain the allergy and reactions thoroughly. This includes any specific foods your child cannot eat or be exposed to.

Epi-Pen: If your child has a severe allergy requiring an epi-pen, you must advise the school in writing of the child's symptoms and detailed instructions for administering any medication.

Food allergies are posted in each classroom as a precaution for all staff members or substitutes who may be serving snacks.

Medications for severe allergic reactions and inhalers for asthma attacks can be kept at school, with a doctor's order.

Child Abuse

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

Fire Prevention/Drills

Evacuation routes are posted in each classroom. Procedures are followed by First School in the event of fire, tornado, and other emergency situations. Drills will be held during the school year.

COMMUNICATIONS

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Our teachers welcome the opportunity to confer with you concerning your child's progress or any special problems about which you may be concerned. The 4 year old class will have parent-teacher conferences, either by telephone or in person.

Communication

First School uses the platform “brightwheel” for all communications. Our preschool phone number is 770-214-1057. Our preschool email is firstschool@cfmc.com.

Teachers will send folders home at the end of your child’s school week. The Friday Folders will have your child’s weekly work and any other important information you need. We think you will enjoy taking a moment with your child to celebrate what they have learned during the week and read over newsletters from the school.

MISCELLANEOUS

Clothing

We recommend that children wear play clothes that are practical, comfortable, and washable. Tennis shoes that tie or have Velcro closures are best. Jellies, cowboy boots, sandals or patent leather shoes are not recommended and can be dangerous on the playground and during gross motor play. At *First School* getting messy is part of the learning process. Clothing should be suitable for daily art projects.

Each child should provide a complete seasonal change of clothing for the teacher to keep in case of an “accident”. Please put the change of clothes in a zip-lock bag and label with your child’s name, and bring to school on the first day.

Label! Label! Label!

Label all lunch boxes and food containers, including water bottles. All removable items (jackets, coats, hats, etc.) should be labeled. This is to ensure all items worn and brought to school also return home.

Toilet Training

Please notify the child's teachers when toilet training has begun. During this phase the child should come to school in clothes that allow for ease in the process. Elastic waistbands are much easier than buttons and belts. This is not only a stage of learning but also a stage of independence. Please bring two changes of clothing during this toilet training period. All children entering a 3 year old classroom should be completely potty trained.

Toys

Unless requested by the teacher for other reasons such as "show and tell," we ask that all personal toys and books stay home or in your car. We understand that some children may need something to transition from home to school and we will work with each family to ease this transition.

Snacks

Each child will bring his/her own snack daily, in a lunch box/bag. Children will have a snack time around 10:00 am with their classmates and teacher. Weather permitting, snack time could occur outside. We encourage healthy snacks such as yogurt, fruit, pretzels, muffins, fruit bars and cheese to be packed in your child's lunch box.

Please do not send items with nuts, potato chips, hard candy or food high in sugar.

This is a great time for your child to learn independence, table manners, and conversation skills.

Please send your child to school with a water bottle to use during the day. We encourage all children to drink water only; but if your child does not like water then adding a few drops of a water flavor enhancer (such as MIO) is allowed. Children are not allowed to have sodas, juice etc. unless approved with the teacher. You will be notified of any food allergies in your child's class.

Class Parties

Your child's class will have a number of class parties throughout the year. Teachers will send out information prior to the party for parents to bring items. A party calendar will be released in August each year. **No nut products** for parties.

Birthday Parties

Your child may celebrate his/her birthday at school if you wish. You may provide a special snack or treat; however, no presents should be received. Parents are welcomed on this occasion, but we do require that you pre-arrange this with your child's teacher. If you are planning a party outside of the classroom and plan to invite classmates, please remember to invite each and every child in the class and ask the teacher to place the invitation in the Friday Folder. Party invitations may not be sent home through the school unless all classmates are included. If your child has a summer birthday please speak with their teacher to set a date to celebrate during the year.

Preparing for the First Day

The first day of school is one that we hope will be a positive experience for you and your child. To help your child start his/her preschool year off on a positive note, please make every effort to:

- plan your schedule so your child will be well rested, unhurried, well fed and relaxed for the first morning and every morning.
- expect that your child will go to school happily and will have a good time. Use encouraging and uplifting words with your child about his/her first day. Your child will sense your own insecurity or anxiousness quickly.
- talk about preschool in a positive way and name specific activities that your child will enjoy during the day. *"You will have so much fun making art with your friends" or "I can't wait to hear about your day and see what you have made" or "Your teacher (use name) will be so excited to see you today"*.
- we ask that you keep all personal items such as: blankets, pacifiers, lovies, etc. at home. These items are "germ catchers" and can easily spread them around when other children try to enjoy them. (If a child is having difficulty with the transition to school, the teacher may suggest bringing a comfort item from home.)

If your child feels the adjustment to preschool is difficult, we encourage you to talk with your child's teacher. They may have some helpful hints or suggestions on how to make the transition to preschool easier.

You are welcome to call the preschool office and check on your child.