



PARENT HANDBOOK

REVISED JULY 2023

Welcome

Welcome to Stepping Stones Preschool, a ministry of Trinity United Methodist Church.

We are delighted with your interest in our preschool. Since 1976, we have been diligently caring for preschool-aged children in our community. Our mission is to care for God's children each step as they grow!

The following information is intended for families interested in our preschool program. We offer half day and full day options for children 3 months through Prekindergarten. The pastors, staff and members of Trinity United Methodist Church (Trinity) believe the early years of development are foundational to the growth of each person. We look forward to the opportunity of partnering with you in your child's development and welcoming you to the preschool family!

Contact Information

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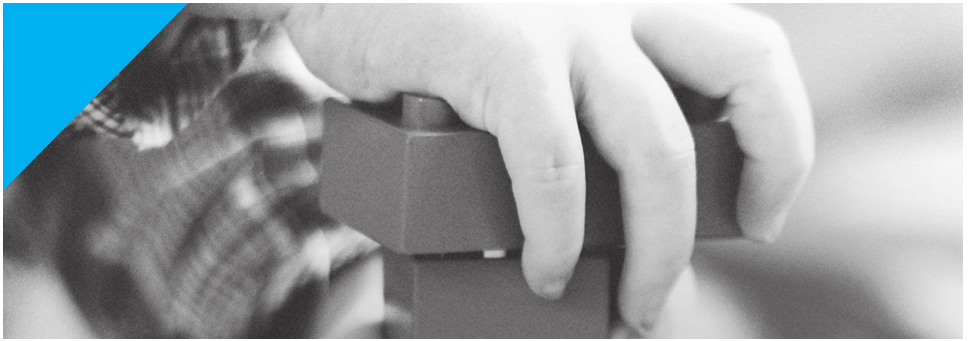
License C08AL0519

Stepping Stones Preschool is licensed by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF). The preschool meets all current licensing requirements and is inspected several times a year by DCF to ensure we are maintaining a safe and healthy environment for Stepping Stones families.



Table of Contents

Page 4	Our Mission & Our Vision
Page 5	Program Information
Page 6-7	Enrollment & Tuition
Page 8-9	Health Requirements
Page 10	Emergency and Safety Procedures
Page 11-12	Arrival & Dismissal/Additional Considerations
Page 13-14	Additional Considerations (cont.)/Important Reminders
Page 15	Food Related Activities, Snacks, & Lunches
Page 16-17	Discipline & Behavior Modification Plan/Disruptive Behavior Policy
Page 18	Behavior & Dismissal/Termination of Agreement Policy
Page 19	Food Policy/Field Trips/Child Abuse Policy/Photographs
Page 20	Volunteer/Family Involvement/Brightwheel Communication
Page 21	Non-Discrimination Policy



Our Mission

To care for God's children each step as they grow.

To provide a safe and caring environment for young children.

To nurture the development of children in a loving Christian atmosphere.

To foster a family community that is big hearted, spirit led, Christ minded, and bound by love.

Our Vision

A Place to Belong...

We believe each person is a child of God, and therefore worthy of love, acceptance, and encouragement. We seek to provide a place where the nurturing of children is of the highest calling.

A Place to Become...

We believe we are made in the image of God and given the capacity to create. We seek to provide to all children opportunities for their cognitive, social, emotional, physical, creative, and spiritual growth.

A Place to Make a Difference...

We believe that God's love is given freely to all of us. We seek to build a staff team who are valued for their commitment to children, and a community where parents of all cultural, ethnic, and economic backgrounds are embraced for their uniqueness in our world.

We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, or national origin. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for our staff team as well as the children and families we serve.

BIG HEARTED | SPIRIT LED | CHRIST MINDED | BOUND BY LOVE

Program Information

A. Stepping Stones Preschool Staff

Our teachers have many years of experience in early childhood education, have taken the mandated DCF trainings, and have CPR and First Aid training. Our team is committed to continuing education through professional development opportunities and many hold higher education degrees and/or nationally recognized certifications.

B. Program Overview

We provide a curriculum that encourages whole-child learning, while developing a positive self-concept and social skills. Each classroom has an age-appropriate environment where the children learn from each other, as well as their teacher.

Research shows that children learn best through play which reflects real actions, tangible objects, and direct encounters involving all five senses. Therefore, much of our program is child centered, permitting each child the freedom to act upon their own curiosity and ideas within a consistent framework. Activities are carefully selected to incorporate and develop all learning domains.

Children are provided a variety of educational opportunities including learning centers to explore, planned activities in art, creative movement, cooking, gardening, nature, and much more! Language and literacy, math, science, and social studies are incorporated within the daily curriculum.

Our foundation is built on a constant supply of love, with a focus on Christ, and the fostering of a close family feeling in a carefully appointed classroom. Our student/teacher ratios are low affording each child individual attention as needed. Enrollment is limited to help achieve these goals. Every classroom has a lead teacher and an assistant teacher.

In addition to our other curricula, we use “ABC See, Can, Hear, Do” supplemented with “Handwriting Without Tears”. Young children are not ready to sit still and focus for long periods of time. They learn best when they move, manipulate objects, build, sing, draw, and participate in dramatic play. The Readiness and Writing program acknowledges that learning needs to be joyful, child-friendly, and active.

C. Chapel Time and Christian Education

As a ministry of Trinity, the teaching of God’s unconditional love is foundational to our program. The three-year-old classes and Prekindergarten classes attend Chapel in the Worship Center each Monday. Our younger children in the two-year-old classes, toddler classes, and infants incorporate Chapel into their classroom lesson plans and also have the option of attending Chapel in the Worship Center as well. Our primary focus is to teach children that Jesus loves them just as they are, and we are called to love God and our neighbors as ourselves.



Enrollment & Tuition

2023-2024 Tuition Pricing Stepping Stones Preschool

Program Time	3 days (MWF)	5 days (M-F)
Infants	*there is no 3-day option	\$1,185
7:30 - 1:00	\$475	\$670
7:30 - 3:00	\$615	\$850
7:30 - 5:30	\$750	\$1,040
9:00 - 1:00	\$375	\$550
9:00 - 3:00	\$515	\$730
9:00 - 5:30	\$650	\$930

A. General Enrollment

Children are enrolled on a first come, first served basis. Enrollment begins in January for the following school year and current students, incoming siblings, and alumni siblings are granted priority enrollment first. After in-house/alumni enrollment is completed, remaining spaces are opened to the community. Once program capacity is full, names are placed on a waitlist and families will be contacted as spaces become available.

B. Registration

To register a child at Stepping Stones Preschool, parents/guardians must submit a completed enrollment packet along with the nonrefundable registration fee of \$225.

C. Tuition and Fees

Stepping Stones yearly tuition is divided into ten monthly payments (August-May). Parents are responsible for paying full tuition each month regardless of absence, holidays, staff development, inclement weather, etc. Please reference the school calendar to be informed of scheduled school closings.

Tuition: Tuition payments are due on the 1st of the month, August through May, and billing is completed in the Brightwheel app. You will have the option of setting up automatic payments or you may use a credit card, which will incur approximately a 3% charge per transaction. Parents are responsible for keeping payment information up to date within the app.

Late Fees: Payment is considered late after the 10th of the month and a late fee of \$20 will be assessed. In the event your account is not paid by the last day of the month, Stepping Stones has the right to terminate your child's enrollment status by the 15th of the following month if you do not bring your account current.

Annual Registration Fee: A \$225 nonrefundable registration fee is due at the time of enrollment each year. The registration fee helps to cover costs for materials, special events, and professional development opportunities for the staff.

For more details regarding billing, please reference the Stepping Stones Preschool Tuition Agreement.

D. Child Placement

As a ministry of Trinity United Methodist Church, it is our mission to provide children with a positive and loving learning experience with an emphasis on Christian teachings. Child placement is decided by:

- Age of the child
- Availability of class openings
- Student/Teacher ratios as mandated by the Department of Children and Families
- Health and wellbeing of the child
- Independence in toileting (specifically for three and four-year-old classes)
- Emotional, social, and intellectual development of the child
- The needs and personalities of the individual child, with input from the teachers and parents shared at Parent/Teacher Conferences and/or with input from the Director and Assistant Director
- The need to create group dynamics that are beneficial to the spiritual, social, emotional, and cognitive wellbeing of all children.

E. Medical/Educational Records

If your child is receiving any therapies or supports, we strongly encourage you to share this information with the school. All information will remain confidential but can be used in collaboration with the parents to determine what supports would be best in the classroom. Stepping Stones will make every reasonable effort to accommodate and include children with disabilities in our classrooms, however, our staff are not specifically certified in teaching students with moderate or severe disabilities. We will work with you and other professionals involved in your child's care to meet their needs. If we determine that we are not able to safely and effectively meet your child's needs, we reserve the right to deny or terminate enrollment. In the case that we terminate enrollment, we will offer a refund of registration fees as well as prorated tuition.



F. Scholarship Fund

Stepping Stones has a scholarship fund for families needing financial assistance. Please contact the preschool office to receive a scholarship application. Scholarship applications are anonymously presented to the Preschool Advisory Board for review and decision.

G. Withdrawal

In the event you need to withdraw your child from Stepping Stones, you must agree to notify the Director at least 30-days prior to the withdrawal date. If 30-days notice is not given, you will be responsible for the full month's tuition. If 30-days notice is given, the month of withdrawal can be prorated according to the date of withdrawal. A Notice of Withdrawal can be emailed or a printed copy made available to you upon request.

Withdrawing families give up all rights to their child's spot and the spot will become available to families on the waitlist.

H. Closures Beyond Control

In the event of circumstances requiring Stepping Stones to close that are beyond the school's control, you will be responsible for the remaining tuition balance of the current month. Should a closure extend further, you will not be billed for tuition until the school reopens.

Health Requirements & Safety Procedures

A. School Entry Health Exam Form & FL Certification of Immunization Form

We are required by the Department of Children and Families to have current health forms on file for each child: Form DH 3040 - School Entry Health Exam and Form DH 680 FL Immunization Record. Health Exam forms are valid for two years from the date of examination. Immunization forms expire according to the date supplied by the physician on the form. Both of these forms are available through your child's pediatrician. We will notify you of expiration dates for physicals and immunizations. If the forms expire, we are required by state law to exclude the child until the proper forms are submitted. These rules are firm, and we are required to comply. The School Entry Health Exam Form and the FL Certification of Immunization Form are required for each child on or before the first day of attendance. If helpful, the forms can be faxed to the church office at (352)248-0021 or emailed to steppingstones@trinitygncv.org.

B. Illness

If a child exhibits any of the above symptoms upon arrival at school, or at any point throughout the school day, parents will be asked to take the child home.

A child may not return without medical authorization or only if the signs and symptoms of the disease are no longer present. A child must be fever free/symptom free without the use of medication for 24 hours before returning to school.

- Fever over 100°F
- Unexplained rash
- Head lice
- Headache
- Scabies
- Nausea, diarrhea, or vomiting
- Hand, Foot, and Mouth
- Discolored urine and/or stool
- Severe or uncontrollable coughing
- Any discharge or drainage from eyes, nose, ears, or open sores
- Unusual or unexplained loss of appetite, fatigue, irritability, or headache
- Under any orders by a physician
- Loss of appetite
- Impetigo
- Sore throat
- Stiff neck
- Ringworm
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Fatigue
- Earache
- Difficult breathing
- Pink Eye or conjunctivitis

C. Medications

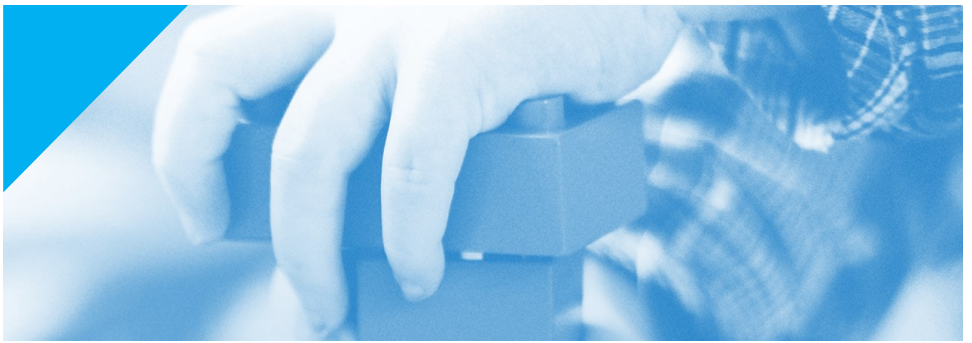
Per Department of Children and Families regulation, children may only be given medication if a parent/guardian has given written consent on a medication authorization form. If needed, please complete the required forms with the preschool office. Prescription medication must have a prescription label with the child's name and date on it. Over-the-counter medicines must have the label on them and an expiration date. Out of date medications will be returned to parents.

D. Accidents

If your child has a minor accident at school, the teacher will attend to your child and then write an incident report. At pickup time, the teacher will go over the report with you and ask you to sign it. This act simply notifies you of the accident. In case of illness or injury, the school will call parents to obtain specific instructions. Please be sure to have the most up-to-date contact information on file in the preschool office. The application for enrollment form lists the name of the child's physician designated by the parents for emergency care in case the parents cannot immediately be contacted. If parents or designated persons cannot be reached, an emergency vehicle will be summoned from the hospital designated on the enrollment form. If a trip to the emergency room is necessary and the parents have not arrived, the Director or Assistant Director will accompany the child at all times until unification with the parents occurs.

E. Stepping Stones COVID-19 Protocols and Communicable Disease/Illness Protocol—Adopted 1/18/23

As part of the enrollment paperwork for Stepping Stones, you are asked to sign an agreement acknowledging our protocols for illnesses. Please reference this document for specific guidelines and procedures for illness at school.



Emergency and Safety Procedures

Equipment: All classrooms are equipped with a walkie talkie and first aid kit. There are smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, and emergency lights all adequately placed and inspected on a routine basis.

Staff Requirements for Safety: All staff are required to maintain current CPR/First Aid training and all incidents/accidents are communicated with parents in accordance with DCF regulations.

Severe Weather: In case of severe weather, we will follow the recommendations of the School Board of Alachua County (SBAC). Any closings will be announced on local television and radio stations. We will also send text/alert messages via Brightwheel to keep you informed of unexpected closings and/or deviations from SBAC decisions.

Safety Drills: Fire drills are conducted once a month per DCF regulations. Severe weather drills and lockdown scenarios are held once per school year. Doors are easily opened from the inside in case of emergency for quick exit. We are required by DCF to perform monthly safety drills and are only permitted to substitute fire drills for an alternate drill twice per school year. Evacuation routes are posted in each classroom.

Evacuation: If a crisis were ever to arise in which we would be required to evacuate the children to a nearby location for their safety, we would evacuate to the Talbot Elementary School campus.

Security: All doors accessing the preschool hallway and classrooms always remain locked. All guests must enter the main lobby and be granted permission to enter the preschool hallway.

Lockdown: In the event of a need to secure our school, we will follow the “I Love You Guys” protocols developed by the School Board of Alachua County (SBAC). The following terms are used: Hold, Secure, Lockdown, Evacuate, and Shelter. A document will be given to all families that define what each of these procedures entails.

Communication of any emergency procedure will be communicated with families via Brightwheel. Information will be limited with the initial communication, but additional information and directions will shortly follow.

In case of an emergency, contact the Stepping Stones Preschool office at (352) 416-3025. If there is no answer, call the Trinity United Methodist Church office at (352) 376-6615 and ask them to deliver a message to the preschool. In the vent of an emergency on campus, Stepping Stones will use Brightwheel to communicate all information to families.

Arrival & Dismissal

We offer half day and full day options. With so many options available to accommodate families, it is important that we adhere to the following protocol.

A. Hours

Early Morning Care: If your child is enrolled in early morning care you are welcome to check-in from 7:30 am – 8:50 am. If you arrive after 8:50 we ask that you take your child to the appropriate 9:00 am check-in location for your child’s safety as we transition children from early morning care from 8:50-9:00.

School Day Care: Our standard school day hours are from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm. Children must be checked-in with their teacher at their classroom or designated drop-off location.

Afternoon Enrichment Care: Children enrolled until 3:00 and/or 5:30 participate in our afternoon enrichment care. For children to participate in afternoon enrichment, they must be in attendance for the school day from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm. At 1:00 children transition to be with their afternoon enrichment teachers. Children in our toddlers and twos classes have naptime from 1:00-3:00; if they stay past 3:00 they enjoy snack, classroom activities and additional playground time. Children in our threes and PreK classes have extended playground time after lunch and enjoy structured activities in the classroom or outside when weather permits; if they stay past 3:00 they enjoy snack, open classroom centers, and finish their day on the playground.

Notes:

- Children do best with a consistent schedule and routine. If you are going to be late or have an appointment, please communicate with your child’s teacher via Brightwheel messaging.

B. Parking

There is adequate parking available on the Trinity property and your child’s teacher can recommend the most convenient parking available based your child’s designated check-in/out locations. We ask that you please take safety in the parking lots seriously and use it as an important teaching opportunity for your child. Our parking lots and campus can be very busy at times and we don’t want any of the children getting hurt. No parking is allowed under the church portico or along the curb for drop-off or pick-up.

C. Check-In/Check-Out

Children must be checked in and out using the Brightwheel app. Use of the Brightwheel app also applies to all individuals listed on your child’s enrollment application as approved pickup persons or emergency contacts. Each person has a unique code, which must be used during the check-in/out process. In addition, our school uses the touchless check-in/out option, which involves scanning a QR code with a smartphone. If you or your designated individual does not have a smartphone, your child can be checked in or out using the tablet located in the classroom. Checking in and out is extremely important as these records are used to check attendance throughout the day, as well as during emergency drills or events.



D. Authorized Pick Up

Each child must have a completed Stepping Stones Preschool Enrollment form on file that lists names, addresses, and phone numbers of all persons designated by parents to pick up their child. Any person that you may call on in an emergency to pick up your child should be included on the form. If someone unlisted will be picking up your child, you are required to notify the school via Brightwheel and add the person in your child's Brightwheel profile. If a teacher and/or substitute teacher is meeting someone for the first time they will ask to see their photo I.D. for the safety of your child. **However, all ID's will be checked at the front desk by an administrator if someone is unfamiliar to the staff.**

E. Late Pick-Up

Please be prompt and respectful of your chosen dismissal time. We understand that unforeseen circumstances arise, and you may run late; please send a message via Brightwheel to notify us and the first time will be forgiven. On the 2nd occurrence and thereafter, a late pickup fee of \$2 per minute may be charged.

Additional Considerations

A. Student Attendance

All classrooms begin their instructional time at 9:00 am. Therefore, it is imperative that students arrive to school on time to receive the maximum benefit from the curriculum and classroom activities. If you are running behind schedule and will not arrive by 9:00 am, please message your child's teacher via Brightwheel. If your child will be absent from school, it is your responsibility to message your child's teacher via Brightwheel as soon as possible to report the absence.

B. Child Assessments

We recognize that each child is unique and develops at his/her own pace. We incorporate a variety of assessment tools enabling us to provide insight on your child that is authentic to their unique development. Throughout the school year, your child's teachers will create a portfolio that focuses specifically on your child and their growth and development. We have also created a checklist style assessment that is based on developmental milestones and the Florida Early Learning Development Standards. Students in PreK will be assessed at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. Children in the younger classes will be assessed mid-year. This information is shared with parents as a tool to provide information on their child's growth and development.

C. Conferences

Teachers and Directors enjoy collaborating with parents/guardians to benefit a child's growth and development. We specifically encourage a mid-year parent/teacher conference after assessments are completed to touch base and make goals for the remainder of the school year. Additional conferences may be scheduled by appointment at the parent and/or administrator's discretion. Please do not hesitate to communicate any specific needs or concerns you may have.

D. Doctor's Appointments

We understand that doctor's appointments are often scheduled during school hours. Please notify us in advance if your child will be late to school due to a scheduled doctor's appointment and/or if you need to pick your child up early due to a scheduled doctor's appointment.

E. Afternoon Enrichment Additional Supplies & Nap Supplies

Students participating in afternoon enrichment are asked to bring a labeled tote bag at the beginning of every week for convenient transportation of items from school to home. Parents of toddlers and twos are required to supply proper nap bedding for their child. The preschool provides a nap cot and we request that parents provide all-in-one nap bedding that fits snugly over the cot. Nap bedding is sent home every Friday to be laundered and returned to school the following week.

F. Items from Home

Extra personal items from home are not permitted inside classrooms. This includes stuffed animals, dolls or action figures, electronics, etc. If these items are brought to school, they will be collected and immediately returned to the parent/caregiver. The only exceptions to this rule are share days (which will be communicated beforehand by your child's teacher) and/or materials specifically needed for accommodating the functioning of a child in a classroom due to a disability or special need.

G. Diapers and Toilet Training

Toilet Training: Toilet trained means your child can verbally tell the teacher he/she needs to use the toilet and is able to pull his/her clothes up and down independently. Children in our three and four-year-old classes must be completely toilet trained. We do not have diaper changing stations in these rooms as required by the Department of Children and Families. If your child is not completely toilet trained at the beginning of the school year, the following steps will apply:

- Step 1: Conference with the director and teacher.
- Step 2: If accidents continue after a concerted team effort between home and school, you will be asked to keep your child at home for concentrated toilet training.

Diapering: Children in diapers are accepted in our toddlers and twos classes. Parents are expected to provide all diapering supplies and replenish as needed. Teachers in the toddlers and twos classes are experienced in helping with toilet learning, and we encourage parents to communicate when their child is showing interest in toilet training. We ask that children actively learning still wear a pull up until they are completely toilet trained.



H. Clothing/School Attire

Please dress your child in comfortable clothing compatible with getting messy and having fun at school. Close-toed shoes are required. Flip-flops and open-toed shoes are not permitted because they are problematic when running and climbing on the playground. Please label all clothing, especially items that might be removed and placed in cubbies during the day. We also ask that all children have a labeled change of extra clothes in case of accidents. We'll prompt you to change the clothing as the seasons change.

I. Insurance

The insurance policy of the preschool does not cover children who are not enrolled in our school; therefore, friends or relatives cannot attend the preschool with your child.

J. Governance

Stepping Stones Preschool is a ministry of Trinity United Methodist Church and is accountable and responsible to the organization and its policies. The Stepping Stones Advisory Board, comprised of stakeholders within the church, the preschool, and the community, works closely with the Director to set and evaluate preschool bylaws and policies. The board also assists in developing the annual budget, identifying space needs, pursuing grants, granting scholarships, approving fundraisers, and monitoring program expectations that relate to the goals and mission of the ministry.

Important Reminders

- Please notify the school immediately with a change of address, phone number, and/or any other pertinent information. You are able to update your information within your child's profile in Brightwheel and ask that, when you do so, you send a message informing us of the change.
- Smoking, including e-cigarettes and vaping, is prohibited anywhere on the premises of Trinity. Narcotics, alcohol, or other impairing drugs or paraphernalia are also prohibited on the church property.
- A list of required forms and informational brochures can be found on the preschool webpage at www.trinitygvn.org/preschool.

Food Related Activities, Snacks & Lunches

Stepping Stones Preschool does not prepare food on site on a regular basis. However, on occasion, we have food related activities that correspond with curriculum and individual class lesson plans. We also ask families to contribute snacks for their child's class and allow special birthday treats to be shared. There is a parental consent section on the Application for Enrollment for parents to agree to their child's participation in food related activities and consumption of class snacks brought in by other families. Please be sure to notify your child's teacher of any dietary restrictions or severe allergies your child may have and fill out a food allergy form, if needed.

A. Hydration

Each child should bring a labeled, reusable water bottle to school every day. Proper hydration is important for your child's growth and development and only water is allowed at school, unless other liquids are medically necessary (documentation from your child's physician is required). DCF requires that all water bottles be labeled with your child's first and last name.

B. Snack

We ask that families help to provide morning snacks for their child's class and the preschool will provide snack for children enrolled in enrichment care. Please reference the Food Policy (next page) before contributing to class snacks.

C. Lunch

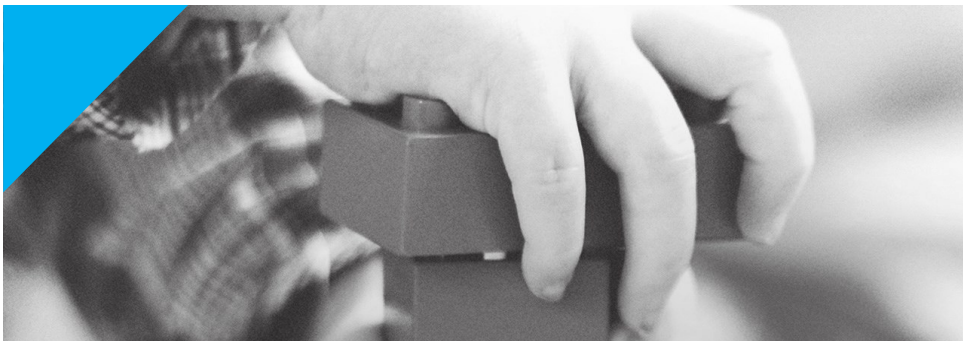
We do not provide lunch. Families are required to pack a healthy lunch. Lunches must meet nutritional guidelines set by the USDA and be packaged in an insulated lunch box with an ice pack. We do not have refrigeration space for lunches, nor are we able to reheat foods. For the health and safety of all students and staff members, glass containers are not permitted in lunch boxes. We recommend bento-style containers or thermoses to pack your child's lunch. Please reference the Food Policy (below) when preparing lunch for your children.

D. Birthdays/Special Occasions

Parents are welcome to supply special snacks to be shared with the class for their child's birthday. Please communicate in advance with the Director AND your child's teacher when making plans for your child's birthday. DCF requires 24 hour notice for any food to be served from parents. We cannot allow special lunches for birthday celebrations (i.e. pizza). We ask that your visit be limited to 10 minutes for birthday celebrations. Please reference the Food Policy (below) before providing a special birthday treat.

E. Food Related Activities

Occasionally, teachers will incorporate cooking into their lesson plans to teach children math skills, introduce science concepts, explore different cultures, etc. These activities will be indicated on the teacher's lesson plan. Teachers will notify you within 24 hours of any food related activities so you can provide an alternative should you not wish for your child to participate.



Discipline & Behavior Modification Policy

Praise and positive reinforcement are effective methods of behavior management for children. When children receive positive, nonviolent, and understanding interactions from adults and others, they develop good self-concepts, problem solving abilities, and self-discipline. Based on this belief, Stepping Stones Preschool uses a positive approach to discipline and practices the following discipline and behavior management techniques.

We...

- Communicate to children using positive statements.
- Communicate with children on their level.
- Talk with children in a calm, quiet manner.
- Explain unacceptable behavior to children.
- Give attention to children for positive behavior.
- Praise and encourage the children.
- Reason with and set limits for the children.
- Apply rules consistently.
- Model appropriate behavior.
- Set up the classroom environment to prevent problems.
- Provide alternatives and redirect children to acceptable activity.
- Give children opportunities to make choices and solve problems.
- Help children talk out problems and think of solutions.
- Listen to children and respect the children's needs, desires and feelings.
- Provide appropriate words to help solve conflicts.
- Use storybooks and discussion to work through common conflicts.

We do not...

- Inflict corporal punishment in any manner upon a child. (Corporal punishment is defined as the use of physical force to the body as a discipline measure. Physical force to the body includes, but is not limited to spanking, hitting, shaking, biting, pinching, pushing, pulling, or slapping.)
- Use any strategy that hurts, shames, or belittles a child.
- Use any strategy that threatens, intimidates, or forces a child.
- Use food as a form of reward or punishment.
- Use or withhold physical activity as a punishment.

- Shame or punish a child if a bathroom accident occurs.
- Embarrass any child in front of others.
- Compare children.
- Place children in a locked and/or dark room.
- Leave any child alone, unattended or without supervision.
- Allow discipline of a child by other children.
- Criticize, make fun of, or otherwise belittle a child's parents, families, or ethnic groups.

Disruptive Behavior Policy

Negative and disruptive behaviors such as biting, hitting, pinching, etc. are common in early childhood and are often developmentally appropriate responses to not having the proper tools of communication. However, if a negative behavior becomes a pattern it must be addressed to help the child learn a more effective way of communicating their needs, feelings, and/or dislikes.

After the 2nd occurrence of a disruptive behavior such as biting, excessive hitting, pinching, etc., the following steps will be taken:

A. Each incident will be documented on an accident/incident form noting the date, circumstances leading up to the incident, and guidance actions taken. All incidents are documented, not just after the 2nd occurrence.

B. The child will be shadowed, within an arm's length, by one of the classroom teachers for three weeks. During this 3-week intervention period, the teacher will work diligently with the child – guiding them through social situations, teaching them the proper skills and language needed to navigate their feelings in a more productive manner, and helping them to change the undesired behavior into a more positive approach.

C. If the behavior continues after the 3-week intervention period, a conference will be held with the parents/guardians, classroom teacher, and the director.

D. If the inappropriate or disruptive behavior continues, the parent will be contacted and required to pick the child up from school immediately after the first incident. Conferences will be scheduled with parents if disciplinary problems occur.

If a child's behavior consistently endangers the safety of the children around him/her, then the director has the authority, after meeting with the parents and documenting behavior problems and interventions, to terminate enrollment for that child.



Behavior & Dismissal/ Termination of Agreement Policy

It is never the desire of Stepping Stones Preschool to expel or dismiss a child. We make every effort to communicate with families, collaborate to find solutions, and remediate issues. However, there are situations in which expulsion or dismissal may be warranted. If after all efforts to resolve the issues have been exhausted, and no improvements have been made, Stepping Stones Preschool does reserve the right to expel or dismiss students from the program. Reasons for expulsion and dismissal may include:

Child Actions (Expulsion)

- Repetitive violent or harmful behaviors against other students and/or teachers that cause a negative impact on the learning environment and/or physically endangers others
- Ongoing verbal and/or physical abuse toward children or staff
- Threats (verbal or physical) toward children or staff

Parental Actions (Dismissal)

- Failure to adhere to the policies and procedures of Stepping Stones Preschool (including financial responsibilities)
- Repeated failure to provide or complete required enrollment forms (including immunization and physical examination forms)
- Verbal abuse toward children or staff
- Threats (verbal or physical) toward staff or children

A Child Will Not Be Expelled or Dismissed If a Child's Parent:

- Reported a suspected case of neglect or abuse that occurred at Stepping Stones Preschool
- Made inquiries into the procedures and policies of the preschool
- Submitted a complaint against the preschool to the licensing authority (Department of Children and Families)

Food Policy

In accordance with the Department of Children and Families Administrative Code for licensed centers, the following foods cannot be accepted, provided, or served to children under the age of 4:

- Whole/round hot dogs
- Popcorn
- Chips
- Pretzel nuggets
- Whole grapes
- Nuts
- Cheese cubes/sticks
- Any other food that is of similar shape and size to the trachea/windpipe

We are unable to serve snacks that have been prepared at home. Class snacks and birthday treats must be store bought and/or made in an approved cooking facility. Food for toddlers must be cut into pieces that are 1/2-inch or smaller to prevent choking. Please contact your child's teacher or the Stepping Stones Director for clarification on acceptable foods.

Field Trips

1. Stepping Stones Preschool does not participate in field trips away from the church property that require transportation.
2. Should a "field trip/special event" experience be brought into our school, the organization will provide proof that their employees are cleared as per our standards of a Level 1 Background Check.
3. Parents will be given a minimum of 24 hours notice when we are having an "in school field trip".

Child Abuse Policy

Teachers will be trained on child abuse guidelines and mandatory reporting twice a year. This training will be embedded in their pre-planning training and again in January of each school year. Teachers are mandated reporters under state and federal laws. You can research more about child abuse policies at www.childwelfare.gov.

Photographs

Parents are given an option on the Application for Enrollment to opt in or out of photographs for their children. This must be marked and the parents desires will be respected.

Volunteer/Family Involvement

Stepping Stones Preschool promotes and encourages parental involvement at our school.

In order to ensure the safety of our children, we ask that volunteers follow the following protocols:

1. Complete a Volunteer Application—*This can be sent via email/Brightwheel or you can obtain a printed copy from the front office.*
2. View the Children and Youth Protection Policies video as governed by the Child/Youth Protection Policy of Trinity United Methodist Church.
3. Sign and acknowledge you have viewed the video and received the policies related to Children and Youth Protection Policies. *A copy of the Child/Youth Protection Policy will be emailed to you once we receive your completed Volunteer Application.*
4. Pass a Level 1 Background Check through Checkr. This involves a \$13 fee billed to you via Brightwheel. All volunteers will need to pay this fee via cash, check, or money order.

Once the above protocols are completed, your name will be entered into a shared Google Doc that identifies you as a cleared volunteer for our school.

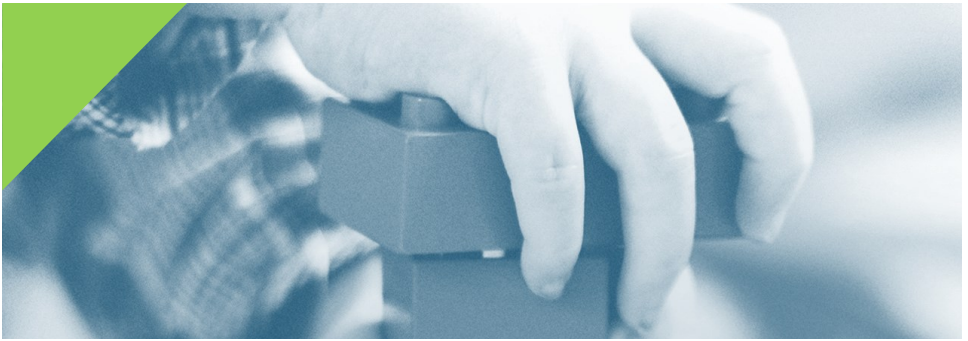
Background checks through Checkr are good for 3 years.

Brightwheel Communication

Communication is essential in ensuring children are successful at school and parents feel involved. Stepping Stones Preschool uses Brightwheel as a way to communicate with families about students and school events/information. In order to ensure messages are received and responded to in a timely manner and teacher's time is respected, we have established some protocols for using Brightwheel for communication.

- There should be no Brightwheel messages sent between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. This allows teachers to have boundaries between home and work in the evenings. If messages are sent, parents should not expect a response until the following morning.
- Personal conversations should not be held using Brightwheel. Please make sure all communications coming and going through Brightwheel are school related.
- If you need to ask a question directed toward the Director or Assistant Director, please use the "Admin" only feature to send this message. Administrators receive every message coming in and out of Brightwheel and messages could easily be missed.
- You are encouraged to use email as a means to contact the Director or Assistant Director with questions related to administrative issues. These emails are:

Jamie Ashford, Director (jashford@trinitygnv.org)
Peyton Snyder, Assistant Director (psnyder@trinitygnv.org)



Non-Discrimination Policy

Stepping Stones Preschool is in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Public Law 88-352), The Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (Public Law 94-135), and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Public Law 93-112). This is an equal opportunity program. No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, political beliefs, or religion, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination.



Trinity

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United Methodist Church

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