



PARENT HANDBOOK **2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR**

The Early Childhood Education Center (“ECEC”) is a ministry of the First Presbyterian Church (the “Church”) governed by the church's session. Our program is open to all families in the community and the surrounding area.

Each teacher is required to have CPR and First Aid training and 24 continuing education hours each year. Teachers also attend a monthly planning/training meeting. Background checks, fingerprint clearance, Protect My Ministry online training, and drug screenings are administered.

Room parents, class parties, and other special activities need volunteers. Volunteers must submit a background check and complete Protect My Ministry online. When families and schools work together, we set a healthy example for children.

Parents may review and discuss any questions or concerns about the ECEC's policies and procedures with the director. They may also schedule an appointment to review a copy of the ECEC's most recent licensing inspection report.

Parents may visit the ECEC during operation hours to observe their child, the child center's program activities, the building, the premises, and the equipment without prior approval.

Our Purpose and Goals

Our purpose is to provide young children with a Christian environment where they can grow spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually. Our goal is to support the development of each child to his or her greatest potential. We believe this happens in a nurturing environment that fosters mutual respect and appreciates the unique qualities of each individual. We will help your child to:

- grow in independence by making decisions and choices;
- grow in assuming basic personal responsibility for self;
- develop language skills and communicate ideas and feelings;
- develop self-control and get along with others as they work and play together;
- develop a feeling of self-worth and self-confidence;
- be curious, think, reason, and problem-solve;
- develop the idea that school and church are happy and safe places, and
- develop a familiarity with the stories of the Bible.

Our Philosophy and Curriculum

We adhere to developmentally appropriate practices established by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC); children learn while they play. Our curriculum focuses on the process of learning rather than the finished product. Teachers act as facilitators for learning by providing a carefully planned environment that is appropriately challenging for each age level and allows children to make choices and direct their learning. Many valuable learning experiences will occur as language develops and social skills are enhanced. The teacher's role is to model, observe, reinforce, and encourage divergent thinking by asking open-ended questions and providing information the children cannot discover for themselves. We will make use of the child's natural curiosity and desire to learn through indoor and outdoor self-directed activities, teacher-directed group and individual activities, development of fine and gross motor skills, art experiences, music, and stories that will be appropriate to each age level.

With infants and toddlers, emphasis is placed on positive interaction with the teacher and exposure to educational toys. We believe that a nurturing environment where the child's needs are met promptly by caring teachers is vital to the development of our youngest children, who are learning to trust. It is important to us that they feel happy and secure while they are in our care.

The teachers foster a stimulating environment with open-ended activities, language experiences, art experiences, and open centers. There is an outside play time each day, and the music teacher visits classes weekly.

- Our music teacher meets with babies, toddlers, two-year-olds, three-year-olds, and four-year-old classes that attend our two-day-a-week program.
- Our three-day program offers music on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and STEM or Chapel on Wednesdays.
- Three-year-old classes and four-year-old classes go on field trips.
- Educational Guests are invited to visit our classrooms and share resources with the children.
- Children have a time reserved weekly in the gymnasium with gross motor activities provided.

Research shows that these early years are critical to a child's later development. To help each child build a positive self-image, opportunity for success will be built into all that we do. As the child sees the value of him/herself as a person, he or she can grow positively. In an atmosphere of Christian love, our teachers will allow children to explore, discover, and create as they learn more about their world and develop a greater awareness of God.

Spiritual Development

As in all other areas of development, foundations for moral and spiritual development are laid during the early years of a child's life. Our goal is to contribute to these foundations in children's lives by teaching simple Bible truths about helping friends, being thankful for God's provision, caring for the things in God's world, loving other people, and loving Jesus. The awareness that God made each person special and unique helps the child value herself/himself and others as persons of worth. We will guide the children to develop a sense of security rooted in God's love and care.

- All of our classes study a monthly Bible story from our Orange Curriculum.
- The love of Jesus is demonstrated to our babies as their needs are met promptly and lovingly, and Bible thoughts and songs are incorporated into their day and activities.
- Toddlers, two-, three-, and four-year-olds are provided with Bible story time daily in their classrooms. Bible stories and activities are age-appropriate.

Here, Christian education is interwoven into our day. During play and learning activities, children will have an opportunity to sing and/or hear (or hear sung) songs about God and Jesus, hear short thank-you prayers, and hear simple Bible verses.

When a child hears a Bible verse related to what he or she is doing, it takes on a deeper meaning. As we care for your children, we will share God's love with them through positive words and actions as they work and play in a safe and nurturing environment. We are committed to providing experiences that help them grow as children of God and become the people that God created them to be.

ECEC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The ECEC Program runs from September through May. Meet the Teacher will be held before school starts. This is a time for parents and children to visit the classrooms, meet the teachers, and sign up to volunteer for special activities.

ECEC OFFICE HOURS

The ECEC office hours during the school year are Mondays from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Our offices are closed on Fridays.

CHILDREN SERVED

The ECEC offers a two-day-a-week program on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. for students ages 6 months to 3 years old, and a three-day-a-week program for students ages 2, 3, and 4 years old by September 1st of the enrolled school year. Our classes begin in September and end in mid-May. Children who are six months old by September 1st (of the registration year) through 4 years old are accepted.

TUITION AND FEES

Tuition is \$270 per child per month of enrollment for two-day-a-week classes and \$400.00 for three-day-a-week classes. A non-refundable registration fee of \$125.00 per child will be charged at registration and must be paid through our online portal.

For our two-day-a-week program, a \$50 supply fee per child, per semester (September and January), will be paid at the beginning of each semester or at registration if enrolling after the semester has started. For our three-day-a-week program, a \$75.00 supply fee per child, per semester (September and January), will be paid at the beginning of each semester or at registration if enrolling after the semester has started.

Upon acceptance, your child's placement within the program will only be secured by completing all registration paperwork, current immunization records, and payment of the last month's tuition for the school year (May 2027) through ACH draft. This ACH draft will be done on Friday, March 27, 2026, to finalize your student's registration. If you register after March 2026, May 2027, tuition will be drafted on the scheduled date below under tuition payment.

If our classes are full, you may still register online and be placed on the waitlist. Once a spot opens up, parents will be contacted. To secure your spot, you will need to pay the tuition, supply fee, and May 2027 tuition.

Tuition will be refunded for May 2027 if your child withdraws on or before May 1, 2026. Requests must be emailed to the ECEC director for our financial records at oortiz@fpcmid.org

TUITION PAYMENT

Tuition payments are collected through ACH (Automated Clearing House), where tuition is automatically taken from an account you provide. You will have the option to have tuition drafted once for the whole school year, twice for the semester, or monthly. The ACH form is available online through our website and must be completed to finalize and secure placement for the 2026-27 school year. A new ACH form must be submitted each school year for continuing students. Fall and spring supply fees will be drafted from the account on file at the beginning of each semester for those paying by month and semester. Those paying by year, fall, and spring supply fees will be drafted in September.

The ECEC accepts tuition and supply fee payment in cash, check, or credit card when payment is made in full for the whole school year at registration. This is the only way we can accept cash, check, or credit card payment. Cash or check payment for tuition for the year and for both semesters' supply fees must be submitted with the registration paperwork to the ECEC office.

The two-day-a-week program total for the 2026-27 school year, which includes tuition and supply fees, is \$2,530.00

The three-day-a-week program total for the 2025-26 school year, which includes tuition and supply fees, is \$3,750.00

Payment by credit card for the year can be made at www.fpcmid.org/ecec under the tuition and registration tab. A 3% processing fee will be added to credit card transactions.

The schedule for ACH withdrawals for the 2026-2027 school year will be as follows:

Friday, April 17, 2026- May 2027 Tuition

*Friday, September 4, 2026

Friday, October 2, 2026

Friday, November 6, 2026

Friday, December 4, 2026

**Friday, January 8, 2027

Friday, February 5, 2027

Friday, March 5, 2027

Friday, April 2, 2027

*For those paying by year, both fall and spring supply fees will be drafted in September. For those paying monthly or by semester, the fall supply fee will also be drafted in September.

**The spring supply fee will be included in this account draft for those paying monthly or by semester.

For students enrolling after March 2026, the May 2027 tuition will be drafted on the dates below, depending on the student's registration date. The semester supply fee will be drafted with the student's first month of tuition.

Wednesday, April 22, 2026

Wednesday, June 10, 2026

Wednesday, July 8, 2026

Wednesday, August 12, 2026

Wednesday, September 9, 2026

Wednesday, October 7, 2026

Wednesday, November 18, 2026

Wednesday, December 9, 2026

Wednesday, January 13, 2027

Wednesday, February 10, 2027

SCHOOL CLOSURE PAYMENT POLICY

If the ECEC cancels school for reasons beyond our control, tuition reimbursement or a make-up day(s) will not be offered. Our school calendar cannot be adjusted. During Construction

If the ECEC temporarily closes for reasons beyond our control (one month or longer), fifty percent of tuition will be billed per child. Tuition collected during school closures helps maintain our teaching staff and your enrollment spot. Please notify the director if your family cannot meet the financial obligations during school closures.

SCHOLARSHIP ASSISTANCE

The ECEC can offer hardship/scholarship aid to those who qualify. To apply for a scholarship, please email the director at oortiz@fpcmid.org. The ECEC aims to support children enrolled in our program and their families through the generosity of our scholarship fund.

REGISTRATION

Registration for the next school year is held online in January. A non-refundable registration fee of \$125.00 is due when you register. The registration fee is non-refundable. Registration will begin with existing students in the ECEC program, then open to siblings of existing students, active First Presbyterian Covenant members, and finally, the community. Registration links open at 6:00 a.m. and remain open for 48 hours. If you miss the registration group on your assigned day, you must register in the next available group. Your application will be in that registration group according to the date and time of your registration.

. After all posted registration periods close, online waitlist registration will be available on the Church's website under "Early Childhood Education Center" about 30 days thereafter. The \$125.00 registration fee must still be paid to be placed on the waitlist and is nonrefundable. The parent/guardian will be contacted when a spot becomes available. If a spot is offered to a child on the waitlist, to secure the spot for the child, the registration/supply fee and May 2027 tuition must be paid within a stated period of time, along with their first month's tuition, if the school year is in session.

WITHDRAWAL: BEFORE THE NEW SCHOOL BEGINS IN SEPTEMBER

If you submit registration and withdraw before May 1, 2026, you may request a refund of May 2027 tuition. Requests must be emailed to oortiz@fpcmid.org. After May 1, 2026, May 2027, tuition is non-refundable. If you withdraw your child after August 1, 2026, you are responsible for September 2026 tuition. Exceptions cannot be made. For our financial records, a notice of withdrawal must be emailed to the ECEC director at oortiz@fpcmid.org.

WITHDRAWAL: DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR

If you withdraw your child from the program during the school year, you must give a one-month notice in writing by the first (1st) of the last month your child attends, or you will be responsible for the next month's full tuition. You must email the director at oortiz@fpcmid.org with your intent to withdraw. Example: If you are not returning in December, notice is due November 1. Note: This notice does not apply to May 2027 tuition. May 2027 tuition is refundable only if you withdraw by May 1, 2026.

If you withdraw your child after attending only a portion of the month, tuition for the remainder of the month is non-refundable. You will be held financially responsible if your child is enrolled in the program, even if the child does not attend. Financial obligations cease when you give official notice of withdrawal in writing following the withdrawal policy guidelines.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

- School doors open at 9:00 a.m. for drop-off. Welcoming activities begin from 9:00 a.m. to 9:15 a.m. Instruction begins promptly at 9:15 a.m. Please have your child(ren) in class

by 9:15 a.m. Prompt arrival and departure are essential to allow children time to engage in the planned classroom activities successfully. ECEC "A" street doors unlock at 1:30 p.m. to begin pick-up. The school day officially ends at 2:00 p.m., and children must be picked up no later than 2:00 p.m. Failure to arrive on time for pick-up could result in being removed from the program.

- Parents must accompany their child to the classroom, make the teacher aware of the child's arrival, and sign their child in. For the safety of the children, there can be no exceptions.

SIGN-IN AND SIGN-OUT

All children must be signed into their classrooms by a parent or guardian. Please inform the teacher of your arrival. At the end of the day, all children must be signed out by a parent, guardian, or authorized person on the pick-up list.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

If someone other than the parent is picking up the child, they will need to stop by the ECEC desk and check in to make sure they are on the permission to pick up form. They will also need to provide us with a copy of their driver's license so we can verify their identity. We will copy the form and place it on file in the front office and the child's classroom attendance folder before the child is released.

A child will not be released to anyone other than parents or guardians without a form on file and a copy of identification. The front office will give a permission to release form that must be given to the teacher before the child is released. You may stop by the front desk to ensure your form is current and has all the individuals you authorize to pick up your child from school.

GUIDING THE DEVELOPING CHILD

Discipline (positive guidance) will be based on an understanding of the child's individual needs and development. Teachers will encourage acceptable behavior and inner control over actions by praising appropriate behavior and redirecting inappropriate behavior. Sometimes, we will use the positive strategy of briefly withdrawing the child from a situation.

If your child is not ready for the group experience, if his or her needs are not best met in the group setting, or if the child cannot follow the program's guidance, the director reserves the right to remove the child after a confidential conference with the parents. We desire every child to have a positive experience, and we do not believe the child should remain in the program unless he or she can benefit. We want parents to be pleased with their child's experience, and they must abide by policies and procedures if their child is to remain in the program.

Operational Discipline and Guidance Policy

26 TEXAS ADMINISTRATIVE CODE (TAC) MINIMUM STANDARDS SECTION 744.501 (7), 746.501 (a), 747.501 (5)

Discipline must be:

1. Individualized and consistent for each child.
2. Appropriate to the child's level of understanding.
3. Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:

1. Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
2. Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
3. Redirecting behavior using positive statements and
4. Using brief supervised separation or timeout from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

1. Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;
2. Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;
3. Pinching, shaking, or biting a child;
4. Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
5. Putting anything in or on a child's mouth;
6. Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;
7. Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;
8. Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed and
9. Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods for the child's age.

This policy is effective on September 1, 2023, and complies with TXHHS Child Care Form 10

Parent's Rights

**Chapter 42 of the Human Resource Code (HRC) Section 42.04271
Rights of Parent or Guardian**

A parent or guardian of a child at a childcare facility has the right to:

- (1) Enter and examine the childcare facility during the facility's hours of operation without advance notice;
- (2) Review the childcare facility's publicly accessible records;
- (3) Receive inspection reports for the childcare facility and information about how to access the facility's online compliance history;
- (4) Obtain a copy of the childcare facility's policies and procedures;
- (5) Review, at the request of the parent or guardian, the facility's:
 - (A) Staff training records; and

- (B) Any in-house staff training curriculum used by the facility;
- (6.) review the childcare facility's written records concerning the parent's or guardian's child,
- (7.) inspect any video recordings of an alleged incident of abuse or neglect involving the parent's or guardian's child, provided that:
 - (A) video recordings of the alleged incident are available;
 - (B) The parent or guardian of the child does not retain any part of the video recording depicting a child that is not their own, and
 - (C) the parent or guardian of any other child captured in the video recording receives written notice from the facility before allowing a parent to inspect a recording;
- (8) Have the childcare facility comply with a court order preventing another parent or guardian from visiting or removing the parent's or guardian's child;
- (9) be provided the contact information for the child care facility's local Child Care Regulation office;
- (10) file a complaint against the child care facility by contacting the local Child Care Regulation office; and
- (11) be free from any retaliatory action by the childcare facility for exercising any of the parent's or guardian's rights.

BITING

Biting is a phase that some children go through, and all eventually outgrow. Biting sometimes occurs when young children are placed in group care or a classroom setting. We are genuinely concerned whenever biting occurs in our classrooms. Parents will receive a written notice of a bite incident, and the child who has been bitten and the one who has bitten will receive a written notice. We do not share the child's name involved in the biting incident with the parents. If the child's biting continues, the director will conference with the parents to work together to cease the child's biting behavior. If you have questions regarding biting at any time, please contact the director.

REMOVAL FROM ECEC

The ECEC program reserves the right to permanently remove a child from the program's enrollment for non-payment of tuition and/or fees or extended absences without payment unless prior arrangements are made with the director. The director also reserves the right at any time to remove a child from the program permanently if the needs of the child are not being met, if the child becomes a danger to himself/herself or others, or if the child's behavior is consistently impeding the educational process of the other children in the classroom. Teachers must devote time to all children, not neglecting others if one child requires constant supervision and/or attention. Children should not take away from the educational process of other children in their class.

POTTY TRAINING

Children who will be three years old by September 1 of the 2026-27 school year must be fully potty-trained.

For children under 3, if you begin potty training your child during the school year, please let us know so that we can support and assist in this process.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Parents are responsible for informing the director of any problem, special need, or physical disability a child might have before enrollment. We reserve the right to refuse admission if the situation is one for which our program is not designed.

IMMUNIZATIONS

TX Licensing requires each child enrolled in the ECEC to have a current immunization record on file. Parents are responsible for updating records each time their child receives an immunization. Therefore, parents must pay close attention to keeping immunization records current.

Families who choose not to immunize their children must provide an immunization exemption waiver form. The form can be found at <https://co-request.dshs.texas.gov/>. A completed and notarized copy of this form must be provided before the child can be admitted into the ECEC program.

TX Licensing requires ECEC staff to follow employee immunization guidelines. ECEC employees are not required to provide immunization records.

HEALTH

Your cooperation is needed to help maintain high health standards in our program and to help protect all our children from unnecessary illness. Parents are asked to keep their child home when the child:

- Has an ear temperature of 100 degrees or higher;
- Has sore or discharging eyes;
- Has had vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours;

If you suspect your child is sick, do not bring him or her to school until he or she has been without a fever for 24 hours without using fever-reducing medicine.

If your child becomes ill at school, parents will be called to pick them up immediately. Please do so as soon as you are called.

State licensing requires us to notify families and staff when a student has been diagnosed with a communicable disease, contagious infection, or virus.

Parents must email the director, Olivia Ortiz, at oortiz@fpcmid.org to alert the school of their child's illness. While sharing your child's illness with their classroom teacher is appreciated, it

does not fulfill the requirement to email the director. Failure to notify the school of your child's illness may result in your child being removed from our program.

If your child is diagnosed with a communicable, contagious disease/virus, please speak with the director to confirm that your child is ready to return to school. A signed statement from the doctor may be requested and presented to the director so that the child can return.

Examples of Contagious Infections, Diseases, and/or Viruses include but are not limited to:

- Flu
- Pink Eye
- Hand, Foot, and Mouth
- Chicken Pox
- COVID – 19
- Measles

We are not licensed to administer medications to children, and the only exception is a prescribed Epi-Pen.

ALLERGIES/MEDICAL ISSUES

The parent is responsible for informing the teacher and director of any allergy or medical issue your child may have. If your child develops an allergy or any other medical issue during the school year, after submitting your paperwork, please submit your child's updated health information in writing, along with your signature. Each student with a suspected or diagnosed allergy must have an updated and current FARE (Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan) form on file that a physician and parent have signed. Both signatures are required for licensing.

If your child has an EpiPen prescription, please make sure that an Epi-Pen is supplied to the ECEC for the school year, along with a trainer pen or instructions labeled with the child's name. Epi-Pens will be evaluated for expiration date, and prescriptions will be labeled for the student. Epi-Pens are stored in emergency Go Bags and will be administered by the director, assistant director, or lead teacher. Reporting the use of the Epi-Pen on the student will be given to the parent by a member of the ECEC administration. All EpiPens not picked up at the end of the last day of school will be disposed of.

APPLICATION OF SUNSCREEN & OINTMENTS

Permission to apply Vaseline, sunscreen, insect repellent, and non-medicated ointment for diaper rash is given to the ECEC with the authorization of a completed registration form. All items must be provided by the child's family and labeled with their first and last name and the date of purchase. All items not picked up at the end of the last day of school will be disposed of.

HEARING AND VISION SCREENING

Students who are four years old must be screened each year for Vision and Hearing per licensing within 120 calendar days of the start of enrollment. Parent permission slips will be sent

to families, and the ECEC will pay the screening fee. Upon completion of the screenings, results will be sent home to families.

PROMOTION OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Licensing requires children in a child care center to have 60 minutes of physical activity to develop gross motor, social, and emotional learning. The ECEC provides 2 playground times for students each school day to meet this standard. During inclement weather, children will use the gym and their classrooms. The director will determine Outdoor weather play per the current local weather forecast. Outdoor temperature of 40 degrees Fahrenheit or higher is the minimum temperature for outdoor play. Children may be kept inside in inclement weather or below 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Children will play outside daily; make sure your child is dressed appropriately for outdoor play.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Each Monday, families receive the Family Connection email at the address on file through my FPC, our online portal. This email contains important information about ECEC events for the week. If an email address changes, each family must update the ECEC. Illness notices and classroom updates are also sent to the email on file. Parents will be notified by email and written notice if an ECEC policy has been updated or a new policy has been implemented.

LICENSING

The ECEC is licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services to provide childcare for up to 100 children. Its operation number is 1763130. Parents may review the current licensing inspection report at the ECEC or online at www.tpdprs.state.tx.us. The local licensing center can be contacted at (432) 686-0666, 3401 North A Street, Midland, Texas 79705.

As a parent, you are entitled to a copy of the Minimum Standards for a Licensed Childcare Center. You may ask the director of the ECEC or view a copy on their website www.tdprs.state.tx.us

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Please label (first and last name) all personal items of clothing, lunch boxes, cups, blankets, bottles, pacifiers, diaper bags, etc. that you bring for your child. Please do not allow your child to bring his or her toys to school. Purses, etc., should be left at home. Do not allow your child to bring candy, gum, toy guns, or money.

FOOD

We are a nut/seed-free school for the health and safety of students and staff with nut allergies. Nuts and seeds, including peanut butter, sunflower butter, almond butter, etc., are prohibited. Please do not send any food for your child's lunch or a classroom snack containing nut or seed products. We do not intend to be extreme. We would rather err on the side of caution than take risks with children and staff with severe allergies.

Please send your child a well-balanced, nutritious lunch that does not need to be warmed in the microwave. Also, please send water for your child to drink.

Children's lunches are stored in their cubbies. Please send food that does not need to be refrigerated. Food and drinks that need to stay hot or cold should be sent in a thermos or with an ice pack.

For infants, send plenty of bottles and baby food with instructions on how and when your child will be fed. If you send an extra bottle for emergency purposes, please label it. There is a refrigerator and microwave in the infant room.

Children choke easily on hot dogs and grapes. If you must send hot dogs or grapes, be sure that you cut them into small pieces that are not round. Apples should be peeled and cut into small pieces. All food should be ready to serve.

Please do not send breakfast for your child to eat at school. This applies to children of all ages, including infants and toddlers. Teachers are very busy receiving infants and toddlers at the beginning of the day, and schedules do not allow time for feeding breakfast.

SNACK TIME

Parents are asked to take turns providing snacks for the class. Snack suggestions include goldfish, cheez-it's, pirates booty, grapes (cut in half), bananas, mandarin oranges, cheese and crackers, Cherrios, puffs, and apple sauce pouches. Please visit with your child's teacher about any food allergies in the class and preferences. Each child's classroom teacher will organize a sign-up for snacks. The school will provide napkins for daily snacks.

CLOTHING

Bring at least one change of "seasonally appropriate" clothes in the diaper bag each school day for your infant or toddler. For two-, three- and four-year-olds, please bring a "seasonally appropriate" change of clothes, including socks to be left at school. This should be in a Ziploc bag and clearly labeled with your child's name. We have a limited supply of extra clothes at school. If your child needs to change clothes at school and does not have extra clothing and the school does not have something that will fit, parents will be called and asked to bring clothes to school immediately.

Children should wear comfortable, washable clothes that allow them to play and move about easily. Simple play clothes and two-piece outfits are more manageable for children and teachers. Many of our creative activities are messy. Even our youngest children use paint, markers, and glue, and they often play in water tables.

We recommend tennis shoes for active play.

Children will play outside daily, except during inclement weather or if the temperature is below 40 degrees Fahrenheit. We reserve the right to keep children indoors when the wind chill is 40 degrees Fahrenheit or lower. Make sure your child is dressed appropriately for this.

DIAPERS AND BABY WIPES

Parents are required to provide diapers and wipes for their children. If your child is in a nursery wing class, please send a large box of sensitive skin wipes when school starts in September. When our supply is low, your teachers will post a note asking you to send more.

REST TIME

Licensing requires that students in school for five hours or more be provided with rest time. The ECEC will provide rest mats for each student. Students may also bring a blanket or “lovey” for this time. Children are not required to sleep during this time, and an alternative activity, such as reading books, will be provided for those who do not sleep. Rest time is approximately 15 minutes at a minimum and will not exceed three hours.

FIELD TRIPS

Educational and enriching field trips will be planned for three-and four-year-olds during the school year. Each child must have a field trip permission form signed by their parent or guardian on file before leaving school

Transportation will be in the church bus. Teachers who drive must attend a 2-hour transportation safety class each school year.

Parents are responsible for correctly strapping their child’s car seat in the assigned bus on the morning of the field trip. They are also expected to remove the car seat from the bus at the end of the school day. The car seat needs to have the child’s name marked on it. Each child is buckled into his or her car seat. Emergency information files, first aid equipment, fire extinguishers, a field trip t-shirt that must be worn identifying the child as a student at the ECEC, and a stamp on each child featuring the name and phone number of the church are the precautions taken to ensure safety.

Parents may transport their children in their own vehicles to and from a field trip. However, some field trips do not allow younger siblings to attend. If so, please make other arrangements for your younger children. We must honor the policy of the field trip location.

BIRTHDAYS

This is an exciting time in a young child's life. You are welcome to celebrate your child’s birthday at school by providing a special snack you discussed with the teacher. Please do not provide lunch, pizza, party favors, balloons, clowns, etc. Please do not send birthday party invitations to school unless all children in your child’s class are invited. We cannot share class parent information for birthday parties, such as phone numbers and email addresses.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Emergency Information and Evacuation Routes are posted in each classroom and on our parent information board. TX licensing requires the ECEC to practice a monthly fire evacuation drill using a primary or secondary route. The ECEC also participates in four safety shelter drills yearly, such as a lockdown or tornado drill. Parents may view a copy of our emergency preparedness plan and evacuation routes from the ECEC director.

In an emergency, our first priority is to ensure the children's safety and care. In an emergency, staff may not be able to respond to messages sent by text as they supervise the children and are responsible for supporting the children's emotional stability in an emergency situation. ECEC administration will always communicate with families via email or text as soon as the emergency situation is secure.

In the event of an off-site evacuation, parents will be notified through our FPC online portal where to pick up their child. Children will be supervised by their teachers and will only be released to an individual listed on our student permission to pick-up form after verification of a valid ID. The following locations are the ECEC off-site evacuation locations. Hospice-911, West Texas Avenue, First Presbyterian Bus Barn-908 West Indiana Avenue, and The Midland Chap Center at Midland College-3600 North Garfield.

SECURITY

For the safety and security of the children, the "A" Street outside access doors to the ECEC, the doors from the Church Commons area to the ECEC, and the doors leading from the main hall of the Lynn Building to the nursery area, will be locked during school hours except when parents are dropping off or picking up their children. All doors where the children are cared for can be opened without a key from the inside to allow for emergency exits. Parents are asked to enter the building through the Texas entrance when the "A" Street doors are locked. Parents may ring the doorbell at the ECEC "A" street entrance during school hours. If you need access to the nursery wing when the doors are locked, office staff will gladly help you. If you have a late drop-off or early pick-up, the staff will bring your child to you in the ECEC lobby. Please know that we prioritize the safety and security of your children. If you arrive after our doors are locked for the day, please wait at the ECEC front desk, and a staff member will escort your child to their classroom. If you arrive before doors open for pick-up, check in at the front desk, and a staff member will bring your child to you. This may take time, and we appreciate your patience.

Door Schedule

9:00 a.m.- 9:30 a.m. -Doors Open for drop off

1:30 p.m.-2:15 p.m.- Doors Open for pick-up

FIREARMS

Following Texas law, firearms and other weapons are strictly prohibited in all licensed childcare centers. If ECEC staff identify a gun or other weapon, the person will be asked to leave the property. Police officers or peace and security officers trained and certified to carry a firearm on duty may have firearms on the premises of a childcare center.

PREVENTING & RESPONDING TO ABUSE & NEGLECT

Per Texas State Law Chapter 42 of the Human Resource Code for Child Care Regulation, the staff at FPC ECEC must report any form of suspected child abuse. This includes any signs or evidence of sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect signs/behaviors of abuse, or suspicion of abuse. FPC ECEC does not condone, hide, or tolerate any type of child abuse. The Abuse Hotline for Texas is 1-800-252-5400.

GANG FREE ZONE

Gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of the ECEC is a violation of Chapter 42 of the Human Resource Code, section 42.064, and is, therefore, subject to increased penalties under state law.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

If the Midland Independent School District (MISD) is closed or delayed due to inclement weather, the ECEC will also be closed or delayed. Canceled days will not be made up. During inclement weather, the ECEC will send an email through the My FPC portal to alert parents of our schedule. It is the parents' responsibility to check our website, your listed email, texts, or local news regarding school closures or a delayed start.

FUNDRAISERS

The ECEC sponsors annual church-wide fundraisers so that the school may purchase new equipment, teaching materials, and provide a high-quality program while keeping your child's tuition to a minimum. Parents are encouraged to participate in the fundraisers.

PARKING

Parking is available for the ECEC in the south parking lot across Texas Avenue from the church and in the east parking lot across "A" Street from the church. To ensure safety, please use crosswalks when crossing these streets. You may also park in the parking lots on Texas Ave south of the big playground. This will give you direct access to the church without crossing the street. Handicap parking is available in the "A" Street Circle Drive.

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD MINISTRY (ECM)

The purpose of the Early Childhood Ministry ("ECM") is a parent volunteer group to assist the Early Childhood Education Center in its ministry by setting policies and developing the program. Members must make a two-year commitment to serve on this committee. They are required to attend the committee's monthly meeting on Monday. Members must be available to help on some Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Some of the duties are:

- Organize all school fundraisers.
- Assist with school pictures.
- Serve as the contact person for Room Parents.
- Organize parent volunteers.
- Organize Teacher Appreciation.
- Assist and support teachers and directors as needed.

Please let the ECM director know if you want to serve on or assist this ministry. We welcome and value parent participation, and we do not intend to overlook any parent who wishes to be involved in our program.

SCHOOL PARTY GUIDELINES

The ECM is in charge, with assistance from the room parent, of the class parties. Information about party details will be given out at Meet the Teacher Day before school starts. Parents are needed to help with the parties. The room parent will volunteer at all parties to lead activities. Party days will be shown on the school year calendar.

- We sincerely appreciate your help.
- It is always a pleasure to have parents involved in our school activities

ROOM PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Each classroom will have one (1) room parent. The room parent will serve as a line of communication between the ECM and the classroom parents. Each room parent will have a specific contact person on the ECM. When special events require assistance from parents, the room parent will receive a call/email/text from the ECM contact person. The room parent will then inform their classroom parents and ask for volunteers if needed. Room parents must be present at all parties and lead activities. The ECM contact person will also contact the Room Parent before each class party.

If you want to serve as a room parent, you will find a place to sign your name on the party sign-up form posted in your child's classroom at Meet the Teacher.

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

Talk about the program as a happy place. If your child cries when you bring him or her to class, it is usually best to leave your child with the teachers as soon as possible. Children usually stop crying before the parent reaches the car. In most cases, the longer the parent stays, the more difficult it is for the child to separate. Should your child's crying persist, we will let you know. Feel free to check on your child by calling the ECEC office at (432) 683-0851.

Please make every effort to have your child in the classroom on time so that teachers can settle the class and begin the day's activities.

Please be sure your child gets enough sleep the night before and eats a nutritious breakfast before coming to school.

You are encouraged to communicate regularly with your child's teacher. If unusual circumstances arise at home, please let us know. We can be a much stronger resource for your child if we are aware of developments that change his or her routine or significantly affect his or her life.

Please carefully read all notices sent home, refer often to your Parent Handbook, and be aware of teacher communication through classroom postings and group text messages.

If you have questions or concerns, please discuss them with the teacher or director as soon as they arise. We welcome your suggestions for improvement and growth. Early childhood should be a wonderful part of that God-given process called “growing up.” When families and schools work together, we set an example for children. Our door is always open, and you are always welcome.

Thank you for trusting us to provide your child with a loving, caring learning experience. We look forward to spending time with your child during this special time in his or her life.

**Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form
Texas Licensing 746.503, 746.603 (a)(1)
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Early Childhood Education Center**

I, _____, parent/guardian of

_____ have received, reviewed, understand,
and read the policies and procedures of First Presbyterian Church Early Childhood Education Center.

I agree to abide by all policies and to pay all fees incurred while in the program.

Signed _____

Date _____

This form must be signed and submitted at the time of enrollment.