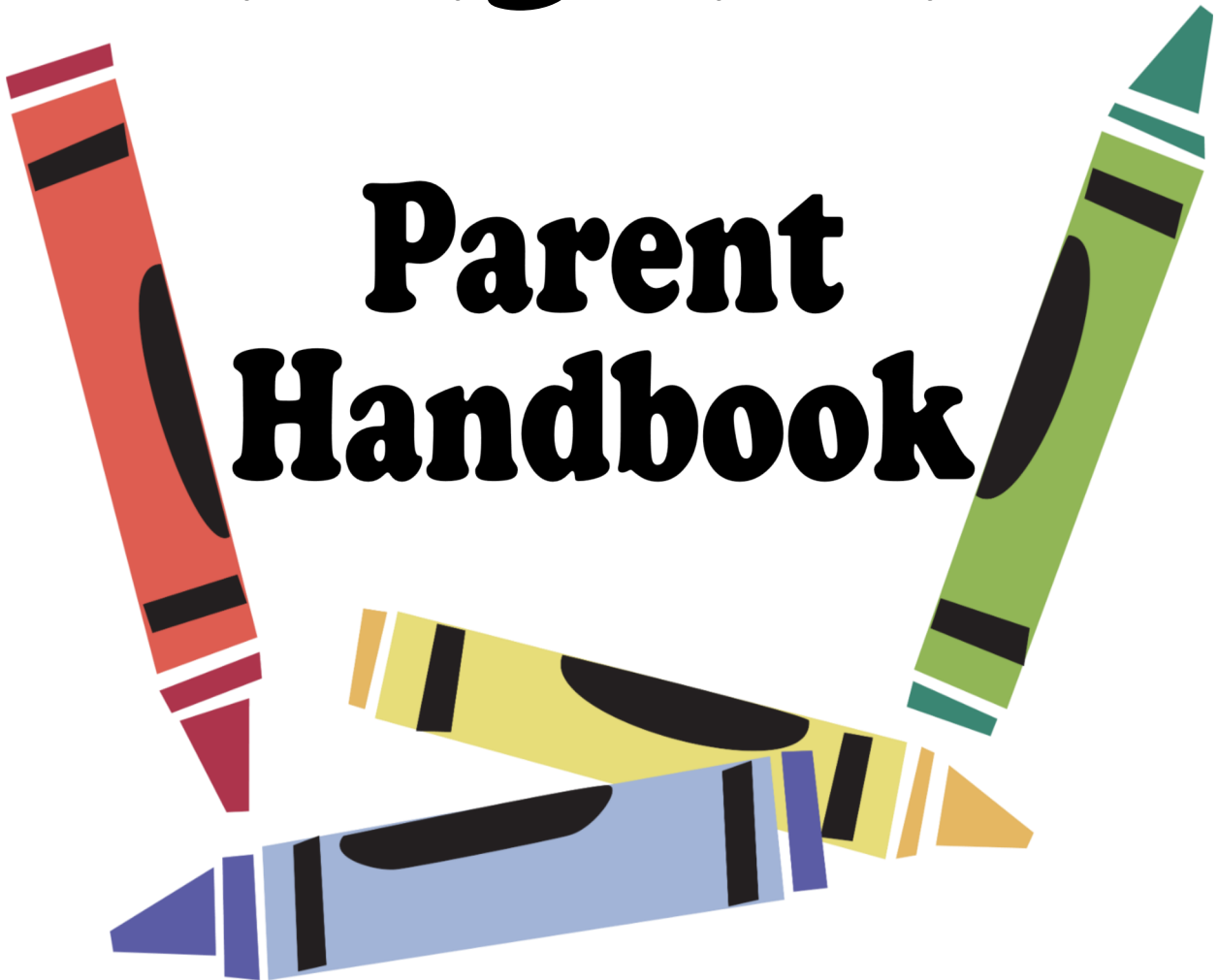




2025-2026

Parent Handbook



First Presbyterian Child Development Center

Serving children ages 6 weeks through 4K

Our Mission:

First Presbyterian Child Development Center is a ministry of The First Presbyterian Church. It is our desire to provide a safe Christian environment where young children are encouraged to grow and develop spiritually, emotionally, cognitively, socially and physically. We offer educational opportunities that enhance growth and development through hands-on, age appropriate activities and experiences. We strive to provide an atmosphere where parents can leave their children, knowing they will be loved and well taken care of in their absence. This ministry of First Presbyterian Church desires to minister to the needs of the whole child, regardless of race, ethnic or economic background.

A. ENROLLMENT

The First Presbyterian Child Development Center is licensed by the South Carolina Childcare Licensing Agency and adheres to all regulations and policies of such. Children, ages 6 weeks through four years of age, are eligible for enrollment. We are a licensed, faith-based center which allows us the right to freely operate using Christian principles and doctrine. Daily Bible stories, instruction and weekly chapel services are offered by our childcare staff, church staff and approved volunteers.

B. ELIGIBILITY

Priority for enrollment as space becomes available is in the following order:

Children of parents who are active members of The First Presbyterian Church, Florence, SC.

Children, who have siblings who are currently enrolled at our center.

Children of First Presbyterian Childcare Center Staff.

All other eligible community children.

First Presbyterian Child Development Center has a waiting list for all future openings. Being on the list does not guarantee space when needed but serves to give priority to people wanting space in the order they are put on the list. As space becomes available in the age group needed, people on the list are contacted. If a parent does not need the space when contacted, the space will go to the next eligible child, unless the first parent agrees to pay a holding fee of \$125 a week until their child is in attendance.

C. HOURS OF OPERATION

The First Presbyterian Child Development Center is open from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday. We do ask that you bring your child to the center no later than 9:00 am. This assures that all of the children eat and rest on their normal schedule. **If your child will be late because of a doctor's check-up or any other reason, we ask that you kindly phone the center or send a message via Brightwheel so that we will be made aware of the situation and can plan accordingly.**

D. ACCESS

The parents of each enrolled child will be given two access cards. These cards will gain entrance into our facility through the tower doors off of Cherokee Road. For the safety of all children and staff, please use the tower doors when picking up or dropping off your child.

One additional card may be purchased in the event that someone else will be responsible for bringing or picking up the child from the center. The cost of an additional card is \$15.00. In the event that a card is lost, another one may be ordered at the charge of \$15.00. Please do not punch a hole in the access card, this will damage the chip and cause it to be defective.

E. HOLIDAYS

The First Presbyterian Child Development Center will be closed on the following days:

New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Thanksgiving Friday, Christmas (5 days), and two days a year for mandatory staff training/work day. We will close at 2:00 pm on the day prior to the July 4th's holiday, the day before Thanksgiving, and New Year's Eve.

When the holiday falls on a weekend, the center will close either the week day before or after that holiday. For example, if July 4th is on a Saturday, the center will be closed on Friday. If July 4th is on Sunday, the Center will close on Monday.

Tuition will remain the same whether or not the center is closed during the week due to a holiday, weather day, sick day or work day.

F. CONFIDENTIALITY

All children have a right to privacy. Neither staff nor parents may divulge any information about children or families to others. All files for children and staff are located in a locked file cabinet in the Child Development Center. Only the CDC Administration Team, which includes the Director, Assistant Director, Site Manager, Administrative Assistant, the church

administrator and the S.C. Childcare licensing agency will have access to children and staff records.

A list of First Presbyterian Child Development Center children's names will not be released without prior notification; however, **parents may choose to share their information through Brighthwheel's Parent Directory.** In addition, parents must sign a release before their child's picture will appear on Facebook, in the church newsletter, local newspaper or any other childcare publication associated with the First Presbyterian Child Development Center. Facebook pictures will appear with no names.

G. REGISTRATION

Applications for registration are available in the child development office or via Brightwheel. There is a \$150.00 nonrefundable registration fee due at the time of enrollment for the first child enrolled in the family. Registration for the second child in the family is \$100.00. There is also a supply fee of \$100 per child. These non-refundable fees are due yearly at the time of registration for the new year. The monies collected are used to purchase curriculum and supplies needed for our program.

First Presbyterian Child Development Center operates 12 months a year. It is necessary for each child to be re-registered to hold their space for the next school session, **which begins in June.** Registration information for the next school session will be available in late February or early March. The registration information will include an updated Parent Policy book and all necessary forms. Children currently enrolled in our facility will have priority for any available space. A child is not officially registered until all forms have been submitted along with the \$150.00 registration fee and \$100 supply fee. **All tuition accounts must be paid up in full before a child will be considered for re-enrollment for the next school year.** Once registration is closed all remaining spaces will be filled from the waiting list, with priority given to First Presbyterian Church members, siblings of children currently enrolled and children of staff members.

H. TUITION

Tuition is currently \$185.00 per week and due on Mondays for that week of care. Online payments are available through Brightwheel. Checks need to be made to: First Presbyterian CDC. If paying by check, please write the child's name on the memo line. Cash payments need to be paid in the Church Financial Office or in the CDC Office.

Beginning January 5, 2026, the weekly tuition rate will increase to \$200. It will increase again on June 1, 2026 to \$215.

Effective September 2, 2025, there will be a \$30 late fee on tuition payments. All payments are due on Monday for that week of care. If payment for that week of care is not received by that Wednesday, your account will be charged \$30 each week until your account is paid in full. In addition, there is a \$35.00 fee for all returned checks. Please make every effort to pay your child's tuition on time. **When payment is over two weeks late, without prior notification from the parent, the child is subject to be dropped from enrollment.**

The same tuition amount is due even when a child is not present at the center or when the center is closed for a holiday or a weather day.

Tuition must be paid prior to the week of care. If paying bi-weekly or monthly, tuition must be paid in advance and not after the period of care.

I. WITHDRAWAL

A two week notice must be given to the director if a parent decides to withdraw their child at any time. This notice will enable the space to be filled without the loss of center funding. If a parent decides to withdraw their child without giving a notice, they will be charged for two full weeks of care.

J. STATEMENT OF DISCIPLINE

First Presbyterian Child Development Center is committed to providing each child with a safe and nurturing environment. Children are taught to be respectful of others. Appropriate behavior is modeled and taught. Because we serve children of different ages and stages of development it is necessary to discipline in different ways. Young toddlers are taught to give "nice touches" to their friends and teachers. As children learn to communicate through their speech, they are encouraged to use their words with others and not their actions. Teachers reinforce communication by encouraging children to use words such as "Stop!" or "I don't like that" if they are being hurt or bothered by another child. Corporal punishment will not be used.

Children are not allowed to hurt themselves or others or destroy center property. When a child loses self-control and is destructive or endangering to others, he/she is placed in "time out". Time out is one minute for each year of a child's age. For example, if a child is 3 years old, they would be placed in time out for 3 minutes.

When the child regains self-control, a teacher talks over the situation with the child and may need to redirect the child's play. Children will be taught to use respect with their teachers. No child will be allowed to use unacceptable language at the center.

If a child continuously displays unacceptable behavior a parent/teacher conference will be needed to determine a plan of action. If the unacceptable behavior does not improve, the parents will be asked to withdraw the child from the center.

K. BITING

Many times children bite during their teething years. Biting helps their sore gums to feel better. Sometimes they bite during play, or when they are excited. This is normal development. Often around 12 months, they realize that if they bite someone they get a reaction. Biting is also a way to control others, “if another child has a toy that I want and I bite them, then I get the toy.” Young toddlers seldom understand the sharing concept. Caregivers and teachers can help by carefully watching to see when the biting is occurring. Sometimes if a young child is not feeling well or they are tired they may have a tendency to bite. It is important to tell the child when he/she bites “STOP that hurts.” Or “NO biting.” Biting hurts. At First Presbyterian Child Development Center we try to teach young children to “give nice touches”. Keeping words short and simple help children understand. Once a child begins to communicate using his/her own words, they can help stop others from hurting them. We may ask that parents bring teething rings that are kept in the refrigerator to soothe their child’s gums when they are swollen and hurting. We will strive hard to keep children from biting, but unfortunately, sometimes it is impossible to catch.

When a child repeatedly bites with no improvement it may be necessary for a parent/teacher/director conference to set a plan of action. If the biting does not improve in a reasonable time frame or if the biting gets worse, the parent will be asked to withdraw their child from our program.

L. ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE/PICKUP AND TRACKING

Each day, teachers will keep an attendance record within the Brightwheel app and track your child in and out throughout various activities during the day. Children will be tracked when moving to a new location within the Center, entering or exiting the facility or a vehicle when on field trips.

We will need a copy of the driver’s license or state ID for each person allowed to pick up your child from the center. No child will be released to anyone without proper identification. This is for the safety of your child.

In the case of divorce or separation please talk to the Director and your child’s teacher about arrival and departure. We must have a copy of all court appointed visitation and custody agreements on file before we can deny any parents access to their child.

Children must be picked up on time. We understand that delays do happen. However, we must charge a \$10.00 late fee when a child is picked up after 6:00 pm. At 6:15 pm this amount goes up to \$20.00. This fee will be added to your tuition account. It will be paid to the two staff members who have stayed late with your child. The Director or the Designee will try to reach the parents by phone when a child has not been picked up by 6:00 pm. If no one is available to pick up the child, the Director or the person in charge, will begin notifying people on the child's emergency list until someone is reached.

For the safety and well-being of the infants and toddlers, we ask that parents picking up multiple children, **pick up in the nursery or toddler rooms first**, and then proceed to pick up the older child. In addition, an adult must always pick up a child. We will never release a child in the care of another child.

M. VISITS/AND OR OBSERVATIONS

At the First Presbyterian Child Development Center we observe an open door policy. Parents may visit or observe at any time without prior notification. However, it is hard for young children to resume play with a hovering parent. If prior notice is given we will try to find a less noticeable place for a parent to observe.

We request that any parental visits are kept to a minimum, so not to interrupt the normal flow of the classroom. It is easy to pass germs especially during the flu and cold season. A parent of a nursing or young baby, who wishes to visit during the day, may do so by taking the child from the classroom and visiting in the nursery pod area. Unauthorized visitors will not be allowed in the classrooms.

N. CLOTHING

Comfortable and washable play clothes are the appropriate attire for the First Presbyterian Child Development Center. Preschoolers, ages 2 and up, need to be able to manage their own clothing for bathroom use. No belts or clothing that button at the shoulder should be worn by children who are potty training. For safety issues, no necklaces or hanging jewelry should be worn by children while in attendance at the First Presbyterian Child Development Center.

Open toed sandals and flip flops are not allowed unless a parent has signed a waiver allowing such. The First Presbyterian Child Development Center will not be held liable if a child is injured due to wearing flip flops or open toed shoes while at the center.

All children will need a Ziploc bag with clean underwear, socks, and an extra outfit. These items need to be clearly marked with the child's name. Accidents do happen, and it is best to be prepared. Each season the parent will need to change out the clothing appropriately.

O. TOYS FROM HOME

Children are encouraged to bring a toy to share on specified “Show and Tell” days. Names or initials need to be on all toys. Other toys that are not to be shared cause much grief for the owner and for other children; these toys need to be left at home or in the car for later use. Toy guns and “gun playing” are not allowed at the First Presbyterian Child Development Center.

P. NUTRITION POLICY

Children, ages one and up are served lunch every day. They are offered snack each day about mid-morning and again after nap time. Children are encouraged to try new foods but are not forced to eat.

Children are not allowed to bring food to the center unless enough is brought to share with the entire class. This includes breakfast foods.

Children are not allowed to chew gum at the First Presbyterian Child Development Center.

When children are present at the center who have food allergies or on restricted diets, their parents will need to provide special foods to meet their dietary needs for lunch or snacks.

In addition, due to nut allergies in the CDC, any food i.e., birthday cake, cupcakes, snacks, etc. brought into classrooms MUST indicate with a label they are “nut free”. If there is not a label indicating “nut free” the food will not be allowed in the classroom. Please note, there are cakes and cupcakes available in grocery stores that indicate “nut free”. The bakery should be able to help.

Q. BIRTHDAYS

Sometimes parents like to bring a special snack to celebrate a child’s birthday. If you would rather not do this please do not feel obligated. If you do wish to bring a birthday snack please let us know which day, so we can give you a count of how many children and staff will be present. A decorated birthday cake is not necessary. We can share, sing over and make anything special. Invitations to private parties are only given out when everyone in the class has been invited. Invitations for a classroom celebration are not allowed.

R. IMMUNIZATION RECORD

All children enrolled at First Presbyterian Child Development Center must have their immunization record on file in the office. These files are checked by DHEC periodically and must be kept up-to-date.

If an immunization record is found to be delinquent in information, a parent will be informed and expected to give a new updated immunization record within a timely manner. If the center does not receive the update within the required time frame, the child will be subject to dismissal until the proper immunization document is on file at the center. This is in compliance with the S.C. Childcare Licensing Regulations.

S. HEALTH POLICY

Please be aware that a doctor's excuse does not void our health policies. We do not provide medical care for ill children at First Presbyterian Child Development Center. Upon arrival children will be assessed for any illnesses. If your child is running a fever, has a bad cold, has an unexplained rash, is vomiting or has diarrhea or any other possible contagious illness, please keep him/her at home. Children need to be free of fever for 24 hours (with no fever reducer meds) before returning to the center. This time frame begins at the end of the business day that the child is sent home. Listed below are symptoms or illnesses that are a cause for a child to be kept at home, or if observed, sufficient reason to send a child home.

FEVER- within the last 24 hours of at least 100.5;

RASH- any unexplainable rash;

COLDS: a cold that is causing them to be listless or obviously uncomfortable with coughing and congestion;

PERSISTENT RUNNY NOSE (green or yellow discharge);

CONJUNCTIVITIS (PINK EYE): If eyes are matted shut after waking or eye pupil or surrounding area is red and/or yellowish green discharge is present;

DIARRHEA, VOMITING or FEVER: Must be free of symptoms or fever for 24 hours (with out medication) before returning to the center. Often older babies and toddlers have loose bowels when teething. If the bowel is loose, but is contained in the diaper and the child is noticeably teething, we will not send the child home. However, if a stomach virus is circulating in the classroom, a bowel movement that is not contained in the diaper is not considered caused by teething. When a bowel movement is not contained in the diaper, we have no way of cleaning a child properly, so the child will be sent home and may not return for at least 24 hours after the last loose bowel movement occurs;

IRRITABLE children who cannot participate in the normal daily routine of the center due to continuously crying or requiring more attention than can be provided without hurting the health and safety of the other children.

ANY CONTAGIOUS CONDITIONS: Should your child contract a contagious disease, you must notify the center immediately so parents of other children may be made aware. A doctor's note may be required before a child can re-enter the center.

A CHILD WILL BE SENT HOME IF LICE IS DETECTED IN THEIR HAIR. The child will be excluded from the center for 24 hours and must be medically treated, with no nits visible in their hair when they return.

WE CAN NOT PROVIDE MEDICAL CARE FOR ILL CHILDREN AT THE CENTER. If your child becomes ill while in our care you will be notified and expected to pick him/her up immediately.

If a child is sent home due to illness they may not return to the center for 24 hours. This time frame begins at the end of the day which they are sent home. Therefore a child who is sent home due to illness may not return to the center the following day.

T. MEDICATIONS

All medication (over the counter and prescribed) must be administered by a parent. At no time will staff members administer medication except for administering an EpiPen. All EpiPens must be accompanied by a written, signed and dated note from the child's physician. Parents must write a written permission note before a staff member may administer the EpiPen to the child. When an EpiPen is administered the staff member will also sign a note documenting the administration of the medicine. In addition, the EpiPen must be in its original container, and the child's first and last name must be on it. It will be kept in a locked medicine box.

All diaper cream or sunscreen must be labeled with the child's name and date. It will be kept in the locked medicine box, located on the counter in each changing area.

Due to the sensitivity of the eye, no eye drops of any kind will be administered by the child development staff while a child is in our care.

U. CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

A childcare staff person is required by law to report to the authorities if they believe a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by acts or omission that would be child abuse or neglect if committed by a parent, guardian or other person responsible for the child's welfare. A childcare staff member must make a report to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Reports of child abuse or neglect may be made orally by telephone or otherwise to the county department of social services or to a law enforcement agency in the county where the child resides.

First Presbyterian Child Development Center will not tolerate any abuse of any child in our care. We will handle any situation accordingly.

V. EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

If a child becomes ill or gets hurt seriously, a staff member will attempt to contact the parents immediately. If the parents cannot be reached, the emergency contacts listed in the child's record will be notified. If a situation requires immediate medical attention i.e. broken bone, a seizure, or any life threatening situation, a staff member will call EMS while trying to get in touch with the parents or emergency contacts. If the child must be transported to the hospital a staff person with the child's emergency record, will go with the child and stay with the child until the parent or emergency contact is present.

Parents sign the permission slip for emergency medical treatment so that their child may be transported to the Emergency Room, (hospital specified by parent) and medical personnel can begin treatment in the case that the parents or emergency person cannot be reached.

Please let us know in writing if your home phone, cell phone or work number should change, so that our records can be kept up-to-date. The center will need to notify you if your child is hurt and non-working phone numbers will only slow down the process.

W. INCLEMENT WEATHER

In case of inclement weather the First Presbyterian Child Development Center will follow the same procedure as the Florence District One Public School System. If the school system is closed we will also be closed. Please stay tuned to our Facebook page for closings and other necessary announcements.

If inclement weather happens during our regular business day we may close early. This decision will be made by the director. If a decision is made to dismiss early, parents will be notified by phone, text or email and expected to pick up their child within a one hour time frame.

X. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

In case of a weather emergency, (tornado, hurricane, etc.), the children will be moved to the inside hallway outside of their classrooms. This is the safest part of the building. The church building is equipped with emergency lighting which will turn on automatically if the electricity goes off. The children will remain in this area with the staff until it is safe to return to their classrooms. In the event that the children must be moved from the church building because of a weather event, fire or other emergency, they will be transported to Calvary Baptist Church, 915 Cherokee Road, Florence. Parents will be notified to pick them up there. (Please read Emergency/ Preparedness plan).

Y. FIELD TRIPS

Preschool classes for 3's and 4's may go on field trips from time to time to enhance their classroom experiences. Parents must sign a permission slip before children are taken away from the center for a field trip. Staff ratios will be maintained on field trips. Emergency information on each child will be taken on all trips away from the center. Staff will keep tracking records of children getting on and off the bus.

Z. PROVISIONAL EMPLOYMENT

All Staff of the First Presbyterian Child Development Center will have their background checks completed before they begin working. We will not utilize provisional employment.

AA. PRAYER NEEDS

Staff and preschool aged children meet each morning for group prayer with the director. Prayer requests are welcome. The First Presbyterian Child Development Center is a ministry of the First Presbyterian Church. The Pastor and Church Administrator are available to meet with parents who have a special need or prayer request. Please feel free to contact them through the church office at 843-662-2583.

BB .GRIEVANCES

Anyone who would like to voice a grievance or concern may do so by arranging a meeting with the Director. If agreement is not met, the parent may request a meeting with the Director and the Church Administrator. A request for a meeting with the Child Development Advisory Committee may be made in writing outlining the need for such and submitted through the church office. The committee may then consider the matter at its next regularly scheduled meeting or specific meeting and take such action, if any, as the committee deems appropriate.

CC. CHILD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

All policies and fees outlined in this book are written in accordance with the regulations of the South Carolina Child Care Licensing Agency and the guidelines of the Child Development Advisory Committee of the First Presbyterian Church. These committee members meet regularly to review policies, to give vision and direction to the Child Development Center. The Director of the First Presbyterian Child Development Center, the Church Administrator and the Pastor serve on this committee as ex-officio members to voice concern and input, but have no vote.

Revised 8/2025