

Aldersgate

PRESCHOOL



A weekday ministry of Aldersgate United Methodist Church

Parent Handbook

2010-2011

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Mission Statement:

The purpose of establishing a preschool at Aldersgate United Methodist Church is to provide opportunities within a Christian atmosphere to meet the educational and social needs of young children in both the congregation and the community.

Program Goal:

To provide a safe, nurturing, Christian environment where young children can explore and discover, through age appropriate activities, the wonders of God's world.

Our philosophy:

Recognizing that the family is the most significant influence in a young child's life, we strive to strengthen, complement and enrich the experiences and opportunities already provided to each child. Further, we strive to give each child the freedom to extend previous skills and to develop new skills within the warm and loving environment of a Christian preschool.

Our curriculum is designed to provide a variety of experiences suited to the developmental level and maturity of each child and recognizes that play is the universal language of children. Our developmental approach recognizes that children develop and reach specific stages of growth in an orderly and predictable manner. Each child is unique in his or her developmental growth time sequence.

Program Objectives:

- ◆ To provide young children a positive experience in what is often their first involvement with an organized program away from their parents.
- ◆ To help children see themselves as God's special creation: competent, unique and lovable.
- ◆ To nurture children's natural excitement for exploration, discovery and learning.
- ◆ To help develop children's skills for interacting with other people: children and adults.
- ◆ To foster children's abilities and interest in books, art, language, cognitive skills, large and small motor activities and music.

Curriculum

Aldersgate Preschool and Discovery Day programs follow a curriculum designed to meet the needs, interests and developmental levels of children. We endeavor to foster each child's growth in the following skill areas:

◆ **Social/Emotional growth**

is nurtured through activities and expectations that promote the development of a positive self-image and increased self discipline and social skills required for positive interaction with peers and adults.

◆ **Spiritual growth**

is enhanced by witnessing adults that conduct themselves in a compassionate, loving and generous manner with every child, parent and co-worker. Children will be introduced to general Christian concepts through prayer, story, Bible verse and song.

◆ **Language growth**

is developed through various opportunities for children to have fun with language and to practice various verbal skills. Children are encouraged to participate in stories, songs, finger plays, personal interactions and drama.

◆ **Physical growth**

is encouraged through activities which promote both large and fine motor coordination. The facility is designed to provide ample space for freedom of movement and the curriculum provides a balance of periods for both quiet and active play.

◆ **Cognitive growth**

is stimulated by an environment rich in materials that are developmentally appropriate and stimulating. Activities and various centers are developed in order to promote curiosity and creativity according to the individual abilities and readiness of each child.

◆ **Self help/School readiness growth**

is encouraged in order that each child will become more independent and develop skills that facilitate a positive school experience both at Aldersgate Preschool plus and in future educational settings.



Daily Routine

Each session day follows a predictable schedule as determined by the individual age level teams. There is continuity in the kinds of opportunities provided throughout the center. They are as follows:

Circle time (15-20 minutes) The purpose of Circle time is to provide a large group experience for the children. Teachers use the key objectives to plan stories, songs, games and other activities that encourage children to participate actively in a large group.

Work time (30-40 minutes, longer in Discovery Days) Children make decisions independently about what area and which activities he or she will participate in. Teachers use Work time to ask questions and get involved in children's play to assist the children in initiating and extending their thought processes. Teachers also observe the children in their stages of development in order to plan appropriate experiences for them. Children are encouraged to participate in multiple areas throughout the year. This time also is an important time for children to practice skills in all skill areas and especially in the social area.

Clean up (10-15 minutes) Clean up time allows children to develop responsibility for putting away their own materials and to bring closure to the child-initiated segment of the daily routine. Shelves and materials are clearly labeled to facilitate this activity. Teachers use Clean up time to ask questions about classification, serialization, and other key experiences.

Snack time (15-20 minutes) Snack time activities include social interaction with peers and adults and hands-on experience with preparation and serving snacks. In our older classes, snack time is incorporated during Work Time. The children may choose snack at any time within this period.

Small group time (10-20 minutes – preschool only, Discovery Days may incorporate this during Work time) Small Group activities are planned by the teacher to offer or extend experiences the children need. Children are encouraged to use materials in different ways and to explore actively. Teachers are observing, offering choices, and asking questions to stimulate exploration and discovery.

Outside time (20-30 minutes) Outside time allows the children to move and develop large muscles. Activities include group games and individual play. Teachers encourage practice of appropriate large motor skills.

Music time (15-20 minutes) Every day for Discovery Days and at least one class session per week in the Preschool classes the children gather for a time dedicated to singing and other rhythm activities.

Story time, music and movement are strategies that are incorporated into the various elements of each day in order to facilitate and stimulate each child's interest and inquisitive nature.

Room Arrangement/Centers

Each classroom is arranged in specific work areas designed to allow the children to make choices and decisions, as well as to foster inquiry, discovery, and learning through different types of play. The following four areas can be found in each classroom. Other work areas may be added from time to time.

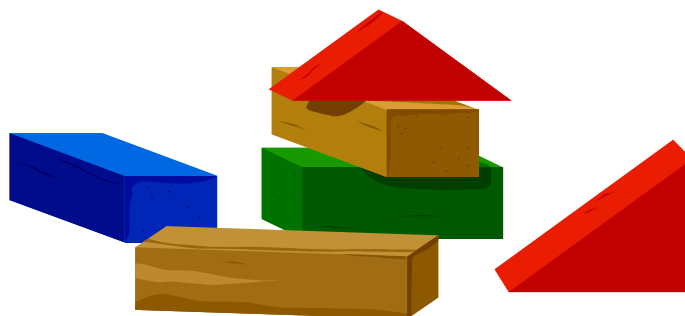
Block area: This is a large area that is carpeted and arranged to encourage creative and cooperative play. The center may contain wooden and other types of blocks, cars and trucks, block accessories (animals, people, traffic signs), small playhouse, airport, garage, firehouse, etc.

House area: Dramatic play is an important part of a child's learning. It helps them understand themselves and the world around them. The house center is arranged to give the child an opportunity to act out familiar situations. This area contains the following equipment: housekeeping furniture and equipment, full length mirror, dolls, doll bed, dress-up clothes and accessories, dishes, etc.

Art area: Art activities allow a child to creatively express their feelings in a visual and sometimes tactile manner. Art can also help develop coordination and manipulation skills. Young children need daily opportunities to enjoy and create with a variety of media. Materials available in this center are as follows: easels, paints, brushes, crayons, markers, scissors, paste, glue, paper and scrap boxes full of material that can be used to make a collage.

Quiet area: This area provides the child with materials that help to develop visual discrimination, eye-hand coordination, and an appreciation of books, puzzles, peg boards and pegs, lacing cards, beads and bead patterns, shape sorters, nesting blocks and rings, along with math and science activities.

Visual stimulation is provided throughout the well planned classroom. By incorporating drawings, words, writing centers, labels, color and shapes, children are naturally encouraged to enhance visual discrimination skills and to begin pre-reading skills relating symbols to objects.



Policies & Procedures

◆ Admission Policy & enrollment

The admission policies of the Aldersgate United Methodist Preschool and Toddler Discovery Day does not discriminate in regard to race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap, or sex in accordance with Kansas Civil Rights Statute K.S.A 44-1009. We are licensed by the State of Kansas and follow their rules and guidelines are stated in the “Regulations for the Licensing” of preschools and day cares.

Each child is enrolled for the entire school year or the balance of the school year. A **non-refundable** enrollment fee is to be paid at the time of enrollment. A child is enrolled and a place is held in one of our classes when the enrollment form has been completed and the enrollment fee is paid. Enrollment for the next year usually begins in January/February of the prior school year. Those already enrolled in the program are given preference and first enrollment opportunities. Following that, enrollment is opened to the community.

◆ Arrival and dismissal

Prior to the school day, our staff are busy preparing for a day full of activities. Children should not arrive any earlier than 8:45am or 12:15pm for classes. Please wait in the hall until the teacher opens to classroom door to signal the start of class. Also, please arrive promptly (within 15 minutes of the beginning of class) so that your child will not miss out on any important introduction for the day. Discovery Days children must be accompanied into the building for arrival and dismissal. After about a month of acclimation, in which the parents walk in, the preschool classes offer a curbside arrival and dismissal system.

All children should be picked up within 5 minutes of their dismissal time

- 11:15am – Discovery Days (M, Th & F), Preschool classes
- 2:30pm – Discovery Days 2 (T,W,& Th), Discovery Days 1 (T,W)
- 2:45pm – Preschool PM classes, Lunch Bunch sessions

Children can become very anxious when parents are late, so please be prompt. There will be a \$5.00 charge for every 5 minutes beyond their regular dismissal time.

◆ Authorization to pick up a child

Children will ONLY be released to a person authorized to pick up that child. We must have written authorization from the parent or guardian if anyone other than a parent is to pick up that child.

On the rare occasion a parent needs to call and inform of alternative dismissal plans the parent must provide his or her PIC (parent identification code). Each parent will determine their individual PIC at the beginning of each year.

If your child is participating in a regular carpool or is to be picked up by a sitter, we will need to have written authorization to keep in the child’s file.

◆ Birthdays

We will note and celebrate birthdays that occur during the school year with song and other recognition items. You may send a special treat to send home with the children in your child's class (stickers, etc. are a good option). Please do not send in snacks to be eaten that day.

As an alternative to a special treat your family could choose to purchase a favorite book to donate "in honor of your child" for our Preschool Plus library. Your child's teacher will read the book to the class, explaining who gave the book and why. The book would then be placed on the class shelf for future reading and then into our school library.

◆ Child neglect or abuse

The state of Kansas requires all child care centers to report any evidence of neglect, suspected abuse or unusual injuries. We are licensed by the state and will follow those guidelines.

◆ Clothing

In order to allow each child to experience "school" to the fullest, please **DRESS FOR ADVENTURE AND FUN!**

One of our major goals is to help children develop self-help skills. Tight belts, suspenders, and overalls require teacher assistance. Children feel much more successful when they can manage sanitary needs independently. Also, in the younger classes, this kind of dress increases the time required to handle diapering needs which takes away from your child's play experiences. **Clothing with elastic waist bands allow for quick and/or independent sanitary care.**

As mandated by the state of Kansas, **we will go outside for large motor play every day** (unless there is rain or extremely cold temperatures). Children should bring jackets and sweaters on cool days. When the weather turns cold, your child should bring a hat, mittens and a coat that zips or buttons closed. All children are expected to participate in outdoor play. You may also include rain boots, rain jacket and umbrellas on rainy days. You never know when we may decide to check out some inviting puddles. Many clothing items are identical, so **PLEASE LABEL ALL CLOTHING!** We cannot be responsible for articles lost that are not labeled. There is a lost and found box in the preschool office.

We recommend a pair of **sturdy play shoes** that secure to a child's foot with buckles, ties or velcro. Sandals, jellies, "dress" shoes and cowboy boots are not conducive to play on the playground or during other large group activities.

Your child will be experiencing activities that are very **MESSY!** Please save all those extra cute clothes for church and special events. Simple play clothes prove the most successful at school. Some children will not engage in some of these activities if they are worried about their clothing. We do provide paint smocks and insist that children wear them. No matter how careful we are, most children will get paint on their clothes. Please reassure your child that any activity he or she is experiencing is much more important than a few spots or stains. Also, we encourage active exploration on the playground. Children may experience mud, rocks, grass, plants, worms, etc. We cannot emphasize it enough, **please DRESS FOR FUN!**

Young children will have an accident from time to time. **We ask that all children keep an extra change of clothes in their school bag.** (Be sure to change these clothes out when the weather changes.) We do have some “extra” clothing at school for those rare instances it is needed. In general, children will feel less intimidated while dealing with an accident when his/her own clothing is available.

◆ **Conferences, communication and visitation**

We maintain an open door policy and hope parents will feel free to come into the room and visit. We would like for each parent to come and share the preschool experience with their child for a day. We know this will make your child feel “Special”. Please understand that we would not be able to accommodate any siblings into the daily schedule. Please contact teachers about scheduling your special day at school.

Please remember that a crisis or change at home affects the child’s behavior at school. Let the teachers know the joyous happenings, the upsetting experiences, or the important changes occurring in your child’s life. Also, please let the teachers know what your child has been told about an impending birth, serious illness, adoption, a recent death, or separation, so conversations can follow consistently. The information will be held in confidence. Teachers and other staff at Aldersgate Preschool Plus will make every effort to provide you with timely and clear information about schedules, curriculum, behaviors and any other concern or question.

We work constantly to build a child’s self-esteem so please understand the need to postpone conversations that would make a child uncomfortable for a more private time. We may hand you a note during transition time and then follow this up with a personal meeting or phone call if needed. Likewise, please feel free to schedule a personal or phone conference for any concerns or questions you may have.

Formal routines have been implemented to facilitate communication from the school to our parents. Discovery Days staff will send home a daily note with information about the activities of the day. Preschool teachers will provide parents with monthly calendars and newsletters. In October our Discovery Days parents will receive a nice photo of their child with a written description of how their child is acclimating to a school environment and in February they will receive a Power Point CD with photos and a more complete description of their child’s development. Preschool classes, and Discovery Days parents who choose this option, will schedule Parent/Teacher conferences in both October and February. Child care will be provided during this time.

◆ **Fees, tuition, late fees and early withdrawal policy**

Registration fees – An enrollment fee of \$55 per child or \$100 per family is required at enrollment for returning families. New families require a \$100 enrollment fee (regardless of number of children). This is a NON-REFUNDABLE fee.

Contract & tuition - Each family will receive a contract in May/June with an explanation of charges due during that school year. This contract, along with at least the first month’s payment is due on July 1st. (Because of the nature of our budget and the need to close out our books at the end of each school year, nine monthly tuition payments are due July & September through April.) If you are mailing your payment, please write your child’s name and class on your check and mail it to:

Aldersgate Preschool Plus
15315 W 151st Street
Olathe, KS 66062

Tuition is averaged over the entire program year. Tuition will be consistent regardless of absences, vacations, holidays or unforeseen closures. Please call the preschool office if you are unable to make a payment so that we can discuss any extenuating circumstances.

Three snow days are built into the schedule. The Preschool board will make a determination on an annual basis if there are more than three snow days.

Late fees – Tuition is due on the first day of each month. Tuition is not considered late until after the 15th of that month. A \$25.00 late fee will be charged on any payments received after the 15th.

Withdrawal – There is a 30 day written notice required for withdrawal. Any advance tuition paid will be refunded as noted on the specific tuition contract.

◆ **Field Trips**

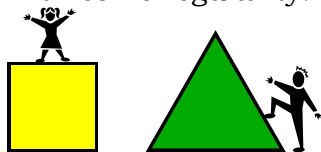
In order to ensure safety and considering the state car seat regulations, Aldersgate Preschool Plus will not plan any field trips that require children riding in others' cars to a destination. Some of our older classes will be able to schedule some walking field trips to nearby attractions. We work hard to provide a variety of activities in our curriculum and will augment that with special speakers and other presentations brought into the classroom.

◆ **Guidance and discipline**

As children grow and develop they tend to test the rules and limits set for them. We use positive guidance at Aldersgate Preschool that includes redirection when inappropriate behaviors occur. We focus on assisting children to understand the expectations and promoting constructive behaviors in an environment that strives toward fostering responsibility, caring and creativity. The goal is to guide children by means of positive helping interactions toward self-discipline, which has self-acceptance as well as self-control as its essential elements. Cooperation and communication between home and school are key ingredients in promoting positive development. Please feel free to call the teacher involved if you have any questions or concerns.

Ages 1-2: Children this age are discovering and experiencing the world in a very physical way. Staff will work individually with each child and closely with parents to develop methods for redirecting and guiding behaviors that may be overly physical or age developmentally inappropriate in a group environment.

Ages 2-5: There may be times when extreme or harmful behaviors may necessitate a short “calming” period for a child. This provides an opportunity for the child to learn appropriate ways to calm him or herself and to strategize appropriate ways to handle anger and aggression. Parents will be notified if a child is requiring a “self-calming” with some regularity.



◆ **Illness**

Our goal is to provide a safe and healthy environment for your child. Following are some reminders to help keep our children and our staff free from recurring illnesses:

- All children must have a physical examination by a licensed physician prior to admittance.
- All children must meet the state of Kansas immunization requirements prior to entering school. Please notify the office of any booster shots your child receives while enrolled at Aldersgate Preschool Plus.
- **Please call if your child is sick and unable to come to school.** It is important that we are notified about illnesses, especially infectious diseases. We appreciate knowing when a child will be absent. The state of Kansas mandates that we report communicable diseases to the state of Kansas Health Department.
- **Please keep your child HOME if:**
 - * Your child's fever has been above normal any time in the previous 24 hours
 - * Your child has been on antibiotics for less than 24 hours
 - * Your child has a rash
 - * Your child has liquid stools or has vomited in the last 24 hours
 - * Your child has heavy green nasal discharge
 - * Your child has a constant cough
- We will work hard to limit any exposure to your child. If a child shows a sign of illness while at school that has not been diagnosed by a doctor as non-contagious, we will contact his or her parents to pick up the child.
- We will **NOT** be able to dispense regular medications to any child. If your child is on medication, please plan doses during non school hours or a parent will need to give the child the correct dosage.
- In rare instances, parents may provide emergency medications (such as an Epi pen to counteract severe allergic reactions) that will be dispensed if a child is in a critical state. A doctor's prescription and a detailed explanation of symptoms will be required to be stored with the medication.
- Our staff will make every effort to help children observe good health practices such as hand washing after potty and before eating, wearing warm outdoor clothing in cold weather and using tissues for blowing noses and covering mouths when we cough or sneeze.

◆ **Parent-Volunteers**

We welcome parents as volunteers in the classroom. In order to volunteer on a regular basis in the classroom, you are required to have a current T.B. skin test and physical form on file. Please contact the preschool office for more information

Our Aldersgate Preschool Plus board will coordinate a Parents club with other opportunities to volunteer time toward special projects. Our board will also plan special activities for our Aldersgate Preschool Plus families.

◆ **Possessions**

Children have difficulty sharing personal items with friends at school. Also, we cannot be responsible for any personal items that are lost or broken while at school. Therefore, please encourage your child to refrain from bringing personal items except during designated "show and tell" or other sharing times scheduled for your child's class. Younger children may bring a comfort item for use during rest time. Please be sure to label anything brought from home.

◆ **School cancellations**

In case of inclement weather, the Preschool and Discovery Day programs will follow the Olathe Public school district and close if they are closed. Please listen to local media for school closings. If the weather turns bad during the morning, please check to see if the PM Kindergarten classes have been canceled.

We may occasionally need to cancel school due to unforeseen circumstances such as funerals. We will provide as much advance notice as is possible.

◆ **Snacks**

The staff at Aldersgate Preschool Plus have committed to providing children with an opportunity to experience a variety of healthy and still “fun” snacks. We ask parents to support our snack choices and to perhaps incorporate some of these choices into their routines at home. A sample of some snack items includes:

- cheese cubes with pretzel stick holders
- cut up fruit (a toothpick for picking them up)
- trail mix – with low sugar, high fiber cereals
- dried fruit
- yogurt with granola
- cheese quesadillas with salsa
- mini bagels
- multi grain crackers
- whole grain tortillas with salsa
- raw vegetables and dip
- pretzels
- 100% fruit juice
- low sugar muffins

◆ **Special Needs**

It is our philosophy and goal to address the needs of all children. In the event that a special need develops, a conference will be held. The parents, teachers, director and a Board representative will determine a plan that will best meet the child’s needs.