

THE BELLEFONTE PLAYSCHOOL



PARENTS' HANDBOOK

THE BELLEFONTE PLAYSCHOOL

OF FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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PARENTS' HANDBOOK
2011 – 2012
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STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The Bellefonte Playschool is a state-licensed nursery school, owned by Faith United Methodist Church. It exists for the purpose of enriching the lives of children. The school provides a supervised environment for socialization through play, and for the teaching of basic readiness skills.

Children will be encouraged to express themselves within the bounds of traditional moral standards, develop social interaction skills and a sense of belonging to a group, and recognize and accept the individual differences of other children.

Teachers and aides will be persons of Christian character and high moral standards. The staff of the Playschool will create a feeling of security and acceptance in each child.

The Playschool, functioning as an educational ministry of the Faith United Methodist Church, is accountable to the Church Council. As such, the Playschool will seek to present a curriculum that reflects the purposes of the Faith United Methodist Church.

The curriculum and the teaching methods will promote Christian standards and values consistent with the beliefs of the Faith United Methodist Church.

(Revised, April 2003)

PLAYSCHOOL ADVISORY BOARD

The school's Advisory Board consists of the Director of the Playschool, one or two Playschool teachers, two parents of children enrolled in the Playschool, two persons who are members of the Faith United Methodist church, the Pastor of the church, and the Treasurer of the church. The Advisory Board meets quarterly in October, January, April and July to discuss the previous events and to make plans for the upcoming quarter of each school year.

If ever you have a problem or concern about something with the Playschool, please contact the Director, the Advisory Board Chairperson, or one of the Parent Representatives. Their names and contact information will be provided to families of enrolled students at the beginning of the school year. Any of us will gladly answer your questions or bring your concerns to the next board meeting.

PLAYSCHOOL STAFF

The By-Laws of The Bellefonte Playschool require that all staff members be of the Christian faith and love children. In accordance with the regulations of the state's Department of Education, all staff members have passed appropriate criminal and child abuse clearances and medical tests. First aid and CPR training is provided to staff members as necessary. In addition, all teachers at The Bellefonte Playschool have at least a four-year college degree in education, as well as certification by the state. Teachers also attend various seminars and trainings throughout the year to keep up-to-date with teaching techniques and concepts of early childhood education.

CLASS ROUTINES

The routines of The Bellefonte Playschool are flexible. Each class session generally begins with free play involving the child's choice of activities. Puzzles, games, books, art materials, blocks, toys, etc. are always available. During free play, teachers and aides work with children individually, or in small groups, to enhance the development of fine motor, cognitive and social skills.

Following free play is clean-up and preparation for snack time. The last part of the school day usually involves structured activities such as games, literature, music and movement, dramatic play, science and nature, or community visitors. Outdoor play is an option when the weather is conducive.

Three-year-old children attend 2-1/2 hours per day for two days a week, while four-year-old children attend 2-1/2 hours per day for three days a week. A certified teacher and a teaching aide lead each class.

The following chart shows a typical classroom routine as posted in each room. Teachers exercise flexibility in this routine to accommodate the needs of the class, needs of individual children, and requirements of special lessons.

Approximate Time	Classroom Routine
9:00 am	Arrival and greetings. Hang up coats. Free play at centers – dress-up, kitchen, blocks, train, toys, etc. Art projects (fine-motor skills). Games or puzzles.
9:50 am	Clean-up time. Everybody helps!
10:00 am	Group time. Calendar, weather & songs. Stories, activities, or special guests.
10:20 am	Group bathroom time. Wash hands before snack.
10:30 am	Snack time with prayer. Quiet reading.
10:45 am	Teacher directed activity. Story, game or activity.
11:00 am	Active play. (gross motor skills) Music and movement, Big Room or outside.
11:25 am	Prepare for dismissal. Put on coats. Get papers or projects to go home. Line up to meet parents/guardians.

SCHOOL CALENDARS AND HOURS

Vacation days follow the calendar of the Bellefonte Area School District, for the most part. The 2011–2012 school calendars for the Playschool are shown below.

Three-Year-Old Classes

Sept. 7	Open House (6-7 pm)
Sept. 13	First day of classes
Nov. 22, 24 & 29	No classes (Thanksgiving)
Dec. 15	Christmas Program (10 am)
Dec. 27, 29	No classes (Christmas holiday)
Mar. 8	No classes
Apr. 26	No classes
May 22	Last day of classes
May 23	Annual Family Picnic

Pre-K (4-year-old) Classes on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays

Sept. 7	Open House (7-8 pm)
Sept. 12	First day of classes
Oct. 21	No classes
Nov. 23, 25 & 28	No classes (Thanksgiving)
Dec. 16	Christmas Program (10 am)
Dec. 23, 26, 28, 30, Jan.2	No classes (Christmas holiday)
Jan. 16	No classes
Jan. 27	No classes
Feb. 20	No classes (President's Day)
Mar. 9	No classes
Apr. 6	No classes (Easter holiday)
Apr. 9	No classes (Unless snow day make-up)
May 9	Spring Program (7 pm)
May 21	Last day of classes
May 23	Annual Family Picnic

Pre-K (4-year-old) Afternoon Class on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays

Sept. 7	Open House (7-8 pm)
Sept. 13	First day of classes
Nov. 22, 23, 24,29	No Classes (Thanksgiving)
Dec. 16	Christmas Program (10 am)
Dec. 27, 28, 29	No Classes (Christmas holiday_
March 8	No Classes
April 26	No Classes
May 9	Spring Program (7pm)
May 22	Last day of classes
May 23	Annual Family Picnic

Playschool hours are from 9:00 am to 11:30 am on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for Pre-K (four-year-old) classes. Hours for three-year-olds are 9:00 am to 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday and Thursday.



Children get the most benefit from their Playschool class when they arrive on time. Please try to be prompt when bringing your child to class! However, please also be considerate of the teachers' planning time prior to class and do not arrive too early. Parents should bring their children to class no earlier than five (5) minutes before starting time.

PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR PLAYSCHOOL

Here are a few important things that parents can do to help their child have a positive experience at Playschool.

#1. Make sure your child gets enough sleep. Most pediatricians recommend that preschool age children need 10 to 11 hours of sleep every night (that's including weekends!). Having the right amount of sleep empowers children to get along with each other and to pay attention better.

#2. Make sure your child has a healthy meal before coming to Playschool. Little brains and bodies need healthy food to function properly. Although Playschool classes share a nutritious snack each day, that doesn't happen until about 10:30 am. Please, don't assume that snack-time is a substitute for a nutritious breakfast! We don't want your little one "running on empty".

#3. Develop a comfortable routine. Make sure you give your child enough time in the mornings to wake-up, get dressed, eat breakfast and get to Playschool on time, without feeling rushed. Some children may become upset and cranky if they are pushed too quickly. Figure out a routine that best suits your child and be consistent.

#4. Say goodbye reassuringly. Many children do very well being left in their classroom with a goodbye hug or kiss from their parent or caregiver. However, for those children who may have a harder time separating from their parents, we suggest making your farewell as upbeat and positive as possible. After you say goodbye, your best plan is to simply walk out of the room without looking back. (We know this is hard to do!) Some children may cry for a few minutes, but please know that the teachers and aides are very skilled in making children feel safe. They will have your child smiling and playing in no time!

#5. Read materials sent home. Please read your monthly newsletters and calendars when they come home. All of the information provided in these and other materials will help you understand what your child is doing at Playschool. Also, you should use information from your calendar to get your child excited about Playschool. Each class day, tell him/her the theme or lesson for the day ahead of time. If children are to bring in something special to class, or wear a special color, the calendar will let you know that too.



FAMILY DIRECTORY AND CLASS LISTS

Information provided by families on the Student Information Form is used to create a Playschool Directory of the classes. The class lists include students' and parents' names, home and e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers. Directories are usually made available to all Playschool families by the end of October. For privacy purposes, families may elect not to have their information included in the directory. However, in these cases, the first name of their child(ren) will still be listed as class members.

A Playschool Directory is compiled to provide our families with a means of contacting one another for car pools and play dates, and as a way for them to form networks and friendships. Addresses are included to give families the ability to mail or e-mail party invitations directly to classmates. To avoid "hurt feelings", the Playschool staff avoids handing out party invitations in the classroom (unless every child in the class gets one!). It is best to mail invitations if only a few children from the class are invited to the event. Until directories are made available, your child's teacher or the director will be happy to offer names and addresses for carpooling or invitation purposes.

Directories are not shared with businesses or organizations outside The Bellefonte Playschool and Faith United Methodist Church. Likewise, we request that our families respect the privacy of fellow Playschool families. Please do not share the directories with other groups, and please refrain from using the directory to promote home businesses.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP PROCEDURES

Drop-off in classroom

When bringing your child to his or her Playschool classroom, please follow these simple requests:

- 1) Please park in the parking lot and have all children with you exit your vehicle. Vehicles should not be parked along the sidewalk, and children, especially infants, should never be left alone in a parked vehicle.
- 2) Please use the small glass door to the right of the church to come into the building. All other doors will be locked!
- 3) If you arrive early, please wait in the lobby area near the windows. Do not wait in the area outside the church office or by the double doors, as this creates too much commotion for the church staff. Also, please supervise your children, and for their safety, do not let them run around or play with the doors.
- 4) Please have your child use the bathroom near the lobby EVERYDAY before class! Make this a Playschool routine.
- 5) When you take your child to his or her classroom, please make sure that the teacher or aide is present and available before leaving your child. This is an excellent time to talk with your child's teacher if you need to.

Regular Pick-up in the Big Room

To lessen the chaos at dismissal time, the Playschool teachers will bring their classes to a designated area in the Big Room (Fellowship Hall), the large room off of the entrance lobby. Parents and guardians will be asked to wait for their children at those designated spots. Signs will be posted on the walls indicating the pick-up areas for each of the classes. When preparing to pick-up your child, please follow these simple requests:

1. Again, please park in the parking lot and have all children with you exit your vehicle, and use the small glass door to the right of the church to come into the building.
2. If you arrive early, please wait in the lobby area near the windows. Please supervise any other children with you.
3. Please do not enter the Big Room if the Playschool classes are still using it for their active playtime (gross motor skills).
4. Please enter the Big Room a few minutes before dismissal time, and wait in the area designated for your child's class. Signs will be posted.
5. While waiting for your Playschool child in the Big Room, please do not allow younger children on the play equipment. Accidents that occur to children not enrolled at the Playschool are the sole responsibility of parents or guardians; the Playschool and Faith Church will not be liable for any injuries.
6. Teachers and aides will bring each class to its designated pick-up area. Children are always excited to see their parents or grandparents waiting for them so please try to be on time. Collect your own child first. Then you may pick up children from another class for play-date or car-pool purposes.
7. Once you have picked-up your child(ren) please exit the Big Room through the center doors. It may be tempting for children to stay and play in the Big Room, but please discourage this because other church groups may be waiting to use the space.

Alternate Pick-Up Plans

There may be some days during the school year when the Big Room (Fellowship Hall) will be occupied by a church event. On those occasions, parents and guardians may be asked to line up outside their child's classroom for dismissal. Teachers will then dismiss each child to the next parent/guardian in line. Families will be notified at drop-off if this alternate pick-up policy will be in effect for any given day. We ask that you wait in the lobby until dismissal time, and then come back to the hallway outside the classrooms. Please be as quiet as you can and do not disturb either the Playschool or Daycare classrooms.

If the weather is favorable, the Playschool teachers may simply have you meet your child(ren) outside, along the sidewalk.

LATE PICK-UP POLICY

Please try to be considerate of pick-up times. Children look forward to seeing their parent or guardian when class is dismissed. Parents/guardians who do not pick up children within 10 minutes of dismissal time will be charged a late fee of \$10 for each ten minutes thereafter.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Monthly **newsletters** will be sent home with children or e-mailed to designated e-mail addresses to keep parents informed of upcoming events at the Playschool. Please read your newsletters to find out what the classes are doing and learning each month! A monthly **calendar** of daily activities also will be provided each month. Please post each month's calendar in a convenient place (like your refrigerator!) and check it frequently to stay informed about themes and activities in your child's class. Articles concerning kindergarten readiness, general pre-school development, parenting topics, etc., are also sent home periodically or are available for the asking.

Please contact your child's teacher or the Director, if you have a question or concern. All of us care about your child and will be happy to help you! **The Playschool's telephone number is 357-9086 and its e-mail address is playschool@bellefontefait.com.** Home telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of the Playschool staff will be made available to you at our Open House in September, and also will be listed in our Family Directory (see page 7).

WEATHER CLOSING INFORMATION

Announcements regarding weather-related closings or changes in the Playschool schedule will be made over local radio stations and television news channels. Families who have provided the Playschool with an e-mail address will also receive an e-mail, announcing the Playschool changes.

Snow days will follow the Bellefonte Area School District's decision. With an all-day cancellation by the school district, we will follow suit and cancel all classes. A two-hour delay by the school district will result in a one-hour delay at the Playschool for morning classes. Classes will start at 10:00 am, instead of 9:00 am, and will still end at 11:30 am. Afternoon classes will meet as scheduled.



We understand that some families may not want to travel to Playschool during a one-hour delay. Please use your own discretion concerning road conditions in your area. We want you and your child to feel safe coming to Playschool! However, if you decide not to bring your child to Playschool on a morning with a one-hour delay, please leave a phone message letting us know, so we don't worry about you.

Classes canceled due to weather will not be made-up at the end of the school year in May. The teachers will ensure that all curriculum goals are met, regardless of the number of class days missed.

DRESS AND IDENTIFICATION



- Please dress your child in play clothes, not fancy or expensive clothes. Paste and paint may get on children's clothing even though we are very careful and provide smocks.
- Please clearly label everything brought to school with your child's name (jackets, mittens, boots, etc.). Many children have similar looking coats, and the teachers need to know

which one belongs to which child, especially when the children are too young to know the difference!

- Please keep in mind that the children will be active and need proper footwear to run, skip, jump and play. Good fitting sneakers or shoes work best, not sandals, crocs, boots or slippery dress shoes.
- Finally, most children enjoy playing outside, so please send sensible outdoor clothing with your child when necessary. Light-weight jackets or sweaters are good for Fall and Spring. Heavy-weight coats in the Winter will allow classes to go outside for walks and black-top play.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences are held at the Playschool in March. By this time of the year, classes are adjusted to their Playschool routine, and the teachers know their students well enough to make thoughtful assessments about each child's strengths, weaknesses and preparedness for the following school year.

The March newsletter and your child's teacher will encourage you to make an appointment for a Parent-Teacher conference. If you cannot come to the Playschool before or after class times, our teachers will be more than happy to arrange an evening or phone conference with you.

If a parent, or teacher, feels there is a concern about any facet of a child's development or Playschool experience, a time for discussion may be arranged at any point in the school year. Parents do not need to wait until March conferences to address their concerns! Parents and teachers should discuss concerns over a child when the child is not present or within hearing distance. This will protect the child's self esteem. If it's more convenient for you, please contact your child's teacher at home to talk about your concerns or to schedule a face-to-face appointment.

Finally, please remember to direct any concerns about your child to his or her teacher only, not to the classroom aide. Teaching aides care greatly about the children, but they have been instructed not to have in-depth discussions about a child's progress with his or her parents or guardians. Our Playschool teachers have special training and certification in the field of education to make them the authorities in these matters.

SNACKS AT PLAYSCHOOL

Sharing a snack at Playschool is an important part of our curriculum. It gives children opportunities to practice good table manners, learn about healthy food choices, count items at the table, and even taste new foods.

Each family is asked to bring a nutritious snack and beverage to share with their child's class, approximately once a month. Each family will get to select their child's first snack day at Open House in September. After that, your child's teacher will schedule your child's snack day approximately once a month. Please let her know, in advance, if your family plans to be out-of-town so that she can schedule your child's snack day around his or her absence. Families will be provided with a snack reminder at the end of the month telling them of their child's snack day the following month. In some cases when the months are short, not every child in class will need to provide snack.

When it is your child's turn to be the "snack helper", we encourage you to provide snacks and drinks that are low in sugar and packed with nutrients. Doing so will help the children build strong, healthy bodies and active minds. Serving healthy snacks at preschool sets a great example for children. Plus, healthy snacks can be very simple to prepare. The list below was obtained from the web-site, Preschoolrock.com, and is included to provide some useful suggestions. Please use this list of snack ideas to create nutritious snacks for your child's class. Try to include at least two food groups for variety and balanced nutrition.

Fruits and Vegetables

- Bananas** - Cut into quarters or halves with peel on for convenience
- Apples and Pears** – Sliced into wedges
- Melons and Cantaloupe** – Cubed or use a melon baller for fun shapes
- Berries** - Serve as is!
- Oranges** – Wedges
- Grapes** - Cut in quarters or halves
- Plums, Peaches and Nectarines** - Pitted and cut in half
- Sugar Snap Peas** – Serve as is!
- Broccoli** – Cut into small florets
- Cucumbers** – Sliced
- Cherry tomatoes** – Cut in half



Suggested Portion Per Child = 1/2 piece of fruit, 1/2 cup raw fruit or vegetable, 1/4 cup dried fruit

Breads and Grains

- Whole Wheat Crackers or Pretzels**
- Whole Wheat Breads**
- Pita Bread**
- Tortillas**
- Fruit or Vegetable Muffins**
- Cookies and Granola Bars** - Choose lower sugar, whole grain versions

Suggested Portion Per Child = 1/2 slice bread, 1/2 ounce crackers

Protein Foods

Hard Boiled Eggs – Shells removed and quartered

Nuts - Chop into pieces

Nut Butters - Spread peanut butter or almond butter on fruit, vegetables, bread or crackers

Beans – Make bean dips like refried bean dip or hummus

Yogurt - Try using plain, low-fat yogurt and serving with fruit or a touch of honey

Cheese - Slices of cheddar or American cheese; string cheese

Cottage Cheese

Suggested Portion Per Child = 1/2 ounce cheese, 2 ounces yogurt, 1/2 ounce nuts, 1 Tbsp peanut butter, 1/2 egg

Milk

Plain Milk

Suggested Portion Per Child = 1/2 cup

Reference: USDA, FNS, Child and Adult Care Food Program. Feel free to reference these websites below for more specific ideas regarding healthy snacks and meals for your preschooler.

http://nutrition.preschoolrock.com/index.php/preschooler_foods_meals_snacks/healthy-snacks-list-for-preschool

http://nutrition.preschoolrock.com/index.php/understanding_nutrition/the_food_guide_pyramid_for_preschoolers

Please note that the Playschool has refrigerator and freezer space available to keep snacks and beverages cold. Also, we have access to an oven and microwave for heating of food. A single beverage, **milk or 100% fruit juice**, is all that is necessary. Water is always available as a second beverage option for children. For sanitation and safety reasons, please make sure your donated beverages are provided in an unopened, plastic container.

The Playschool provides placemats, paper cups, and napkins for snack time each day. These items are often sufficient for serving snacks. However, if your snack should require paper plates, forks or spoons, please provide these items.

*****Please make teachers aware of any food allergies or food restrictions your child may have. This is VERY important!*****



ITEMS FROM HOME DISCOURAGED

The Bellefonte Playschool discourages the bringing of toys and other items from home because of possible breakage or loss. Please instruct your child to leave toys at home, or in your vehicle, during class. If your child has an item to share from a trip or a discovery, please speak with the child's teacher ahead of time to make sure it would be suitable to bring the item to class. You will be notified of special days that will be set aside for "show and tell" of either toys, books, or other items. On those days, toy guns or other toys of aggression are strongly discouraged.

Children in Playschool should not bring back-packs to class. They are often difficult for young children to carry and many times do not adequately hold projects or papers that are sent home. Please refrain from purchasing a back-pack for your child until he or she is getting ready to attend kindergarten. However, if a child will be leaving Playschool to go to a babysitter's or friend's home, and needs to carry extra clothing or supplies, then it is permissible for him or her to bring a back-pack or other bag to class.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

At Playschool we may or may not recognize the birthdays of some famous people throughout the school year. However, we always make time to celebrate the birthday of every wonderful child in our classes! Teachers will schedule each child's class birthday celebration for a day that is close to his or her actual birthday. Children who have summer birthdays will enjoy their special day in May, before the end of the school year. (Because all birthdays are celebrated during the school year, we do not have birthday celebrations during Summer Session.)

Playschool birthday celebrations are extra fun days and involve presenting the birthday boy or girl with a personalized birthday crown and a small gift. The class acknowledges the birthday with some singing and counting of the new birthday age. Finally, the birthday child gets to share a special birthday snack with his or her class.

To keep our focus on nutritious snacks, the Playschool has always discouraged any kind of cake or high-sugar snacks, even for birthdays and other special occasions. Nutritious "special snacks" may include low-fat ice cream cups, fruit popsicles, low-sugar cookies (without icing) or any of the previously suggested healthy snacks made to look festive. (See pages 11-12 for examples and web-site addresses). Parents may also provide special birthday cups and napkins if they wish.

All of us at the Playschool hope your child enjoys a happy birthday celebration with his teachers and classmates. Please remember that if you will be celebrating with a birthday party outside of Playschool, mail or e-mail party invitations to children who will be invited. Our teachers do not like to hand out party invitations unless every child in the classroom is invited. Please use your Family Directory to assist in this matter (see page 7).



HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

At Playschool we like to celebrate holidays and special events all through the school year to teach the children various concepts. Here are the major holidays we recognize and how we celebrate them with the children.

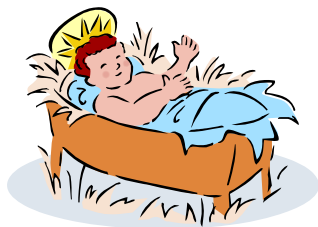


Halloween: At the Bellefonte Playschool, Halloween is celebrated as a fun holiday that focuses on harvest time, animals of the night, and the difference between “real” and “pretend”. Starting in October, children may learn about scarecrows guarding fields of corn, or about harvests of apples and pumpkins. They often make projects that resemble owls, bats or cats, and learn about some of God’s night-time creatures. Classes enjoy singing counting songs and hearing silly stories about make-believe witches, friendly ghosts and talking pumpkins. When Halloween arrives, the children and teachers all get dressed up in costumes. Due to the age of the children, we always insist that costumes not be scary, gory or violent in nature. As a result, the children usually look funny, cute, beautiful, or very clever! (The teachers look pretty good too!) Highlights of our Halloween Parties include guessing who everybody is, playing games, having special snacks, and parading around the church. Parents are always welcome to stay and applaud our Halloween parade.

Thanksgiving: In November, classes start to focus on all the things for which they are thankful -- food, family, friends, homes, toys and pets usually top the lists! Teachers talk about giving thanks to God for all these gifts. All the classes enjoy songs, stories, and crafts about turkeys and other traditional Thanksgiving images. In the Pre-K classes, the story of the first American Thanksgiving is introduced. The boys and girls learn that the Pilgrims and Indians helped each other, became friends, and shared a great feast together. These classes then celebrate by preparing food items and sharing a special snack-time feast. A few parents are asked to help serve food at the Pre-K feast.



Christmas: December is an exciting month at The Bellefonte Playschool. All the children learn new Christmas songs, decorate classroom Christmas trees, and make gifts for their parents. Our teachers tell their classes about the first Christmas when God’s son, Baby Jesus, was born in a stable. The children also enjoy making crafts and singing songs about Santa, his reindeer, and other Christmas symbols. Major highlights of December are the special Christmas presentations for all the Three-Year-Old and Pre-K classes. Parents are encouraged to participate in these programs as well! There is also a brief visit from St. Nick, who tells the children to be good and to go to sleep early on Christmas Eve! Our Christmas parties often include a Christmas video, games, and surprises from the teachers.



St. Valentine's Day: In February, classes prepare for Valentine's Day by making various projects involving hearts. The heart shape is reviewed and the concept of size (small, medium and large) is introduced at this time. Students learn that Valentine's Day is about being kind and loving to all people, especially your friends and family. Classes have parties at which the boys and girls exchange Valentines with everyone in their classroom. Parents are encouraged to help their child create and sign their Valentines at home during the weeks prior to Valentine's Day. (Please see *Helping Your Child Write His Name* on page 17.)



Easter: At the Bellefonte Playschool, Easter is celebrated as the time to remember that Jesus is alive. Usually, teachers do not focus on stories of Holy Week or Jesus' crucifixion since these events are difficult for young children to understand. Other Easter symbols such as newborn chicks and bunnies are used to explain that Easter is a time for new life. On days preceding Easter, all the children create their own Easter baskets as well as other Easter crafts. During Easter parties, when the children are hunting for eggs, the baskets are "mysteriously" filled with treats.



FIELD TRIPS



Field trips will be scheduled throughout the school year for children attending both Three-Year-Old and Pre-K classes, and for our Summer Session. The Bellefonte Playschool rents a school bus for these occasions. Due to the compartmentalization of the school bus seats, children may ride the school bus without child restraint systems (car or booster seats). Therefore, when field trips are planned, classmates and adults will be able to ride together. Riding school buses and learning bus safety rules are good experiences for children who may eventually take a bus to elementary school!

A permission slip will be sent home prior to each field trip. It must be signed and returned to your child's teacher before a child will be permitted to participate. In some cases, a small fee may be requested to purchase items on the field trip. If parents do not want a child to participate in a field trip, the parents will be responsible for keeping the child home on the day when the trip is planned.

Parents may be asked to volunteer as chaperones for educational field trips. Because chaperones are expected to give their full attention to the Playschool children entrusted in their care, younger siblings of Playschool children should not accompany their parents on field trips.

REGISTRATION AND TUITION

- A registration fee is expected to be paid when a child is enrolled at The Bellefonte Playschool. Refunds for withdrawal may be made until September 1st. However, only one-half of the registration fee will be refunded. No refund will be made if the child withdraws after school begins. If a child enters the Playschool in mid-year, half of a full year's registration fee will be charged.
- Tuition is due at the beginning of each month. Families will not be billed, but Tuition Coupons (payment coupons) will be provided to families before the beginning of the school year. Our policy states that payment of tuition must be made by the 5th of each month. **If full tuition is not paid by the 10th of the month, a late fee of \$15 will be charged. If, after 30 days, no payment or partial payment is made, the child will be dropped from the Playschool.**
- **Tuition should be placed in the black Tuition Box outside of Room 27 or mailed to *The Bellefonte Playschool, Faith United Methodist Church, 512 Hughes Street, Bellefonte, PA 16823.*** Please do not give tuition checks to your child's teacher. Her job is to pay attention to your child and answer any questions you may have, not collect tuition.
- Please make all checks payable to **Faith United Methodist Church**, or to **Faith U.M.C.** for short. Because the Playschool is part of Faith Church and uses its tax identification number, the bank has requested that all incoming checks contain the same name. You may reference Playschool in the memo portion of your check, if you wish.
- If paying by check, please include the appropriate month's payment coupon, or the child's name on the check. This is especially important if someone other than the parent is writing the check. If paying by cash, please provide tuition in an envelope with the appropriate month's payment coupon.
- For tax purposes, end of year statements will be provided to all Playschool families in January or May. Monthly receipts will not be provided unless requested.
- We cannot hold or accept post-dated checks. **If a check is returned for insufficient funds, a \$10 bank charge will be added to the monthly tuition paid, in addition to personal penalties from respective banks.**
- Parents who have more than one child attending the Playschool at the same time will receive a tuition discount, but must pay the full registration fee for each child. Although full monthly tuition is expected for the first child, a 10% discount will be given for the second, 10% for the third, etc.
- Children, who are absent during any month because of vacation, extended illness, religious reasons, etc., will not be exempt from tuition remission. Full tuition must still be paid because the child's place in class is still being held for him or her.
- Any parent experiencing financial hardship should contact the Director to make special payment arrangements. Families undergoing financial difficulties due to job-related or medical hardships may be eligible for tuition assistance.

Enrollment Agreement

When children are enrolled at the Bellefonte Playschool of Faith United Methodist Church, parents or guardians are asked to agree to the following terms. Their signature on the registration form indicates their acceptance of the enrollment agreement. A summary of these conditions is provided below for your reference.

- Agree to pay the Registration Fee to help the ongoing program of the school. Understand that 50% of this fee will be refundable until September 1, 2009, if a child is unable to attend the Bellefonte Playschool.
- **Provide proof of measles immunization in compliance with state regulations before a child's first day of class.**
- Take full responsibility for the transportation of a child to and from the Bellefonte Playschool.
- Understand that if a child is picked up ten minutes late, there will be a late fee of \$10.00 for each ten minutes thereafter.
- Provide a nutritious snack for the children in a child's class when requested by the teacher (approximately once a month).
- **Pay tuition before the 5th of each month for the regular school year, or when directed for the Summer Session. Agree to pay a late fee of \$15.00 if payment is made after the 10th of any month.**
- If it is necessary to withdraw a child from The Bellefonte Playschool, give the teacher and director at least two weeks advance notice.

HELPING YOUR CHILD WRITE HIS NAME



When helping your child to write his or her name, please encourage the use of a single, capital letter at the beginning of the name, followed by all lower-case letters. This is the way the Playschool teachers will be teaching the children to write their names, and it is the same method used in kindergarten. It's best for a child to learn to write Jane or John in the beginning, rather than "unlearn" JANE or JOHN later!

Also, please remember not to get concerned if your child's letters don't look like actual letters. This is very normal! In time, all scribbles will start to resemble recognizable letters. It's more important to praise a child for his or her efforts than to stress perfection. Likewise, please do not encourage your child to write on lined paper at this early age. There will be plenty of time for that in elementary school. At the preschool age, children should feel free to write their "letters" anywhere they want on their paper!

HEALTH, ACCIDENTS, AND SAFETY

Immunization Requirement: The State Board of Education requires that parents of children enrolled in the Playschool present proof of immunization for his or her child before school begins in September. Records of children who have previously attended a Three-Year-Old class, or are repeating a class, are kept from the prior year.

Illness Policies: It is each parent's responsibility to be aware of the following symptoms: sniffles or runny nose; red watery eyes; swollen glands; skin eruptions (rash or spots); vomiting, coughing, or diarrhea during the night; fever or pain. The child should remain at home if any of the previously mentioned symptoms are present. Please notify your child's teacher if your child will be absent for a length of time. It is not necessary to call if the child is absent for only one or two days. If your child has been put on medication, he/she should have taken the medicine for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

If your child should contract a contagious illness or condition (such as, but not limited to, flu, chicken pox, strep throat, or head lice) please notify the Playschool as soon as possible. Parents of children in your child's class will be advised to check for symptoms of the illness or condition. Please do not return your child to Playschool until the illness or condition has improved due to appropriate treatment.

Head Lice Policy: In the case of head lice, The Bellefonte Playschool has adopted a "no nit" policy. Any child showing symptoms of head lice (severe scratching) will be examined by staff members outside of the classroom. If such children appear to have lice eggs or "nits" in their hair, parents will be contacted and asked to pick up their child. Head lice are a common condition in school age children and are easily treated with special shampoo and thorough cleaning of bed linens, carpets and draperies. More information about head lice is available upon request.

Medical Treatment: Parents must supply any medical materials for their child if medicine is to be given while the child is at school. A doctor's note must accompany any medication that is to be given to a child while attending The Bellefonte Playschool.

Parents or guardians will be required to complete and sign an Emergency Information form at the beginning of each year. If a parent/guardian does not permit medical treatment for a child, that parent/guardian must submit a prior written statement to that effect, as a part of the medical agreement.

Accidents: For accidents of a serious nature occurring in school, a parent/guardian or the emergency contact person designated on the Emergency Information Form will be contacted. If necessary, the local EMS and the doctor or dentist listed on the Emergency Information Form will be notified as well. Full responsibility for payment of any fee from an emergency call or visit, and for all medical care, rests with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child.

For accidents of a minor nature, the school has first aid supplies on hand. Objections to the use of these supplies should be made known to the director and to your child's teacher. Likewise, any allergies or special health concerns should be made known to the director and to your child's teacher.

Parking Lot Safety: For safety reasons, please drive slowly and carefully while in the parking lot. Also, please do not park directly in front of the building in the fire zone. Please walk your child into his or her classroom. We do not want children simply dropped off at the main door and allowed to enter by themselves. Also, never leave children younger than six-years-old unattended in your parked vehicle.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN

The following information is to assure you of our concern for the safety and welfare of all students in The Bellefonte Playschool in the event of an emergency. It is also required of schools licensed by the Pennsylvania State Board of Education. The school's emergency plan provides for response actions to be taken in all types of emergencies. Therefore, several types of protection responses are planned as follows:

<u>Condition</u>	<u>Response</u>
Building Evacuation	Evacuation to a safe area on the church grounds in case of fire.
Delayed Opening, Cancellation of Classes, Early or Delayed Release of Students	These actions are normally taken in case of a winter storm. Cancellation of classes may be necessary in case of disruption of public utility service.
In-Place Sheltering	Sudden occurrences such as tornadoes and hazardous material accidents may dictate taking cover in place as the best immediate response.
Evacuation	Total evacuation may become necessary if the school is in an endangered area. Hazardous material accidents, bomb threats, etc. are examples.

Additionally, if your residence should be in an endangered area, and the school is not, your children will be cared for at the Playschool until the danger has passed, or you, or a person you authorize, comes to the school to regain custody. If a total evacuation of the Playschool becomes necessary, the children will be taken to the Bellefonte Area High School. In either case, you will be kept informed on the location where you can regain custody of your child through local radio and television announcements.

Those persons authorized by you on your child's Emergency Information Form may be contacted in the event that you, as a parent or guardian, are not available. You are urged not to telephone the school, or attempt to make different arrangements. That will only create confusion, and divert our staff from their assigned emergency duties.

All parents/guardians will receive a directory of students in their child's class (see page 7). For families who permitted the sharing of their personal contact information at the beginning of the school year, phone numbers will be included. The directory will be used to help families stay in contact. In the event that land-line telephone or cell phone services are lost, mass media will be used to communicate status, procedures, and future considerations. Loss of mass media communications could necessitate the use of route alerting and/or neighborhood communications networks. In order to ensure the safety of the children of The Bellefonte Playschool, we urgently request the cooperation of all parents/guardians in the event of an emergency.

PLAYSCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

CIU #10 : The Bellefonte Playschool works cooperatively with the Central Intermediate Unit (CIU) #10. This partnership enables some of our students to receive extra instruction from CIU teachers at no cost. The CIU works primarily with children who may have delayed development or speaking skills. Periodically, parents may see an additional adult in a Playschool classroom who is a CIU staff member. That person is often there to observe or work with a particular child. Sometimes the CIU teacher may involve other Playschool children in a discussion or play situation with the child receiving CIU instruction to help that child practice social interaction skills.

Please speak with your child's teacher if you feel your child's speech or development is not consistent with other children of his or her age. If she agrees with your concern, she can arrange for your child to be evaluated by a CIU staff member here at the Playschool. CIU staff will evaluate our students when a request has been made by a parent or a teacher and only after signed consent has been obtained.



Faith Church: Being a part of Faith Church enables The Bellefonte Playschool to utilize the many areas of the building and grounds for our classes and special events. As a ministry of the church, the Playschool also helps other ministry groups with special projects. For example, the children may make decorations for food baskets that are given to the needy, or they may participate in a mission project. Playschool families will also be invited to special church events throughout the year and are welcome to utilize our church's library as well.

Soccer Shots: Soccer Shots is a national program designed to teach soccer skills to children ages three to six. In the fall, spring, and summer, Soccer Shots instructors will come directly to the Playschool on Wednesdays and Thursdays, right after Playschool classes, to teach soccer techniques, teamwork, sharing and respect. For families that wish to enroll their children in these 30 to 40 minute classes during eight to nine week sessions, tuition will be payable directly to Soccer Shots. More information about this exciting activity will be provided at our Open House in September and may also be found at www.soccershots.org.

WHAT YOUR CHILD WILL LEARN AT PLAYSCHOOL

The philosophy of The Bellefonte Playschool is based upon giving children an enriching experience before they enter elementary school. Children with a high quality preschool education tend to have more successful futures than children who do not. Because the Playschool is licensed by the Department of Education, Board of Private Academic Schools, it is required to follow certain guidelines and provide instruction in the areas of social development, physical development, language development, cognitive development, and aesthetic development. These guidelines are consistent with the new Pennsylvania Learning Standards for Early Childhood. Also, because we are operated by Faith United Methodist Church we provide these lessons with a Christian emphasis and employ only qualified, Christian teachers and aides.

This section provides a summary of what children are taught in each of these important categories.

Social development: Children will be provided many opportunities to develop social skills such as cooperating, helping, and communicating to resolve problems. Teachers usually facilitate social development throughout the whole time at Playschool, but mostly during free play and small group time.

Examples of social skills include:

- making friends and accepting their individual differences
- learning to take turns
- learning simple games and their rules
- participating in group discussions
- being flexible in new situations
- being responsible for self, coat, belongings and bathroom use
- following directions
- practicing good manners
- learning and following safety rules
- becoming aware of emotions and accepting own and others

Physical Development: Children have daily opportunities to use large muscles and to develop small muscles, particularly those in the hand.

Use of large muscles (gross motor development) will occur primarily during the active playtime at the end of class time. Children will be able to play outside or inside to practice many of the following skills:

- climbing appropriate equipment
- riding tricycles
- running, jumping, skipping, hopping, galloping, etc.
- going through a hoop or tunnel
- catching, throwing or kicking a ball
- pushing or pulling a cart
- sliding down a slide
- climbing stairs
- waving a parachute, flag or streamer

Use of small muscles (fine motor development) occurs daily during free play when children are creating art projects, at snack time, or at quiet reading time after snack. Some of the skills they practice include:

- holding pencils, crayons, markers, scissors and brushes correctly
- cutting on a line
- building with small blocks
- putting puzzles together
- doing finger plays as directed by their teacher
- working with small manipulatives (toys)
- turning pages of a book one at a time
- lacing beads or sewing cards
- tracing pictures, stencils or shapes
- sorting food or objects

Language Development: Children are provided activities to develop language and understanding through listening to stories, going on field trips, making and watching presentations, seeing print in use, communicating, writing, drawing and copying. Children practice various language skills during class time, every day, at Playschool.

Some of the language skills practiced may include:

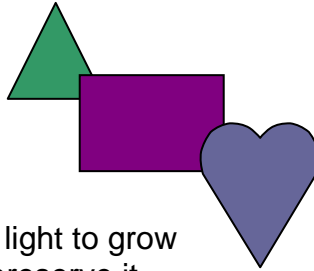
- determining noises that are the same and different
- identifying common sounds
- performing appropriate activities when given a sequence of 2 to 3 directives (i.e. hang up your coat and sit down on the rug)
- exhibiting interest in stories
- participating in show and tell
- describing events in pictures
- participating in songs, finger plays, and poems
- telling, retelling and discussing stories
- discussing feelings and concepts
- recognizing name in print
- observing written labels around the room and making associations
- recognizing and supplying rhyming words
- putting 3 pictures in the proper sequence
- learning vocabulary for basic color, shapes, and size comparisons



Cognitive Development. Children love to explore and discover. Teachers at the Playschool help children learn about the world around them through discovery, playing games, solving problems, sorting, and classifying objects. These cognitive activities often serve as the theme or lesson of each day. They are incorporated into the art projects, science activities, stories, songs and discussion topics.

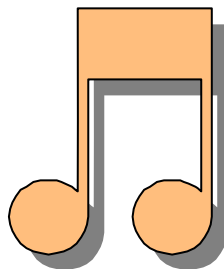
Some activities that provide cognitive development for the children include:

- counting verbally to ten
- identifying basic colors
- identifying circle, square, triangle, rectangle, heart and diamond
- making size comparisons
- identifying and forming simple patterns
- learning how animals adjust to the seasons
- identifying animals and their sounds
- identifying mother animals and their babies
- observing how a seed changes
- learning the parts of a plant
- discovering that plants need soil, water, and light to grow
- learning about the environment and how to preserve it
- observing the types of weather and appropriate attire
- exploring each of the senses
- participating in customs of other countries
- celebrating our holidays and famous birthdays
- exploring different occupations
- having a chance to be “leader for the day” and other helpers



Aesthetic Development: Children have daily opportunities to express themselves through music and art activities. Here are some ways in which children explore their creativity:

- working with a variety of art mediums
- defining roles through dramatic play (pretend and dress-up)
- responding to pitch, rhythm, tempo, and dynamic changes in music
- creating motions to songs and finger plays
- remembering words to songs or rhymes
- developing self-esteem and confidence
- appreciating and enjoying differences in music and art



Christian Concepts: During their time at Playschool, children learn through the examples of their teachers and classmates that God and Jesus love them and want them to be kind and caring to all people and animals. Other ways in which children are taught to follow the teachings of Jesus include:

- praying together before snack time
- treating others as they would like to be treated
- recognizing Christmas as a celebration of Jesus' birth
- singing Christian children's songs
- meeting with the Pastor to hear short stories or lessons
- recognizing Easter as a celebration of Jesus' resurrection
- understanding that all gifts are from God
- realizing that God made the world



CONVERSATION STARTERS

The preschool years are the best time to start developing a habit of talking with your child about school. It is a routine that you can both carry into the elementary years and beyond. However, if you ever feel concerned about something your child tells you, please do not hesitate to speak with his or her teacher.

To start conversations with young children, make sure your questions are specific and open-ended. Here are some examples of questions to ask your Three-Year-Old or Pre-K student to better understand their time at Playschool:

- What toy did you play with during free play? Tell me about it.
- Did you share the toy with anyone? Who?
- Did you have a special job in class today? Who was the leader today?
- What did you have for snack today? Who brought snack? Did you like it?
- Tell me about the story your teacher read today.
- I like your art project; how did you make it? Tell me more about it.
- What songs did the class sing today? Can you sing one for me?
- After snack, did you play outside or inside? What did you do there?
- What did you learn about _____? (Insert the theme of the day from the calendar into the blank.)

It may take several weeks for your child to get accustomed to talking about his or her time at Playschool. However, it will soon be an event that both of you will look forward to sharing together. Enjoy these precious conversations on your trip home, or over lunch, or even later in the evening when you are both relaxed. The Playschool years are indeed a special time. Enjoy them!

