

A&M United Methodist Church  
Weekday School

Parent Handbook



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## OVERVIEW OF OUR PROGRAM

The A&M UMC Weekday School is located at 417 University Dr. in College Station directly across from Texas A&M University Campus. The school is governed by and responsible to the Weekday School Board of A&M United Methodist Church. Our school is open Mon - Fri, from 7:30am-5:30pm. We are licensed to have up to 110 children. Check out our web site at [www.am-umc.org/weekdayschool](http://www.am-umc.org/weekdayschool) for more class information.

### **OUR MISSION**

The Weekday School is a ministry of A&M United Methodist Church, serving families with programs that nurture child development. The Weekday School utilizes the congregations' resources in providing high quality and age-appropriate preschool programs within a Christian context.

Our philosophy is that each child comes to us with a vast array of individual differences. We accept each child as an individual and, within a Christian atmosphere, help each one develop his or her greatest potential.

We are a non-profit preschool with our program operating year round. We are licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) 979-731-1108, and we are subject to the "Minimum Standards for Day Care" published and overseen by the TDFPS. We carry liability insurance under the church's policy.

The Weekday School offers full-time childcare for children ages six weeks through 5 years of age. Each age group follows a developmentally appropriate curriculum including goals for cognitive and spiritual development, as well as social and motor skills. Copies of the curriculum goals are available in each classroom. We also teach a Christian curriculum, both in the classroom and during chapel time.

We do not teach theology or doctrine to young children. However, as a church program, we do consider ourselves Christian educators. We pray before meals and snacks, and children ages 2 through 5 years attend chapel time. Bible songs and prayers are incorporated into the day's activities and a particular emphasis is placed on the Christian holy seasons of Christmas and

Easter. For these holidays, the Christian meaning of Christ's birth and resurrection are taught and emphasized. In teaching social skills, love and empathy for others are taught and modeled on the example of Christ.

The Weekday School follows the standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children program. The National Academy of Early Childhood Programs administers a national, voluntary, professionally-sponsored accreditation system for all types of schools and child care centers. Early childhood programs accredited by the NAECP have voluntarily undergone a comprehensive process of internal self-study, invited external professional review to verify compliance with the Academy's Criteria for High Quality Early Child Programs, and been found to be in substantial compliance with the Criteria. The Weekday School is actively involved in ensuring the maintenance of above average standards that mirror both NAEYC and NAECP standards.

A high quality early-childhood program provides a safe and nurturing environment while promoting the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of young children. In our program, you will see:

- frequent, positive, warm interactions among adults and children
- planned learning activities appropriate to children's age and development
- specially trained teachers
- enough adults to respond to individual children
- many varied age-appropriate materials
- a healthy and safe environment for children
- nutritious meals and/or snacks
- regular communication with parents who are welcome visitors at all times
- effective administration
- ongoing, systematic evaluation

The Weekday School teaching staff follows experiential hands-on method of preschool teaching. We believe that young children learn best through play and exploration of a variety of materials. This is facilitated by the teacher, who structures the classroom environment and schedule of activities, to provide many and varied interesting options in which children can participate

individually, in small groups, and as a class. Reading and writing readiness are achieved through experiencing books, stories, and language in a variety of ways.

### ***OPEN DOOR POLICY***

Here at the Weekday School we have an open door policy. Please feel free to stop by at any time to look around and visit with us. We do ask that you not disturb the teachers while they are with the students. Their first priority is to ensure the safety and well being of the children in their care and, therefore, may not have the time to visit with you right then. If you need to speak to a teacher, please make an appointment to see them after class time. We appreciate your cooperation.

### ***COMPLAINT PROCEDURES***

If you should have a situation occur that is of concern to you, please discuss the situation with the lead teacher. If the situation is not resolved, see the Director. If you feel that your situation still has not been resolved to your satisfaction, you may contact the church office at 846-8731 and receive information on contacting the current school board chairperson.

### ***ABOUT OUR STAFF***

We are very proud of our well-trained staff. All staff is required to attain a minimum of 24 clock hours of continuing education each year. They must also maintain current CPR and First Aid certification. The majority of our Lead Teachers are CDA Certified or have a college degree in teaching and a trained teaching assistant. At nap times, we may reduce our staff to one trained early childhood professional per classroom as long as we are still within minimum standards of child-to-staff ratios.

### ***ENROLLMENT PROCESS***

Upon enrolling your child, you received an enrollment packet, a price list, and a brochure. Please be sure to read through all the information you received. You will need to return the enrollment packet along with applicable fees before your child will be enrolled. You must have an up-to-date immunization record before your child will be admitted into the program. At the time of enrollment, you will be given a PIN number to enter the facility. This PIN number is only for the guardians of the child being enrolled. This PIN number is not to be given to **anyone** else. Please do not give the PIN number

to other people who will be picking up your child. If your number is used by someone other than you, the enrolled family will be fined \$100.00, your code will be deactivated and you will not be issued another entry code. You also need to make sure that anyone who is allowed to pick up your child is on the enrollment form and on the emergency card. Only those on the list will be allowed to pick up your child. They will be required to press the intercom button before entering the facility, wait to be buzzed in by the office and show their drivers' license as identification. If you are divorced parents and have a court order as to when one or the other is allowed to have the child, we must have a copy of those documents in the child's file for reference.

### ***PARENT INVOLVMENT***

Parents are welcome to share their job or a hobby with the children. Other opportunities include joining the class for lunch, participating in show and tell, sharing cooking or craft activities, and accompanying the children on a field trip. We encourage parents to participate in PTO activities and school events in order to be involved in your child's school.

### ***TUITION POLICY***

**All tuition is due on the first day of the month.** Your account becomes overdue if the balance is not paid in full by the fifth (5th) of each month. Account balances are not to be carried over to a following month. If you fail to pay your account balance in full by the 5th, the balance will be subject to interest at the rate of 10% per annum until paid in full and a liquidated damages fee of \$25.00 will be charged to your account. An additional \$5.00 will be added daily until the 15th of the month. Your child will not be allowed to return to school until all fees are paid and your child will be placed on the waiting list for a fee of \$50.00. In addition, the School reserves the right to terminate your child's enrollment at the School for failure to pay in a timely fashion as set forth above.

The monthly tuition rate remains constant regardless of the number of holidays within a month.

There is a two-week withdrawal notice required. If you withdraw your child without giving a two-week notice, you will be responsible for paying full tuition. If you decide to re-enroll your child at a later date, you will have to pay a registration fee and fill out new enrollment papers. All is contingent upon whether or not we have space available.

### ***RETURNED CHECK POLICY***

There will be a \$25 charge for all returned checks. Cashier's check or money order will be required as payment for a returned check. Your account will be put on a money order or cashier check basis after two returned checks. Your child will not be readmitted until your account is up to date.

### ***LATE PICKUP POLICY***

\$10.00 after 10 minutes, \$15.00 after 20 minutes, \$20.00 after 30 minutes, \$10.00 after each additional 10 minutes after 30 minutes. Late pickup policy is subject to periodic review and revision by the Weekday School Board. Changes to this policy will be issued in writing when made.

### ***HOLIDAYS AND CLOSINGS***

Every year, the Weekday School Board decides on what holidays we will be closed. This list will be posted in the office, the classrooms, and upon request. Please be sure to look over it carefully so that you may make other arrangements during those times. In addition to holidays, the school is closed from time to time for staff development and staff training. In the event of severe weather, the Weekday School will follow the College Station ISD schedule. If they are closed for severe weather, then the Weekday School will also close. If they start 2 hours late, the Weekday School will start 2 hours late. Closing announcements are always carried on the local television station, KBTX.

### ***SIGN IN/SIGN OUT SHEETS***

Parents are required to sign their child in and out every day in order to meet licensing requirements. Be sure to state the child's arrival time and departure time. The sign in/out sheets are located in front of each classroom. A parent or designated responsible adult must walk into the building with the child each day and make certain that the child's teacher is aware of the child's arrival and departure. Older siblings are not to bring or pick up a child unless they are at least 16 years of age or older with a valid driver's license and listed as an authorized pick-up on the emergency card.

### ***PARENT CONFERENCES***

We try to hold at least one parent conference a year for the children in Promises, Sunshine, and Friendship. This is a time set aside for you to visit with your child's teacher to go over any concerns you or the teacher may

have as well as discuss accomplishments your child has made throughout the year.

### ***ABSENT POLICY***

We are required to keep daily attendance records. Therefore, if your child will be out for any reason, please call and let the school know. Also, our teachers are very particular about their "children" and become concerned when we do not hear from you if your child is absent. Please remember that full tuition is due regardless of your child's absence.

### ***SEPARATION ANXIETY***

Separation at drop-off is often times difficult for many children at many different ages. It also often comes and goes in stages without any rhyme or reason. Below you will find some tips to make drop-off as easy as possible for both you and your child.

1. Be consistent with your drop-off routine
  - a. Keep your morning home routine consistent
  - b. Drop-off at the same time each day
  - c. Establish a set separation routine between you and your child (i.e. Use same departing language each day: I love you and hope you have a great day. I'll be back to get you soon. Then give a hug, high five, hand shake etc.)
  - d. Drop and Go - Linger typically will only make the separation more difficult. 99% of the time, your child will stop crying within 2 minutes or less of your departure
2. Find the routine that works best for both you and your child.

Sometimes it only takes tweaking your schedule by a few minutes. If your child is anxious about arriving in the gym, then arrange to arrive a bit earlier or a bit later so that they may be dropped off in the classroom with their teacher. If your child is intimidated by dropping off in the classroom and is more comfortable coming into the school day in an environment of play, then plan your drop-off time to coordinate with gym time.
3. Often times, the smallest changes can result in separation anxiety.
  - a. Change in who is dropping them off
  - b. Change in time of drop off
  - c. Change in morning home routine

- d. Returning from time away from school
  - e. Change in classroom
  - f. Phases of growth and development - one day they may develop separation anxiety when previously they had none. This is very normal and many children will go in and out of separation anxiety phases
4. It is often times very upsetting to a child to see their parent during the day if it is not time to be picked up. And while we do have an open door policy, please keep this in mind when deciding whether or not you should come for a visit during the day. If your child struggles with separation anxiety, we recommend that you do not come by for mid-day visits. If you need to bring a forgotten item, you can drop it in the office so as to not disrupt your child and the classroom.
  5. If you are concerned about your child's separation anxiety, please feel free to talk to the teachers, office staff, or director for ideas on how to make the transition easier.

### ***CHILDREN'S CLOTHING AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS***

Children's clothing should be comfortable, allowing complete freedom of movement, washable, and suitable for daily indoor and outdoor activity. Please consider the weather when dressing your child for the day. Children should be dressed lightly during the heat of the summer and warmly during the cold days of winter. Outerwear is required during the winter months. Sandals or open-toed shoes are discouraged. Cowboy boots or other hard, slick-bottomed shoes are discouraged because they are not safe for climbing on the playground equipment.

Children are required to have a minimum of one change of clothes appropriate to the season in their cubby each day. During potty training, more may be required.

Please be sure to mark all personal belongings with a permanent marker. This includes lunch boxes, mats, underwear, socks, clothes, coats, sweaters, gloves, hats, etc. We are not responsible for lost items.

Please do not allow your child to bring any toys, games, etc. except on "show-n-tell" days. This will avoid lost possessions, broken toys, and hurt feelings. Children are not allowed to bring candy, gum, or money without director/teacher permission. On "show-n-tell" days, your child may not bring anything considered a "fighting" toy (such as Power Rangers, Ninja Turtles, etc.), toy guns, toy knives, shooting toys, or other weapons.

## **MEALS**

Breakfast, lunch and one snack are served each day in your child's classroom. Breakfast is served from 8:15 AM to 8:30AM. Lunch is served "family style" at 11:30 AM. The children will then have an afternoon snack after naptime at 3:00 PM.

Monday's are sack lunch days. No peanut butter of any kind or anything with nuts is allowed, and if found, will be removed from the classroom. This restriction is a precaution for allergies. We have pizza available per purchase on Mondays in place of a sack lunch. Pizza is forfeited if your child is sick. We are required to make sure that each sack lunch meets the nutritional guidelines set forth by minimum standards. There is a copy of the guidelines in the Director's office for your convenience.

The children are encouraged to try everything on their plate. If they finish their plate, they are allowed "seconds" if they so desire. They are never forced to eat anything.

Menus are posted at the beginning of every month, and a copy is emailed to each parent. Please read the menu carefully and alert the teachers if your child is not to have certain foods. You will need to provide a sack lunch for them on those days. For PM snack, we serve 100% fruit juice along with the snack item. If you do not want your child to have the juice, you must provide a fruit, milk, or other dairy product to substitute for the juice. As members of the Federal Food Program, all meals and snacks provided by the school must meet the nutritional requirements set forth by the Food Program.

In the infant classroom, you must provide a feeding schedule monthly. You may provide breast milk, formula, or other milk products. Until your child is ready to eat from the school menu, you will need to provide food/milk from home. If you would like to breast feed your child, you are welcome to do so

at any time. We will gladly provide you with a chair and blanket within your child's classroom. Below you will find some Breast Feeding Resources within our community:

La Leche League International: <http://www.llli.org/>

Baylor Scott & White Lactation Specialists: <http://www.sw.org/women-health/lactation-consultants>

## **SPECIAL DIETS**

If your child is on a special diet because of medical reasons, please inform us, and we can work with you to help meet those needs. A doctor's note must be on file in the office if your child has an allergy to milk or other food products.

## **HOME LUNCH GUIDELINES**

### **All Ages**

1. Home lunches should meet the nutritional guidelines of the school. You can find some examples noted below
2. All lunches should either be packed in an insulated lunch box with ice packs or give to the caregivers to be stored in the refrigerator
3. Make sure you do not include any items that contain nuts of any type. We are a nut-free facility and will not be able to serve those items to your child. (This includes items such as almond milk.)
4. If your child has specific dietary needs/allergies, these need to be documented with the office so that all caregivers can be made aware. If your child has an allergy to dairy products, you will need to provide supplemental items when they are unable to eat the provided foods. If they will be on a non-standard milk, you will need to provide a milk alternate. Please make sure it is labeled appropriately so that all are aware of the contents.
5. All foods that present a choking hazard must be sliced appropriately so that they will not be a choking hazard. Typically this involves slicing them long-ways. (Hotdogs, grapes, carrots rounds, etc.) Fruits with an internal seed/pit must be seeded before being sent to school for your child's lunch

## HOME LUNCH SUGGESTIONS

### All Ages

Home lunches need to be nutritionally balanced and contain at least 3 of the following components: protein, fruit, vegetable, starch

1. Turkey Sandwich, sliced fruit, potato chips, raw veggies with dip (can also include dessert item, but not counted as 1 of the 3 components)
2. Meat and cheese slices with crackers, sliced fruit, yogurt
3. Chicken, green beans, sliced fruit

These are just suggestions, meant to serve as guidelines for you as you consider what to pack for your child. Please do not pack multiple foods high in sugar. You are welcome to send a small dessert such as a cookie, but please only send one dessert item. (No candy, please.)

### Infants

Please be sure to label all bottles with your child's first name and last initial as well as label with the contents. You can use adhesive labels or write on the bottle with a permanent marker. Please code bottles using the following abbreviations:

1. Breast Milk - BrM
2. Formula - F
3. Cow's Milk - CM
4. Soy Milk - SM
5. Mixed Bottles:
  - a.  $\frac{1}{2}$  Breast +  $\frac{1}{2}$  Cow = BrM/CM
  - b.  $\frac{1}{2}$  Formula +  $\frac{1}{2}$  Cow = F/CM



### NAP/REST TIME

Minimum Standards require that all the children must have a rest time of at least 45 minutes while in our care. Those children (except for infants) who do not sleep must rest quietly on their mat during this time. They will be allowed to read or do other quiet activities on their mats after 45 minutes. Parents must provide a mat that is waterproof or washable and free of any rips, tears, or holes for their child. Mats are available in the school office for a fee. These mats should be small enough to roll up and fit in the mat cart or cubbies provided in your child's classroom. Children may bring one blanket, a small pillow, and one soft sleeping toy if they so desire. These

items are to be taken home and washed as needed but at least every Friday as required by minimum standards.

### ***SCHEDULE/ACTIVITIES***

The morning hours consist of structured preschool activities with certified teaching staff. Outdoor playtime is included as well. Outside playtime is only canceled in the event of rain, hail, sleet, heat advisory, temperatures under 40 degrees, or temperatures over 99 degrees. During those times when outside play is not permitted due to weather, the children will be taken to the gym instead. The afternoon hours include rest time, art, free play, enrichment activities, and outdoor play. Water activities and sprinklers are during warm weather only. Physical activity is important in the healthy growth and development of children. All children are encouraged to participate in physical activities while outside and in the gym. If you feel your child is not well enough to participate in outdoor/physical activities, then your child should not come to school that day. In addition to the daily activities, the children are also able to participate in some special learning opportunities specific to certain days such as Chapel time, music enrichment activities, and field trips. Parents are welcome on field trips and are a great help.

### ***SCREEN TIME***

Children under the age of two are not permitted to have any screen time during the school day. For children over the age of two, some screen time may be used primarily for educational purposes. All screen time must be documented in the weekly lesson plans which are submitted to the director as well as posted in the classroom. **For children in Bumble Bees and Promises:** Screen time is limited to 30 minutes per day and all videos shall be rated G, age appropriate, educational in nature, and fit with the weekly lesson plans. Any non-educational videos, such as Disney movies, will require prior parental permission. **For children in Sunshine and Friendship:** Screen time is limited to 2 hours per day, but should not exceed 4 hours per week. All videos should be rated G, age appropriate, educational in nature, and fit with the weekly lesson plans. Some Disney movies may be shown occasionally. Friendship also participates in the summer movie clubhouse program with Cinemark, and therefore, with parental permission may see some PG movies.

### ***ANIMAL VISITATIONS***

No animals will be allowed on the premises without the approval of the Director. If approval is granted, parents will be given adequate notice of the date and time.

### ***DISCIPLINE***

The Weekday School utilizes positive discipline techniques such as redirection, verbalization of misunderstandings, consistency, acceptance of feelings, firmness, and fairness. In certain situations, a brief "renewal time" (also known as a cool down period or thinking time) will be utilized. If the problem continues, the parents will be notified and consulted on ways to help alleviate the situation. A child that expresses aggressive behavior including but not limited to biting, hitting, or other unacceptable behavior will receive a Behavior Report. Successive behavior reports may, at the sole discretion of the Director, lead to expulsion. In all circumstances, the Director's goal is to maintain a safe, and secure, learning environment that balances each child's needs with the impact on the student body and parents. While biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior for very young children, by the age of two and a half, the majority of children are able to use their words instead of using this method to inflict harm on others. Biting hurts and can be dangerous if it breaks the skin. We encourage the children to communicate with us and their friends and to use these verbal skills when they are frustrated. Any child in Sunshine and Friendship that bites another child or person will receive a behavior report and a call to the parents on the first offense. Any future biting incidents will result in the child being sent home. While we realize that this policy may interfere in a parent's work day, the child who is bitten suffers far worse. We thank you in advance for adhering to this important policy.

### ***ILLNESS/EXCLUSION POLICY***

By state law, children must remain at home (or will be sent home) if they have:

- An oral temperature of 100.1 degrees or higher or an underarm temperature of 99.1 degrees or higher. They must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school. For example, if we send them home on Monday, they should not return until Wednesday.
- 2 bouts of diarrhea or vomiting. They must not have a bout of either for 24 hours before returning to school.

- Any contagious disease such as, but not limited to, measles, chicken pox, mumps, roseola, strep throat infection, conjunctivitis (pink eye), and untreated bronchitis.
- An undiagnosed condition such as an unexplained rash.

The teachers are required to perform a "Daily Health Inspection" as the children arrive in the morning. If they feel a child is too sick or might be contagious, they may send the parent and the child to the office to have the Director evaluate the problem. Children who are at school and become ill must be picked up within one hour of contacting the parents.

### ***MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS AND MEDICATIONS***

Children are required to have a copy of their current immunization record with the Weekday School while in our care. This is a requirement of minimum standards. A statement signed by a physician licensed to practice medicine in Texas is also required. This statement should state that the physician has examined the child within the last year and finds the child physically able to participate in the school's program. Children in our pre-kindergarten class (4 and 5 year olds) must have a hearing and vision screening on file and results of screening will be mailed to Austin, TX, as per the Health Department. In case of an emergency, a legal parent or guardian will be contacted, as well as local EMS. If your child requires medication while at school, an office staff member will administer the medication in accordance with your written instructions as provided on a completed Medication Authorization Form, and this person will record the time and amount given. All medication brought to school must be in its original container and marked with the child's name (prescription medications must be in the pharmaceutical container, and over-the-counter medication must be in the original bottle or box). The medication will be kept in the office. No medications, sunscreen, diaper rash ointment, Oragel, vitamins, or anything that could be ingested should be in your child's bag or cubby. No medicines may be brought to the WDS in baby bottles or sippy cups due to other children possibly getting that bottle or cup. According to a directive from the State, the Weekday School cannot give children ANY medication (prescription or over-the-counter) that is not age appropriate without a doctor's approval. Please have your child's doctor provide a written statement of appropriate dosage of over-the-counter medications your child is likely to need; forms are available in the main office. Vaseline will be kept

in the Weekday School office to be used in extreme cases when diaper rash ointment is not available or until the parent can supply diaper rash ointment.

### ***CHILD PICK UP POLICY***

If someone other than the parents listed on the emergency card is picking up the child, please complete a Special Release Authorization form located in the WDS office. Please make sure the individual has his/her identification each and every time he/she is authorized to pick up your child. If it is a last-minute event, please contact the WDS office. The office staff may ask for your code word to verify your identity.

### ***INFANTS/SIDS POLICY***

All infants who cannot roll over on their own will be placed on their backs to sleep. The infant will not be allowed to lie on his/her stomach or side for sleeping, even if a doctor's note is provided. Baby beds will only have a sheet and small blanket, no bumper pads will be in their beds due to suffocation issues. The beds can have a mobile or side entertainment mobile strapped to the bed.

### ***PESTICIDE TREATMENTS***

The Weekday School facilities are treated quarterly with an indoor pesticide. This treatment takes place while the children are not present. Information on the application of pesticides is available on request.

### ***CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT***

The Weekday School is required by law to report any apparent incident of child abuse or neglect defined as "non-accidental infliction or threat of infliction of physical, emotional, or mental harm to a child".

"Any person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect shall report to any local or state law enforcement agency, and in addition, reports shall be made to the Texas Department of Human Resources 1-800-252-5400 or the agency designated by the court to be responsible for the protection of children".

All such reports contain the name and address of the child, the name and address of the person responsible for the care of the child, and any other pertinent information.

### ***EMERGENCY DRILLS***

According to minimum standards, the Weekday School is required to conduct fire drills once a month and "duck and cover" drills four times a year. These drills will make quite an impression on your child the first time a drill is held. We will conduct these monthly and as time goes on, your child will become accustomed to the drill and what is expected of him/her.

### ***EMERGENCY/DISASTER PLAN AND PROCEDURE***

Tune in to KBTX or radio station KORA FM 98.3 or WTAW AM 1620 for Weekday School emergency information.

#### Power Outage

- The WDS administration will contact the utility company to find out the length of time the outage can be expected.
- If the WDS Director decides the time frame is too long, parents will be contacted to pick up their children.

#### Fire Procedures

- Relocation address, if necessary, is the A&M UMC, 417 University Drive, College Station, TX 77840 (979) 846-8731 or A&M UMC Annex Building, 300 College Main, College Station, TX 77840.

#### Evacuation of the area

- The need to evacuate and the destination will be determined by the local fire/police department depending on the nature and location of the disaster.
- Transportation will be organized/provided by the local fire/police department.
- WDS administration will attempt to contact the parents if the emergency allows. If not, parents should tune in to KBTX or radio station KORA FM 98.3 or WTAW AM 1620.
- Parents will be instructed to pick up their children at the designated site.

\*A complete A&M UMC Weekday School Emergency/Disaster Plan is available upon request.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are a part of our curriculum for our 4 & 5 year old classes only. The teachers periodically will plan a field trip that will relate to an area of study they are working on that week. We may visit the museum, grocery store, and other attractions around Brazos County. All field trips require at least a 48 hours notice to parents and children. Permission slip forms are on the enrollment form you fill out when you register your child. All children are required to be in a child-safety seat system. Our staff/child ratio on field trips 1 to 8-10 for 4 & 5 yr. olds. We love and strongly encourage parents to attend our field trips with us. If you would like to attend trips with us, please see the Director for the necessary forms. We are required to run a criminal history check on every individual who attends field trips or volunteers with us. We also need a copy of the parent's Texas Driver's License and insurance (if a child is riding with another parent). This inconvenience is for the safety of the children. Parents or volunteers who are not cleared through this process will not be allowed to attend the trip. All parents of 4 & 5 year olds will be required to attend a mandatory field trip orientation prior to the beginning of summer field trips.

### **PARTIES**

Birthdays are an especially exciting time for young children, and the Weekday School is happy to help your child celebrate with classmates. Please make arrangements with the teacher in advance. Your attendance is welcome but not required.

We celebrate various holidays with classroom parties throughout the year. Parent participation is greatly appreciated. Your child's teacher will provide you with further information. All food brought for parties must have been prepared in a bakery or other store establishment and free from nuts or nut products.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Communication between parents and teachers is extremely important. If you should ever have any questions or concerns, please speak with the teachers about it. If the concern is about a particular teacher or staff member, you may speak with the Director. We want you to be happy here, and, therefore, it is crucial that we keep in constant contact with you. Also,

if a teacher has a concern or question, she/he will set aside a time convenient for the both of you to discuss it. We also have a "Parent Bulletin Board" that is located outside the office. Please check it often for any information we think you might find valuable. You will also find a suggestion box along with slips of paper and pens if you would like to leave any suggestions or comments or teacher praises for the office staff.

### ***CONTACT INFORMATION CHANGES***

In order for us to be able to effectively communicate with you as well as be able to reach you in the case of an emergency, please be sure to always update us with any changes in your information. This includes home addresses, phone numbers, email addresses etc. You may do so by emailing the school, stopping by the office to speak with an office staff, or filling out a change of information form which can be found on the table below the parent information board. Please place the change of information form in the parent suggestion/comment box.

### ***CELL PHONE USE***

Please refrain from using your cell phone during pick-up and drop-off times. Our teachers often times need to communicate with you and are unable to do so if you are on your phone. If you must take a call, please do so in the hallway before entering the Weekday School areas. (Commons area, classrooms, playground, and gym) We want to create an environment of open communication between the staff and parents of the Weekday School. This is also important in regards to the development of your child. It is important to greet your child when coming to pick him/her up and reinforce that you value him/her and are excited to see him/her. If you are on your cell phone, you cannot adequately greet your child and send a message of value and importance. Your inattention sends the message that they are not important and that you do not have time for them even after being away all day.

### ***CURRICULUM***

While we do not follow a commercially-prepared curriculum, our teachers are allowed discretion as to what types of lessons or activities they will utilize in implementing these goals. However, each lead teacher will be familiar with the National Association for the Education of Young Children's "Developmentally Appropriate Practice", which covers children from birth through age eight. Many resources are available to offer teachers ideas for

themes and activities. We utilize a developmentally-appropriate and Christian-based approach to instruction based on thematic units selected by the teacher and developmental goals for each age group.

**CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT**

All classrooms are monitored by the office staff via cameras located in every classroom.

**APPEARANCE RELEASE**

The Appearance Release form allows the Weekday School to use photos, videotape, etc. of your child for crafts, to be posted in your child's classroom, etc. This form must be signed by you in order for us to use any pictures of your child for school purposes.

**CHAPEL**

Chapel is held once a week for ages 2 years and up. A Church staff or Weekday school staff member leads chapel in the sanctuary.

We welcome you to our school and look forward to forming a lasting relationship with you! **WELCOME!**

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**NON-DISCRIMINATION**

No person shall, on the grounds of race, religious belief, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any of our programs.

**CIVIL RIGHTS**

If you believe you have been discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age, political belief, religion, or disability, write to: U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, 950 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20530. Phone # 202-514-4609

**TDFPS**

Minimum Standard rules may be viewed in the Weekday School Office. To view rules and licensing reports go to [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us) Parents may also review a copy of recent licensing reports on the parent board located in the Weekday School entry way. The local phone number to licensing is (979)731-0118.

Texas state law requires the staff of this child care facility to report any suspected abuse or neglect of a child to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or a law enforcement agency. Confidential reports may be made by calling 1-800-252-5400.

Failure to report suspected child abuse is punishable by fines up to \$1,000 and or confinement up to 180 days.

### **Gang-Free Zones For Child Care Centers**

As a result of House Bill 2086 that passed during the 81<sup>st</sup> Legislature, Regular Session, Chapter 42 of the Human Resource Code includes section 42.064, effective September 1, 2009. This new statute requires that information about gang-free zones be distributed to parents and guardians of children in care at licensed child care centers. The following is a tip sheet to assist in complying with the new law. This information may be posted at your child care operation or copies may be provided to parents.

#### ***What is a gang-free zone?***

A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location where prohibited gang related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas law. The specific locations include day care centers. The gang-free zone is within 1000 feet of your child care center. For more information about what constitutes a gang-free zone, please consult sections 71.028 and 71.029 of the Texas Penal Code.

#### ***How do parents know where the gang-free zone ends?***

The area that falls within a gang-free zone can vary depending on the type of location. The local municipal or county engineer may produce and update maps for the purposes of prosecution. Parents may contact their local municipality or court house for information about obtaining a copy of a map if they choose to do so.

#### ***What is the purpose of gang-free zones?***

Similar to the motivation behind establishing drug-free zones, the purpose of gang-free zones is to deter certain types of criminal activity in areas where children gather by enforcing tougher penalties.

#### ***What does this mean for my day care center?***

A child care center must inform parents or guardians of children attending the center about the new gang-free zone designation. This means parents or guardians need to be informed that certain gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of your center is a violation of this law and is therefore subject to increased penalty under state law.

By signing below, I am verifying that I have received, fully read, and understand the A&M UMC Weekday School parent handbook. I agree to abide by the guidelines set forth in the handbook.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

July 2015