

# **PARENT HANDBOOK**

## **2023-2024**



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## **WESTLAKE UNITED METHODIST PRESCHOOL CALENDAR 2023-2024**

<b>August 24-25</b>	<b>Individual school visits for children – ALL CLASSES</b>
<b>August 28</b>	<b>Visiting Morning for Families</b>
<b>August 29 &amp; 30</b>	<b>First Day of Classes</b>
<b>September 4</b>	<b>Labor Day Holiday</b>
<b>September 5</b>	<b>Early Drop-off and Extended Day classes begin</b>
<b>October</b>	<b>Parent Conferences</b>
<b>October 6-9</b>	<b>WUMP Closed, Fall Break</b>
<b>November 20-24</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Holiday</b>
<b>December 21</b>	<b>**Dismiss at 12:00 Noon for Christmas Holiday</b>
<b>December 22-Jan. 8</b>	<b>Closed for Holidays</b>
<b>January 9</b>	<b>Staff In-service, WUMP Closed</b>
<b>January 10</b>	<b>Classes Resume</b>
<b>January 15</b>	<b>WUMP Closed, MLK Jr. Holiday</b>
<b>February 16-19</b>	<b>WUMP Closed, Presidents' Day Holiday</b>
<b>March-April</b>	<b>Parent Conferences</b>
<b>March 11-15</b>	<b>WUMP Closed, Spring Break</b>
<b>March 29-April 1*</b>	<b>WUMP Closed, Easter Holiday*</b>
<b>May 15</b>	<b>WUMP Last Day, Noon Dismissal</b>
<b>May 16*-17</b>	<b>Staff Work Days</b>

**\*Bad Weather Make-up Day for MWF classes will be Monday, April 1.**

**\*Bad Weather Make-up Day for TTH classes will be Thursday, May 16.**

# WUMP TUITION AND FEES 2023-2024

## Tuition Policy

Tuition for the school year is based on an annual fee. For convenience to parents we divide the tuition into nine monthly installments. Preschool tuition payments are due on the **first** day of each month and is considered **late** after the tenth of the month. A late charge of \$15.00 will be assessed for tuition paid **after** the tenth of the month. Families with tuition or fees still due after 30 days will be contacted by the Director or Assistant Director, and will be required to commit to a payment plan. Families who refuse to participate in a payment plan will be subject to removal from the program.

**Full payment is due each month regardless of the number of days your child is expected to be in attendance. No adjustments are made for illness, vacation, weather closures, or any other unexpected school closures beyond the preschool's control.**

**Tuition Deposit and September Tuition:** In order to hold your child's spot in our program we require a deposit of one month's tuition to be paid **before** your child's attendance. The **Tuition Deposit** will be applied to May 2024 tuition and is **not refundable. Tuition and all enrollment forms are due before your child can attend their first day of school.**

**Fees:** A non-refundable Registration Fee is required once a year at registration. **Your child will not be considered enrolled until Registration Fees and the May Tuition Deposit are paid.** We encourage families who pay bills online to set up WUMP as a vendor and set up auto-pay through your bank. Please contact the director of the school if special arrangements are needed. There is a \$25.00 charge for ANY returned check.

### Toddler Classes

2 Days	\$575
3 Days	\$660
5 Days	\$1000

### Twos Classes

2 Days	\$500
3 Days	\$635
5 Days	\$1000

### Threes Classes

3 Days	\$575
4 Days	\$625
5 Days	\$800

### Registration Fees

2 Days	\$125
3 Days	\$155
4 Days	\$165
5 Days	\$180

### Pre-k Classes

4 Days	\$625
5 Days	\$700

### Supply Fee

\$250

### Early Drop-off Monthly Fees

Monday-Friday	\$50
Drop-ins	\$25

### Extended Day Monthly Fees

Monday-Thursday	\$80
Drop-ins	\$25*

\*(There will be a \$35 fee for Early Care and Extended Day Drop-ins without notice.)

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# PROGRAM PURPOSE

## **PHILOSOPHY**

The philosophy of Westlake United Methodist Preschool is to provide an environment of Christian love in which each child's unique abilities and characteristics are nurtured and strengthened. The needs of the "whole child" will be addressed through activities planned around social, emotional, cognitive, physical and spiritual development. Our approach is to provide hands-on, developmentally appropriate activities to promote the individual child's independence, problem solving abilities and love of learning. **WE ARE ABOUT CHILDREN!**

### ***Thus a Child Learns***

***Thus a child learns: by wiggling skills through his fingers and toes into himself; by soaking up habits and attitudes of those around him; by pushing and pulling his own world.***

***Thus a child learns: more through trial than through error, more through pleasure than pain, more through experience than suggestion and telling, and more through suggestion than direction.***

***Thus a child learns: through affection, through love, through patience, through understanding, through belonging, through doing and through being.***

***Day by day the child comes to know a little bit of what you know; to think a little of what you think; to understand your understanding - that which you believe and dream and are, in truth, become the child.***

***As you see things dully or clearly; as you think fuzzily or sharply; as you believe foolishly or wisely; as you dream drably or goldenly, as you bear false witness or tell truth, thus a child learns.***

***Frederick Moffett***

## **HISTORY, ACCREDITATION, AND LICENSING**

Westlake United Methodist Preschool has been in operation since January 1980. Westlake United Methodist Preschool was licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services in 1984, and accredited by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), in June 1987.

Westlake United Methodist Preschool is a Texas Rising Star Provider through the Texas Workforce Commission. To be a Texas Rising Star school, child care providers must meet quality requirements that exceed the state's minimum licensing standards. These requirements are designed to enhance the intellectual, physical, and social/emotional development of the children in their care. As a Texas Rising Star provider, our program goes through a comprehensive self-assessment, annual assessment by Rising Star specialists, and monitoring visits. As a TRS provider we are assessed in the following areas:

- Staff Qualifications and Training
- Program Administration

- Teacher/Child Interactions
- Indoor and Outdoor Learning Environments

If parents would like more information, please visit <https://texasrisingstar.org>

WUMP is licensed by the state of Texas, and follows the Minimum Standards for Childcare. A copy of minimum standards from the Texas Department of Health and Human Services is available in the preschool office, or you can access the standards online through the HHS website. Copies of the preschool's inspection reports and reporting numbers are posted on the bulletin board outside the preschool office, and also available at [hhs.texas.gov](http://hhs.texas.gov)

### **GOVERNING BODY**

The Preschool is a mission of Westlake United Methodist Church. As such, the WUMC Church Council has ultimate authority over the program. The Senior Pastor is the permit holder of the state license, and is a designated spokesperson for the preschool, along with the Preschool Director. The Director manages the preschool staff and supervises the daily operations of the program. A Preschool Advisory Council, made up of members of the church's leadership committees and parent representatives, meets quarterly to provide guidance to the Director, and to ensure that the program runs effectively.

### **PROGRAM GOALS**

The philosophy and goals of Westlake United Methodist Preschool are to meet the needs of the "whole child". We strive to foster the development of each child's social-emotional, cognitive, language, physical development and creative abilities through hands-on learning activities. Our goal is to create an environment in which children achieve independence, self-discipline, social competence, self-knowledge, and enthusiasm for learning. We work to foster positive attitudes, problem solving skills, and intellectual growth. We seek to assist parents in understanding the developmental stage of their children and how best to contribute effectively to their child's growth. We strive to work in partnership with families, each other and the community for the welfare of children. Parents are *strongly* encouraged to actively participate in their child's experience at the preschool.

### **CURRICULUM**

Based upon knowledge of child growth and development, teachers plan individualized curriculum designed to promote the development of each child. Daily lessons include a balance of activities that are teacher directed and those that allow children to explore independently. We strive to help children become independent, self-confident, inquisitive, and creative learners. Our curriculum goals are in the following areas of development:

#### **SOCIAL**

Through school, a new and different world is introduced into the child's life. Westlake United Methodist Preschool will help the child to adjust socially by:

- encouraging the enjoyment of work and play with others as part of a larger group;
- encouraging him/her to see himself/herself as an individual in relationship to others;
- encouraging growth in independence, self-confidence, and self-control.
- encouraging certain behavior responses while discouraging others;
- encouraging interaction and friendships; and learning to give, share, and receive.

### **EMOTIONAL**

Emotions are a combination of physical and mental states, which react upon each other. Understanding the way a child reacts to situations, redirecting his/her reactions, and helping him/her to attain necessary satisfaction are important to the child's growth. Westlake United Methodist Preschool helps the child grow emotionally by:

- encouraging the child to see emotions as a natural and acceptable life process;
- helping to direct and channel emotions into constructive use;
- understanding and accepting certain limits; and
- helping each child develop self-esteem.

### **INTELLECTUAL**

Westlake United Methodist Preschool understands the child's innate ability and curiosity to learn. Through providing a loving, stimulating environment, the child will have the opportunity for conceptual and perceptual development. With an environment rich in varied materials and experiences, conceptual and perceptual skills will develop with the "whole child." WUMP helps the child grow intellectually by

- exploring new ideas and experiences;
- exploring books, vocabulary, and language skills;
- exploring sensory stimuli: vision, hearing, touch, taste, and smell;
- learning to observe, compare, and to differentiate;
- expressing concrete and abstract ideas;
- encouraging games of fantasy and role-playing;
- encouraging curiosity, thinking, and reasoning;
- providing art media, music, movement; and
- encouraging listening to others, following directions and communicating.

### **PHYSICAL**

Physical development is an equally important goal to the child's total developmental process. Developments of large and small muscles in the child's body help not only in the attainment of coordination, but also with self-confidence, self-control, and independence. Fine motor skills are necessary before a child can write and manipulate scissors, etc. WUMP provides a variety of indoor and outdoor activities for development, such as:

- playground and gym apparatus for large muscle growth; climbing, sliding, crawling, and balancing;
- wheel toys, blocks for building, sand pile;
- housekeeping materials and furnishings;
- balls, ropes, beanbags, toss toys;
- painting, clay, scissors, manipulative toys; pencils, crayons, markers
- musical instruments, musical games and finger plays.
- Screen time is *NOT* part of our daily routine and may be used *ONLY* for brief periods to enhance or support a curriculum topic.

### **SPIRITUAL**

The United Methodist Discipline recognizes that children learn Christian values of love, understanding and forgiveness by the example of a loving and caring staff. Westlake United Methodist Preschool helps the child grow spiritually by:

- conducting all activities in a loving manner;
- encouraging the child to show tolerance of others;
- attending weekly chapel services led by a minister or lay religious leader;

- learning songs, stories, finger plays about God's love and other Christian themes;
- celebrating Christmas and Easter and learning about various holiday traditions in other cultures and traditions;
- providing opportunity to learn and practice prayer before meals.

The activities that we plan for children, the way we organize the environment, plan the daily schedule and talk with children, are all designed to accomplish the goals of our curriculum. Our curriculum works best when teachers work cooperatively with the parents, children, and other staff to determine each child's developmental level, interests, and needs.



# ADMISSIONS INFORMATION

## *SCHEDULES, ADMISSION AND TUITION*

### **SCHOOL HOURS**

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Monday through Friday
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Extended Day on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday
8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.	Early Drop-Off Monday through Friday

### **CALENDAR**

We are a school year program. Classes begin each fall in late August or early September and end late in May. An annual calendar of holidays and staff in-service dates is issued at the beginning of each school year. We will generally follow the Eanes I.S.D. calendar regarding holidays, bad weather days, and in-service days. Registration for the following school year will begin each January. We also offer an 8-week summer program. Registration for the summer program is held in early spring.

### **ADMISSION**

Westlake United Methodist Preschool is non-discriminatory as to ethnicity, religion, gender, or disability in its enrollment or employment practices. To implement inclusive practices, we will develop appropriate training, if necessary, to prepare parents and staff to meet the needs of children and families. We respect cultural diversity. We welcome all children and strive to meet the needs of each child. The school is an extension into the community of the church's respect for human love, for worth of each individual, and for cooperation among adults as they care for children. We are an Equal Opportunity Employer. The Preschool Director and Assistant Director decide admission to the preschool. Families in the program do not have the right to determine the admission, placement, or dismissal of a child from another family.

Children currently enrolled will have first choice during registration to continue their current placement with regard to days of the week. Those wishing to increase or decrease days will be placed on a wait list and placed, as space becomes available.

All children are required to have completed enrollment forms on file in the preschool office ***prior*** to their first day of attendance. No child is considered fully enrolled until all forms are completed and all fees are paid in full. These forms include:

- Tuition Agreement***
- Emergency Information/Release***
- Preschool Policy Agreement***
- Medical Information (signed by physician annually)***
- Record of Immunizations***
- Vision and Hearing Test Results (for children age 4 and older)***
- Personal Information Form/Developmental History***

***All forms are issued and updated annually.*** Parents must provide updated immunization records as required by the Texas Department of State Health Services and Travis County. The state of Texas requires all children who are 4 years old and enrolled in preschool to receive Vision and Hearing screenings. The testing results must be turned in to the Preschool office for the child's file along with the Admissions Forms. Parents may submit testing results from their pediatrician or other qualified screener, or they may have their child tested when the Preschool offers screenings in the fall.

### **IMMUNIZATION POLICY**

We believe that the health and safety of all children is our highest priority. In order to protect the health of the infants and vulnerable children in our care, as well as the pregnant women in our community, WUMP would like all children to be vaccinated following the state's immunization schedule. An increase in the number of families who are opting out of vaccinations due to reasons of conscience could put us at risk for not being able to provide community immunity for our families. We would like to maintain at least a 95% vaccination rate among our students.

Families who register at WUMP must provide a current vaccination record before their child will be able to attend school. A child will not be able to attend class without a complete vaccination record that meets the Texas Health and Human Services guidelines found here:

[http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/Schedule/schedule\\_child.shtm](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/Schedule/schedule_child.shtm)

In the rare case that there is a medical contraindication, we require that it be documented in writing by the child's physician and submitted to WUMP before the first day of school. If the child is on a delayed vaccination schedule we must have a note in our files from the child's physician stating that the immunization required would be injurious to the child's health and well-being and the medical necessity to omit or delay the vaccination(s). If it is in the medical best interest of the child to receive the vaccinations at a later date, the document from the physician must also include pre-planned appointment dates on which the delayed vaccine(s) will be administered, with the goal of "catching up" to meet the Texas Minimum Vaccine Requirements. Documentation of the administration of the delayed vaccines will be due to WUMP immediately following the appointment date. We will also admit students recently arrived in Texas who are vaccinated in compliance with their previous state's vaccination policy, as well as vaccine exemptions from families who provide an affidavit from the state of Texas.

### **PARENT ORIENTATION AND OPERATIONAL POLICIES**

Parent orientation to the philosophies and program practices at Westlake United Methodist Preschool is **required** of **families** new to our program. This Parent Handbook provides written policies and procedures, and is reviewed and updated annually. Before enrollment each family is required to sign a Child Care agreement that they have **read** the Parent Handbook and understand the program policies. This agreement will be kept on file in the Preschool Office. In addition to the agreement, we encourage families to:

*\* Tour the facility, visit the classroom, and meet the teachers*

*\*Attend Classroom visits held at the beginning of each school year*

*\*Attend New Family Orientation*

If changes in policy occur during the school year, we will notify parents of the change in writing, and will ask parents to sign a statement saying they have received and understand the new policy. Families who repeatedly fail to follow school policies and procedures will be subject to removal from the program.

## **CLASSES OFFERED**

Enrollment for all classes is based on the child's age as of **September 1**. Children may be enrolled for classes as listed below. Additional days can only be added upon request of the parents and if openings are available.

<b>Infant</b>	4 months - 13 months*	6 children/2 staff
	Monday-Friday, Monday-Wednesday-Friday or Tuesday-Thursday	
	*Infants must be 4 months or older as of September 1 in order to be enrolled for the school year. Enrolled students younger than 6 months as of September 1 will start once they turn 6 months old.	
<b>Toddler</b>	14 months- 23 months	8 children/2 staff
	Monday-Friday, Monday-Wednesday-Friday or Tuesday-Thursday	
<b>2 Year Olds</b>	24-36 months	16 children/3 staff
	Monday-Friday, Monday-Wednesday-Friday, or Tuesday-Thursday	
<b>3 Year Olds</b>	36-48 months	18 children/3 staff
	Monday-Friday, Monday-Wednesday-Friday, or Tuesday-Thursday	
<b>Pre-K</b>	4-5 year olds	21 children/3 staff
	Monday-Friday, Monday-Wednesday-Friday, or Tuesday-Thursday	

**Extended Day and Early Drop-off:** Children will be divided into compatible age groups according to daily attendance.

### **EXTENDED DAY**

**Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, 1:00-3:00 p.m.**

Children may attend Extended Day on a regular basis each week or on a drop-in basis as *space allows*. Children attending on a drop in basis must have prior approval from the preschool office. Children ages 2-5 will be picked up from the playground. Infants and toddlers will be picked up in the Infant classroom.

### **EARLY DROP OFF**

**Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday, 8:00-9:00 a.m.**

Children may attend Early Drop off by registering to attend on a regular basis each week or on a drop-in basis as *space allows*.

### **WAITING LIST**

A waiting list will be maintained and parents notified, as space becomes available in a specific age group. To be included on the wait list, parents are required to complete a short form on the website. Once on the list, you will remain until placed. Parents will be called periodically to see if they want to remain on the list.

### **WITHDRAWING FROM WUMP**

Non-payment of tuition can result in dismissal from the program. After an account is delinquent for 60 days, enrollment in the program will be terminated. Families withdrawing from the program during the school year may request a refund of the tuition deposit **with** 30 days written notice **AND** if we are able to fill the spot without loss of tuition for Westlake United Methodist Preschool. We encourage families who pay bills on-line to set up WUMP as a vendor and set up

auto-pay through your bank. Please contact the director of the school if special arrangements are needed. There is a \$25.00 charge for **ANY** returned check.

### **ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL**

Children thrive on routine, so consistent attendance at school is important. Please notify the director or your child's teacher to inform us if your child will be absent from school. You can email us or mark your child as absent on the Brightwheel app. It is important that we know if the illness is due to illness.

Please let them know if your child has a communicable illness or disease. Many communicable diseases must be reported to the Travis County Health Department, and we need to inform other parents about a possible exposure. A physician's release may be required for a return to preschool following certain illnesses. See the Health and Safety section of this handbook for more information about absences due to illness.

### **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE FROM SCHOOL**

School starts at 9:00 a.m. Parents may drop off between 8:55 and 9:10. Call the office if you arrive late, and we will take your child to class. Come for your child between 12:45 and 1:00 p.m. If you are picking up more than one child, allow enough time to collect all children from the classroom **no later than 1:05 p.m.** Staff must be free to leave the classroom for responsibilities with Extended Day at 1:10 p.m. Please remember that teachers have after school commitments.

Prompt arrival and departure is extremely important in facilitating family/staff interactions, and allowing children to successfully engage in planned or unplanned classroom activities. If you have something to discuss privately with your child's teacher, please schedule a time with the teacher when you can talk.

Parents of Infants and Toddlers **must** leave a name and phone number where they can be reached **each class day**. Parents of 2-5 year olds are asked to inform teachers if they will be unreachable by phone on any day and leave the name and number of a person we should contact in case of illness or emergency. **ALL CHILDREN** must be signed-in upon arrival and signed-out upon departure using the Brightwheel app.

### **RELEASE OF CHILDREN**

Each child must be accompanied to his/her classroom by the adult who brings the child to school. Children must be signed in and out each day, either with a class roster, or thorough the Brightwheel app. Permission must be given **in writing** to the teacher and/or the office if someone other than a person authorized on the child's Emergency form will be picking up your child. We *will* ask for photo I.D., and/or you can give the person picking up your child the 4-digit Brightwheel code.

### **LATE PICKUP FEE**

There is a late pickup fee of \$1.00 per minute for *each* child left after dismissal at 1:05 p.m. or 3:00 p.m. if the child is registered for Extended Day.

***FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE***

Limited funds are available to provide tuition assistance to families currently enrolled in the program. An application must be filled out by the family and returned to the Director. It will be reviewed by the Senior Pastor, and members of the church's Trustees, and Finance Committee, who will determine how much if any funds are available. The name of the family will remain confidential. Families will still be expected to pay partial tuitions costs, which will be due by the 10<sup>th</sup> of every month. Families who are delinquent in these payments are at risk of losing future tuition assistance. Contact the Director for more information.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

### **HEALTHY ARRIVALS**

Children should arrive at school healthy and ready to learn. Teachers will perform **HEALTH CHECKS** when children are dropped off in the morning in order to ensure that there are no health concerns. They will be looking for:

- General mood and changes in behavior
- Fever or elevated body temperature
- Skin rashes, unusual spots, swelling or bruises
- Complaints of pain and not feeling well
- Signs/symptoms of diseases (severe coughing, Sneezing, breathing difficulties, discharge from Nose, ears or eyes, diarrhea, vomiting, etc.)
- Reported illness in child or family members

### **ADMINISTERING MEDICATIONS, INSECT REPELLENT, AND SUNSCREEN AT SCHOOL**

The staff **will not** administer any medication without parental permission, with the exception of external first aid. If a child is taking medication for an illness, he/she should not be brought to school. If a child must take medication for a chronic condition, we must have an order from a licensed health care provider which details circumstances and gives instructions for dosing of any over-the-counter or prescription medication. The teacher will keep a log to indicate when the medication is given. All medications will be kept in the Preschool Office

If children need skin protection from sun or insects, **please apply before bringing your child to school**. WUMP teachers may **only reapply with written parental permission**. Permission forms are available in the Preschool Office. The Preschool does not supply insect repellent or sunscreen, so families must provide a supply from home and make sure that it is labelled with their child's name.

### **EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL DUE TO ILLNESS**

We ask your cooperation in maintaining **high health standards** for all of the families and staff at Westlake United Methodist Preschool by complying with the following policy:

-If your child shows **ANY** signs of illness such as fever, red or discharging eyes, runny nose, sore throat, cough, vomiting, diarrhea, or a rash **within the past 24 hours**, he/she **may not attend preschool** that day.

-If your child is too ill to play outside, please keep him/her at home. Small children do not understand why they cannot play when everyone else is outside.

If your child becomes ill while at school you will be notified immediately and be expected to arrange to have your child picked up from preschool as soon as possible. In the event a parent cannot be reached, a person listed on the child's emergency form will be notified and asked to come for your child. An ill child may not be left at preschool for any reason. We believe sick children deserve to be comfortable at home, and all children and staff deserve the healthiest environment possible.

### **PARENT NOTIFICATIONS OF INJURIES AND ILLNESS**

Parents will be contacted immediately if your child is injured and the injury requires medical attention from a health care professional. Should a parent or other designated emergency contact be unavailable, the child's physician will be contacted to determine what action should

be taken. Should immediate medical attention be needed, EMS will be called to transport to an Emergency Room. A verbal and/or written incident report will be provided to parents concerning minor accidents i.e. scrapes, bumps, bruises, etc., detailing the circumstances and treatment. All staff are trained in CPR and First Aid procedures. WUMC carries liability insurance to cover injury to a child while on the premises.

We will notify parents if someone in their child’s class has a contagious disease or condition such as lice, and will include information about the symptoms and how it is spread. See the following chart for guidance on when to keep children home from school:

#### Guidelines for Illnesses at School

Illness	Should You Stay Home?	When You Can Come Back.
Chicken Pox	Yes	When all the pox have scabbed over
CoId/Allergies	No with no fever & a clear nose discharge Yes with fever &/or green nose discharge	When nose is clear and no fever
Coxsackie (Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease)	Yes	When without fever
Diarrhea	Yes	24 hours after last movement
Ear Infection	No without fever Yes with fever	
Fever	Yes	24 hours after fever subsides
Fifth Disease	No without fever Yes with fever	24 hours after fever subsides
Giardia	Yes	When diarrhea subsides or Dr. approves readmission
Impetigo	Yes	When treatment has begun
Lice	Yes	When I treatment given and no nits are present
Pink Eye (conjunctivitis)	Yes	24 hours after treatment has begun
Unidentified Rash	Yes	When rash is gone unless Dr. approves readmission
Ring Worm	No, but keep area covered	
Roseola	Yes, with fever	24 hours after fever subsides
Rota Virus	Yes	When diarrhea subsides or Dr. approves readmission
Strep Throat	Yes	24 hours after treatment has begun and fever free
Vomiting	Yes	24 hours free of symptoms

#### **ANIMALS AT SCHOOL**

Small pets such as hamsters, fish and birds are permitted in classrooms. Staff will supervise to ensure a safe and sanitary classroom environment. Permission from the Director is required before any other animal is brought to school. Parents must be given notice before any animal visits, and we must receive copies of vaccination records for dogs and cats. Children will wash hands after touching any animals. Because of our location we sometimes are visited by wild animals or pets from neighboring homes. Please do not let your child approach or touch any animal that is unfamiliar to you.

#### **APPROPRIATE CLOTHING FOR SCHOOL**

We prefer that children be dressed appropriately for active play. Sneakers or rubber-soled shoes are best for sturdy footing. Sandals, Crocs, and cowboy boots are **not appropriate** for active play and **should not** be worn to preschool.

Dress your children for an active day of play! Clothing should be comfortable and washable. Play is the work of children and learning is hard, dirty work. If your child isn't dirty at the end of the day, give them back to us because they haven't played hard enough to learn as much as we would like. Please make sure your child knows **it is OK to get dirty**. Often children refuse to take part in painting, sand and water activities because they are afraid to get their clothes messy. They might miss out on some great learning experiences. An extra change of clothing (suitable for the season), labeled with the child's name, should be left at school for every child. As the weather changes, check the clothes at school to see if they are still appropriate and still fit. See the Cold Weather Guidelines below for information about appropriate winter clothing.

**PHYSICAL PLAY INDOORS AND OUTDOORS**

Children have opportunities to play outdoors *every day* unless weather conditions prevent. They typically spend 45 minutes on the playground and 30 minutes in the gym each day. Teachers provide a balance of structured activities (games, creative movement, etc.) and unstructured independent learning activities in the classroom, gym, and playground. In the case of rainy weather, unless it is stormy, children will still be able to take nature walks with umbrellas. Regardless of the weather, children will still get to play in the gym, and do physical activities in the classroom and/or an alternative classroom set up for active play.

**EXTREME WEATHER OUTDOOR PLAY GUIDELINES**

The chart below, from the American Academy of Pediatrics, shows the guidelines we will use to determine if the children will play outside during cold weather. When temperatures drop, we will continue to take the children outside to play. Please dress your child in layers, including a heavy winter coat, socks, hats, and mittens or gloves.

Wind Chill 32• & Up	Wind Chill 13• to 31•	Wind Chill Below 13•
<b>IT'S SAFE TO PLAY OUTSIDE</b>	<b>BE CAUTIOUS WHILE OUTSIDE</b>	<b>IT'S UNSAFE TO PLAY OUTSIDE</b>
<p>Dress your child in layers, with a hat, mittens and gloves.</p> <p>Babies and young toddlers develop hypothermia faster than older children. Teachers may keep them inside if they think it is too cold.</p> <p>Bundle them in one layer more than you would wear.</p>	<p>It's okay for children to be outside, but we will watch for signs that they are too cold, such as shivering or fatigue.</p> <p>We will have your child take indoor breaks every 20 to 30 minutes to warm up, or reduce their time outdoors.</p> <p>You child's body temperature will drop much faster if they get wet, so swap soggy gloves and hats for dry ones.</p>	<p>We will keep your child inside if the wind chill gets below 13 degrees.</p> <p>As the wind chill factor approaches 0•F, there is a serious risk of frostbite.</p> <p>Source: American Academy of Pediatrics</p>



We will plan to have children play outside in warmer temperatures, and always provide shade and water for the children. We will limit outdoor time in the case of high ozone level warning.

In cases where we limit play outdoors due to weather conditions, we will provide other opportunities for children to go outside or engage in active play. The alternative activities may include nature walks, yoga, music and movement, and/or games in the classroom, gym, or Wyatt Hall.

### ***DENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION***

February is Dental Health Awareness Month, and our teachers will plan lessons around how children can keep their teeth healthy. Also in February we have a dental health professional visit our school and give a talk to the twos, threes, and Pre-K classes. All of the children receive little bags with a toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, and tips on how to care for one's teeth. Here is a link for more information about dental health for your child:

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/oral-health/Pages/default.aspx>

### ***SCREENINGS***

All children who are 4 years old or older must receive a vision and hearing test. Families must turn in the results of these tests as a condition for enrollment in the Pre-K class. We also have a nurse visit our program in the fall and families can sign up to have a vision and hearing test done here at WUMP.

We also have a speech pathologist come in the fall to provide speech evaluations. Families who have concerns about their child's speech can sign up for a screening while their child is at school.

## **SAFE SLEEP POLICY**

All staff, substitute staff, and volunteers at Westlake United Methodist Preschool will follow these safe sleep recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) for infants to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome/Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS/SUIDS):

- Always put infants to sleep on their backs unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional.
- Place infants on a firm mattress, with a tight fitting sheet, in a crib that meets the CPSC federal requirements for full size cribs and for non-full size cribs.
- For infants who are younger than 12 months of age, cribs should be bare except for a tight fitting sheet and a mattress cover or protector. Items that should not be placed in a crib include: soft or loose bedding, such as blankets, quilts, or comforters; pillows; stuffed toys/animals; soft objects; bumper pads; liners; or sleep positioning devices. Also, infants must not have their heads, faces, or cribs covered at any time by items such as blankets, linens, or clothing.
- Do not use sleep positioning devices, such as wedges or infant positioners. The AAP has found no evidence that these devices are safe. Their use may increase the risk of suffocation.
- Ensure that sleeping areas are ventilated and at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.
  - If an infant needs extra warmth, use sleep clothing, such as sleepers or footed pajamas, as an alternative to blankets.
- Place only one infant in a crib to sleep.
- Infants may use a pacifier during sleep. But the pacifier must not be attached to a stuffed animal or the infant's clothing by a string, cord, or other attaching mechanism that might be a suffocation or strangulation risk.
- If the infant falls asleep in a restrictive device other than a crib (such as a bouncy chair or swing, or arrives to care asleep in a car seat), move the infant to a crib immediately, unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional.
- Our child care program is smoke-free. Smoking is not allowed in Texas child care operations (this includes e- cigarettes and any type of vaporizers).
- Actively observe sleeping infants by sight and sound.
- If an infant is able to roll back and forth from front to back, place the infant on the infant's back for sleep and allow the infant to assume a preferred sleep position.
- Awake infants will have supervised "tummy time" several times daily. This will help them strengthen their muscles and develop normally.
- Do not swaddle an infant for sleep or rest unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional.

### **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

Westlake United Methodist Preschool has in place an *Emergency Preparedness Plan* to be followed in emergencies that may result in evacuation of the building, a lock-down or potentially dangerous situation, or off-site evacuation. Staff practice the emergency procedures routinely. We conduct monthly fire drills and both weather and lockdown drills four times a year, following state requirements. **A copy of our *Emergency Preparedness Plan* is available for review in the Preschool Office.**

If an emergency situation develops that requires that children and staff be relocated away from the campus, children will either be taken to Building M, in Westland Office Park, 5524 Bee Cave Road or transported to ***Westlake Hills Presbyterian Church, 7127 Bee Caves Rd, 512-327-1315***. If an emergency evacuation requiring a different route is deemed necessary, children will be transported to ***Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church/Butterfly Christian Preschool, 3525 Bee Cave Road, phone 512-327-6035***. Parents will be contacted immediately. ***Accurate and complete information about how or where parents can be reached each day is extremely important. Please leave primary contact cell phones turned on while your child(ren) attend Preschool.*** Parents will be contacted via Brightwheel in the event of weather related incident or school closing due to unsafe conditions such as fire, flood, or acts of nature that cause damage to the preschool.

### **EMPLOYEE VACCINATION POLICY**

In compliance with the Texas Health and Human Services Minimum Standard Rule #746.3611, we have adopted a policy for protecting children from vaccine-preventable diseases. While the safety of our employees and children in our care is important, we have elected to make immunization for vaccine-preventable diseases optional to our employees. We strongly recommend that our employees receive vaccines for influenza, pertussis, and varicella. The preschool will reimburse staff for the cost of a flu vaccine.

## **ADDITIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### ***PARKING AT WUMP***

**ALL** traffic must enter the parking lot off Redbud Trail at the church sign and exit through the rear of the parking lot. Please follow the traffic flow marked by cones to make pedestrian crossings safe. Large vehicles (SUV's, trucks) should **always** park in the outer parking lot due to limited sight when backing up. Safety of all children is our primary concern! **Please do not double park, do not leave the engine running in an unattended vehicle, and NEVER leave unattended children in a vehicle! Handicapped parking spaces** may be used **ONLY** with a valid handicapped permit. **Less Mobile parking spaces** are only to be used by parents with infants, toddlers **AND** older children being brought to school. Please **do not** park in spaces reserved for families who paid for parking during our Spring Auction. These policies are for the safety of families and children. **Please** closely supervise your children when leaving the classroom, especially once you leave the building. The parking lot is a dangerous place at the day's end.

### ***FIELD TRIPS AND ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES***

We do not transport children, or offer field trips at WUMP. Instead we schedule special visitors throughout the year to provide enrichment for the children.

### ***WEATHER CLOSURES***

We will close school for bad weather events, and all families will receive an alert on the Brightwheel app to announce any closures or delays. The Director and Assistant Director will watch for school district closures in our area, and we will close when necessary to protect staff from driving in unsafe conditions. If area schools announce a delayed start, we will also delay, with classes from 11:00 am-1:00 pm, and Extended Day. The staffing and schedule will likely change on such days. If there are *excessive* school weather closures in a school year, PSAC and administration will consider adding additional make-up days to the calendar.

### ***CHILD RECORDS***

Files are maintained on each child registered in the program and are kept secure in the Preschool office. Such files include health information, emergency contacts, records of assessments and parent conferences. Contents of children's files are confidential and are available only to administration, staff and regulatory authorities with consent of parent or guardian. We keep confidential any information concerning students, their families, school staff and operations. If a custody agreement is in place in the instance of separated or divorced parents, we must have a copy of the agreement in the child's file.

### ***CHANGE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION***

Parents are strongly encouraged to update contact information as soon as possible. It is extremely important for staff to have the most current contact information in case of emergency. Any change to contact information can be updated directly in Brightwheel, or you can inform us in writing or by email to the Preschool Office.

### ***HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT***

Westlake United Methodist Preschool staff members are not acting as agents of the preschool when independently providing child care for families outside of their regular work schedules, on or off of the Westlake United Methodist Church campus. Westlake United Methodist Preschool shall be held harmless in any situation where an employee of the preschool independently cares for children outside the scope of their employment with the preschool.

### **CELL PHONE USE**

Our policy concerning the use of cell phones during school hours consists of a **“Cell Phone Free Zone”** for the Preschool **and** parking lot. Cell phones may not be visible between the hours of 9:00 am and 3:00 pm. **Children deserve all of our attention!**

### **GANG FREE ZONE**

As a licensed child care facility we are required to inform our families that under the Texas Penal Code any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to a harsher penalty.

### **PERSONAL PROPERTY**

Children should not bring toys from home as they get lost or broken and are difficult to share. Please label all property coming to school; lunch boxes, thermos bottles, diaper bags, and all clothing. Teachers will try to see that these are kept safely in the children's cubbies or hung on hooks. **Weapons or representations of weapons of any kind are not allowed at Westlake United Methodist Preschool.**

### **BIRTHDAYS AND HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Sharing a birthday is a special time for the children. Parents may want to provide a special snack for the entire class near this special occasion. Invitations to private parties should be mailed to homes, and will not be distributed at school unless all children in the class are invited.

Holidays have become overdone and can be hectic and very overwhelming to children. Parents share in planning certain holiday celebrations with the guidance of the teachers. We require that seasonal classroom celebrations be kept simple and limited to a short portion of our day. Activities **must be approved by the teacher** and be appropriate for the developmental level of the children in the group. Alternate treats such as raisins, stickers, etc. should be used rather than candy. We ask that candy and gum not be given as favors. **Due to extreme choking hazard we allow NO BALLOONS at the Preschool.**

### **When bringing special snacks to celebrate a birthday or holiday, please:**

- Follow WUMP's nutrition policies for lunches and snacks;
- Make sure that the food doesn't pose the threat of an allergic reaction in vulnerable children;
- Only bring commercially prepared foods to school;
- Don't bring overly sugary foods, such as sugary drinks, sodas, frosted cakes or cupcakes (alternatives include ice cream, popsicles, or muffins);
- Don't bring foods that are common choking hazards; and
- Please discuss your plans ahead of time with your child's teacher.

# CHILD DEVELOPMENT, DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE

## ***BEFORE YOUR CHILD ATTENDS SCHOOL***

A child's introduction to school influences his/her overall adjustment. Following are some suggestions that can help make your child's school experience a happy one.

Talk about the school in advance. Visit the facility if possible. Respond to your child's questions about school with simple and straightforward answers.

We have planned activities to help introduce you and your child to their teacher and the preschool:

- Schedule a tour of the facility and a visit with the classroom teachers.
- A visit to the classroom in late August/early September so that the teacher can meet you and your child in the school surroundings.
- Attend a mandatory Family Orientation to become familiar with preschool policies and procedures.

A note about the classroom visit - *this is your child's time with the teacher*. Teachers are interested in seeing the types of toys and play equipment that interest your child and getting to know them. Visits last about 20 minutes. Any parent concerns are to be discussed in private with the teacher, not during the school visit.

## ***ADJUSTING TO SCHOOL***

Encourage your child to go through routines with the other children, but do not insist. ***Always*** tell your child good-bye before leaving even though he/she has become interested in some school activity. Say good-bye and depart quickly, as a lingering departure may be difficult for some children. Staff will work with parents to make the transition easier. Your child is adjusting to many new people and situations. He/she may become fatigued more easily at first. You may need to adjust the schedule to accommodate his/her needs.

If your child does not share his/her preschool experiences with you, do not be surprised. A young child lives almost entirely in the present. Instead of asking him a lot of questions, allow him to share his experiences if and when they choose.

## ***GUIDANCE & DISCIPLINE***

One of the main objectives of our school is to help children develop self-discipline or inner controls over their actions. To encourage this, we will utilize various guidance techniques, such as:

- accepting the child's feelings;
- setting reasonable limits and behavior expectations and enforcing them with appropriate natural consequences;
- redirecting the child to another activity when necessary
- using positive statements and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only on unacceptable behavior;
- being individualized and consistent,
- helping the child to talk about misunderstandings and frustrations rather than using actions that would hurt another; and
- Showing each child patience and understanding.

There will be **absolutely no** physical or harsh punishment. The following types of discipline are prohibited by the Preschool:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;
- Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;
- Pinching, shaking or biting a child;
- Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;
- Withholding active play or keeping a child inside as a consequence for behavior, unless the child is exhibiting behavior during active play that requires a brief supervised separation that is consistent with the guidance techniques listed above; and
- Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed; and
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

Discipline is individualized and consistent for each child and appropriate to the child's level of understanding. If the usual guidance techniques are unsuccessful, teachers will ask the parents to come for a conference to discuss the situation.

In the event that a child's behavior is a chronic problem and is unresponsive to the staff's attempt to alter the behavior, the school may follow any of the following steps appropriate to the situation:

- Hold a conference with the parents, teacher and director to discuss the situation and to develop methods of correcting the behavior problem;
- Ask the parent to have the child examined by a pediatrician;
- Ask the parent to have the child evaluated by a child guidance professional;
- Recommend the dismissal of the child from Westlake United Methodist Preschool, only if other interventions have failed, and if the child's behavior continues to present a danger to themselves or others, physically or emotionally.

**The Preschool's policy is that the suspension and/or expulsion of a student should only be used as a last resort after other interventions have been unsuccessful.**

### **CHALLENGING DEVELOPMENTAL BEHAVIORS**

During the preschool years children sometimes exhibit undesirable behaviors such as biting, pushing, and hitting. This can be upsetting to parents, whether their child is the aggressor or the victim. Although we don't condone this type of behavior, rest assured that experts in early childhood development acknowledge that it is a normal part of a child's development.

*Biting is a behavior that is upsetting to most parents, and usually occurs among the ones and twos. Here are some common reasons why children may bite:*

*Teething: Toddlers are often cutting teeth and it hurts. Chewing on something relieves the itch and stops the pain momentarily.*

*Sensory Explorations: Toddlers are very good at using all of their senses to learn about the world. Using their mouths to explore their environment is an important style of learning for infants, and continues into toddlerhood. They bite everything, not just their playmates.*

*Cause and Effect: Children are eager explorers. They are constantly studying cause and effect. Biting produces a predictable response, which often is dramatic: there is a lot of noise/attention from adults.*

*Affection: Some parents nibble on their baby to show affection, and a child equates that with biting.*

*Self-Assertion: This is probably the most common reason children bite. It's a way to express frustration when they don't yet have the language skills to do so.*

The preschool staff takes action to reduce the number of biting incidents, including providing access to teething toys, providing numerous sensory exploration activities, providing opportunity to explore cause and effect, and offering toddlers options/alternatives to reduce frustrations.

*Other Undesirable Behaviors: As children get older they may begin to exhibit other antisocial behaviors. Children just learning to interact with others may not have the communication skills to express their needs appropriately, resulting in a physical outburst. Some children have not yet learned that their actions may hurt others, since they are only beginning to interact with their peers.*

At the preschool we try to prevent as many altercations as we can. When staff see problem situations develop they will intervene in order to model appropriate problem-solving skills for the children, and to diffuse the situation. In class they frequently model and discuss ways to be a good friend, by using words, sharing, being kind, and listening to others. They model to the children how to show empathy to a child who is hurt.

We believe our low student to teacher ratios, along with a professional staff trained in early childhood behaviors reduces the chances for biting and other aggressive behaviors at preschool. As the children spend more time at school they will acquire skills that will enable them to get along with others without physical outbursts. The development of social skills at this age is as important as the acquisition of academic skills, and will enable them to be successful at school in the future.

Unfortunately, we are unable to prevent every incidence of children getting hurt. If, despite our efforts, a child does get hurt at school we will inform the family. Due to confidentiality we cannot tell parents the name of the other student who hurt their child, and we cannot go into detail about our interactions with the other child's family. We understand how upset parents may be when they learn their child has been hurt; however, we ask parents for understanding that this can occasionally happen when children interact with one another.

We will inform families when their child shows challenging behaviors at school. Often the behavior will be a one-time occurrence, but if the child shows a pattern of hurting others or unsafe behaviors we will reach out to the family to discuss the situation. We will ask the family to meet with the teacher and Director to express concerns about the situation, and to come up with a plan to reduce the behaviors in the classroom. The school will use internal resources to assist in the classroom, but may also recommend that the family seek outside help to rule out an underlying health problem that could cause the negative behaviors. We welcome input from other early childhood professionals to ensure that we can meet a child's needs. When a child is exhibiting a pattern of misbehaviors, we expect open communication and cooperation from the family. We will keep parents informed of their child's progress. Our plan will meet the terms of our Discipline and Guidance policy on pages 20 and 21 of this handbook.



## ***SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN***

WUMP staff must supervise children at all times. A child who repeatedly tries to leave a classroom or other preschool area poses a risk to themselves and to the rest of the group. If we determine that staff must spend an unreasonable amount of time and effort trying to prevent a student from leaving, the child will not be able to continue in the program.

WUMP supports families and children who may need additional accommodations, to include home language, special needs/differing abilities, and cultural backgrounds.

Children with disabilities and other special learning needs will be welcome in our classrooms to the extent they can participate in our usual program. If necessary, parents may be asked to provide additional staff for a child requiring exceptional care. Staff will work with outside specialists on methods and plans to best meet the individual needs of each child and their family. Enrollment for children with special needs will not be terminated unless a child presents a danger to themselves or others, physically or emotionally.

# PARENT INVOLVEMENT

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATION**

Parents are an important part of our program and are welcome to visit the preschool at any time during school hours without prior approval. Parents are able to help with special enrichment activities, celebrations, special projects, and as room parents. Open parent-staff communication is one of the cornerstones of quality child care because it enables us to work as partners for the best possible environment for children. Families and teachers will respect the need for daily open communication regarding pertinent information about the child. The Preschool will use a variety of methods to communicate with parents in a way that is easily understood: the Brightwheel app, newsletters, classroom notes and bulletin boards, phone calls and e-mails. Parents of Infants and Toddlers can expect to receive a written daily report. Teachers and parents will maintain confidentiality about each child and their family. Families will be asked to sign a permission note to give an outside caregiver or nanny information regarding their child and/or classroom activities.

Parents having concerns about their child and/or the experience at Westlake United Methodist Preschool should:

- first talk with the teacher to resolve the concern;
- schedule a conference with the teacher and director;
- talk with the director if the situation seems to persist;
- talk with a member of the Preschool Advisory Committee or the Senior Pastor of WUMC;
- report serious or dangerous unattended complaints to the Texas Department of Health and Human Services at [www.hhs.texas.gov](http://www.hhs.texas.gov)

All families and staff at WUMP deserve to be treated with respect. Families who use profanity or threatening language to staff will be asked to leave the program.

## **PROGRAM EVALUATION**

WUMP sends a written parent survey to all families at the end of the school year. Suggestions and evaluation results are integrated into the preschool program whenever possible.

## **PARENT CONFERENCES**

Conferences are scheduled twice each school year, in the fall and in early spring. Parents are encouraged to attend the conference at the time scheduled by the teacher. The director is available to attend any conference as requested by parent or teacher. Teachers observe and document developmental milestones and will meet with parents to discuss a child's progress, share any concerns and plan together to meet a child's developmental needs. If further screening is felt to be necessary, we will work with parents and refer to outside consultants and resources. Parents are encouraged to make arrangements for care of children during a scheduled conference, as teachers will not conference in the presence of children older than 12 months. Parents and teachers may request conferences at any time as needed.

## **PARENT RESOURCES**

Children don't come with an instruction manual! Sometimes families will need support for their child on specific issues, or may just have general questions about parenting. Parenting resources are listed on our website. Informational fliers about support for families is posted on the Bulletin Boards, and can be found on the book shelf outside the office. The Preschool office maintains a resource library and can also help families make connections with area services.

# CHILD PROTECTION

## **CHILD ABUSE AND PREVENTION**

All WUMP staff receive at least one hour of training annually on prevention, recognition, and reporting of child abuse and neglect. All Preschool staff are required by Texas state law to report any suspected child abuse/neglect to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) and any applicable law enforcement without prior consultation with any family member involved.

Parent awareness of signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect, including warning signs that a child might be a victim as well as prevention techniques is vital to the health of our community. Such information is available through the Preschool office, on the school's website, the HHS website, or the Center for Child Protection.

Parents should call the Texas Child Abuse Hotline if they witness child abuse and/or neglect. Your report will remain confidential. You cannot be held responsible for reporting an instance that you believe is abuse, but it's possible to be charged if you witness abuse and/or neglect but don't report it to the authorities.

Parents should be aware of the following contact information:

**Local Child Care Regulation** 512-369-7192  
**Licensing Web Site** [www.hhs.texas.gov](http://www.hhs.texas.gov)  
**Texas Child Abuse Hotline** 800-252-5400

Prevention efforts help parents develop their parenting skills, understand the benefits of positive discipline techniques, and understand and meet their child's emotional, physical, and developmental needs. Prevention programs can help parents identify other needs they may have and offer assistance in getting additional support.

Here are some community resources offering parenting classes and other support to families:

Center for Child Protection, 512-472-1164, [www.centerforchildprotection.org](http://www.centerforchildprotection.org)

Austin Child Guidance Center, 512-451-2242, [www.austinchildguidance.org](http://www.austinchildguidance.org)

For Kids' Sake, 512-476-9490, [www.for-kids-sake.com](http://www.for-kids-sake.com)

Online parenting classes are available at Texas A&M Extension Service, [www.extensiononline.tamu.edu/courses/child\\_care.php](http://www.extensiononline.tamu.edu/courses/child_care.php)

# NUTRITION

## **NUTRITION**

Westlake United Methodist Preschool is committed to good nutrition and healthy habits as an integral part of the Preschool experience. Children not only benefit physically, but also learn the principles of good nutrition.

**Breastfeeding** education and support resources will be provided upon request. Helpful websites are American Academy of Pediatrics at [www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org), the Central Texas Breastfeeding Coalition at [www.keepaustinbreastfeeding.org](http://www.keepaustinbreastfeeding.org), and La Leche League at [www.llli.org](http://www.llli.org). Private and comfortable spaces for breastfeeding are located in the Infant Classroom, in nearby rooms, and in the Sanctuary. Parents have the right to breastfeed or provide breast milk for their child while in our care.

## **LUNCHES, SNACKS AND WATER**

***The Preschool is not responsible for nutritional value or for meeting the child's daily food needs. However, healthy meals are strongly encouraged. We want all children to grow up healthy!*** We would like to expose the children to a variety of foods that are nutritious, flavorful, and appealing to the senses. We encourage families to bring less processed foods, and more foods that are made from whole grains. We recommend that families consult the USDA's ***Dietary Guidelines for Americans*** for healthy eating choices, found here: <https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/>

All children will bring their own snacks and lunches from home. Whole foods rather than processed foods are encouraged. Send such foods as sandwiches, cheese, fruits, vegetables, pasta and leftovers. ***Lunches should include a healthy balance of fruit, vegetables, grain, and protein source and are in keeping with our snack food policy of low sugar and preservatives, 100% whole fruit juice, milk, or water. Lunches must be simple and easy for children to serve and eat by themselves.*** We prefer lunch boxes with wide mouth, flip-top lid thermos or individual 100% juice boxes for children 2-5 years old, and an easily opened covered divided plate container for lunches for infants and toddlers. Most classrooms don't have access to a refrigerator, but small ice packs work very well in lunchboxes. All liquids and foods hotter than 110 degrees F will be kept out of reach of children.

Safe drinking water will always be available to children throughout the day, including at snack, lunch, and after active play. Please bring a water bottle labeled with your child's name so that teachers can refill it during the day. We are committed to serving water in a sanitary manner. If our water supply is affected by boil-water notices, or other disruptions to our water service, we will ask parents to bring additional supplies of water for their child

## **FOOD ALLERGIES**

Parents must provide information about food allergies or sensitivities that their child may have to school staff, and we must be given an Allergy Action Plan signed by a physician. In cases of severe allergy we may have to restrict what children in a specific classroom can bring for lunch and for snack. The teachers are all trained annually on food allergies and how to act in the case of an allergic reaction. We will inform all families in the child's class of the food allergy and precautions that we have put in place to ensure children's protection. We reserve the right to not serve a food item if we suspect that it may contain a restricted ingredient. Teachers may have to ask you about a food's contents before they are able to serve it in the classroom. Dairy products, nuts, both peanuts and tree nuts, eggs, wheat, shellfish, and soy are foods that may

cause allergic reactions in children. Visit the websites [www.foodallergy.org](http://www.foodallergy.org) or [www.acaai.org](http://www.acaai.org) for more information on food allergies.

Your child's teacher may provide suggestions for foods that are appropriate for the class. If there are children in the class with food allergies food provided must not contain any ingredients that could trigger the allergy. **Please DO NOT send sodas, candy, chewing gum, chips, fruit punch, Kool-Aid, sports drinks, or other high sugar, non-nutritious foods to school. Also, please make sure that foods are not a choking hazard. For that reason we cannot serve nuts, popcorn, or hard pretzels as snack to children younger than 4 Years Old.**

Food brought from home to be shared among children must be either whole fruits or vegetables or **commercially prepared packaged food in a factory-sealed container, or prepped in a kitchen that is inspected by the health department.**

### SNACK/LUNCH FOOD SUGGESTIONS

#### Websites for healthy lunch ideas:

[www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org)

[www.nutrition.gov/topics/nutrition-age/children](http://www.nutrition.gov/topics/nutrition-age/children)

[www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org) Nutrition for kids

Lunches from home should contain at least one item from each of the following food groups:

#### PROTEIN SOURCES

Cheese sticks or cubes	Nuts/Peanut butter
Lunchmeat rolls	Yogurt/Dairy
Leftover chicken/beef/pork	Eggs (hardboiled)

#### FRESH FRUIT

Oranges	Bananas	Apples
Melon	Peaches	Pears
Pineapple	Berries	Seedless grapes (cut lengthwise)
Dried fruit	Grapefruit sections	Kiwi

#### COOKED OR RAW, CUT-UP VEGETABLES

Carrots	Celery	Peas
Zucchini	Cucumber	Broccoli pieces
Cauliflower	Green beans	Corn
Cherry tomatoes	Sweet potato	

#### VARIETY

Granola	Crackers	Popcorn (Pre-K Only)
Fruit popsicles	Pudding cups	Dried fruit or vegetables
Goldfish	Dry cereal	