



PARENTS DAY OUT

First United Methodist Church | Morristown

PARENT HANDBOOK

2025-2026

WELCOME!

The Parent's Day Out (PDO) is a ministry of First United Methodist Church, Morristown. Programming is based upon the theory that play is an effective method of learning. Children will explore and socialize through activities such as storytelling, crafts, music and free play.

OUR MISSION: The Parents Day Out program of FUMC strives to positively impact the community by providing children with excellent care in a safe, secure, and loving Christian environment.

OUR GOALS:

- Build relationships with new adults and other children while away from home.
- Develop a feeling of independence and self-worth.
- Develop a love for learning.
- Work on cognitive, social, emotional, fine motor, gross motor, speech, and language skills.
- Learning to share and take care of others.
- Developing the ability to express their emotions in constructive ways.

DAYS & HOURS OF OPERATION: Tuesdays & Thursdays from 9:00am - 2:00pm

Parents will be given a class calendar on the first day of classes. PDO will notify parents in advance of any changes to the calendar.

FEES & PAYMENTS

Payments: Families can connect and pay tuition online directly from the **Brightwheel app** using bank account transfers (also known as ACH or direct deposit), credit cards, or debit cards. If paying by check, make payment to FUMC and place in an envelope marked with your child's name and class. (Ex: *Daniel Smith-2s*). Place checks in your child's folder on or before the 5th of each month. Please see the director or assistant if you are paying in cash. Tuition is due regardless of illness or days out for other reasons.

Admission: \$450

First and last month's tuition is due by the first day of classes.

Enrollment Fee: \$25 per family (yearly)

This non-refundable fee is due when you register - to reserve a place in class from initial enrollment day until your child's first day of school. We will accept any child regardless of race, color, religion, or nationality. We do not discriminate in our administration of policies.

Activity Fee: \$25 per child (yearly)

This fee helps cover extra activity expenses we have throughout the year. These activities are enjoyed by all students. Activities may include: *Harvest Party, Thanksgiving Feast, Pizza Days, Crafts, All About Me booklets, Christmas Party, Ice Cream Party, Open House, Valentine Party, and more!*

Monthly Tuition: \$225 (each additional sibling \$210)

The monthly tuition payments began after the first month of class. Payments are due by the 5th of each month. Payment is considered late after the 5th and a \$25.00 late fee is assessed. Delinquent accounts can result in dismissal from the program.

Sibling Discount: We offer a \$15.00 per child discount if you have two or more children enrolled in the program.

Withdrawal from Program: If you must withdraw early, you will be refunded May's tuition, provided you give us two weeks' notice. May's tuition can be applied to the last month your child attends.

Non-Refundable: Tuition is non-refundable. A \$25.00 late fee will be assessed for any payment that is not made by 5:00 p.m. on the 5th of each month. Credit is not given for a child’s absence. This includes childhood illnesses, family vacations, temporary exclusion, and holidays. No prorating will be granted for late admission or early withdrawal.

COMMUNICATION

Brightwheel: We use a childcare management app called Brightwheel. This is a free app that parents/guardians will download to your phone once you have been enrolled into the program. We will use this app for check-in/out, daily communication and tuition payments. **This is the main communication tool PDO uses to get important information to you.** Please be sure to turn your notifications ON for this app.

Newsletter: Look for a monthly newsletter from your child’s teacher and/or the director in your child’s folder. Please read it thoroughly to note upcoming events or any schedule changes. We will also post information on the Brightwheel app.

Parent/Teacher Conferences: We offer at least one conference each year for 4- and 5-year-olds. Evaluation forms are sent home bi-annually for twos and above. Teachers are happy to call you after school or schedule a conference for any occurrence during school. The teacher will be focused on the children and is instructed not to discuss the children during drop-off and pick-up. It is okay to discuss general questions, etc., but no in-depth discussions should occur at the door.

Emergency Contact Information

If your personal or emergency contact information changes during the year, please update your child’s teacher or the PDO Director as soon as possible.

CLOSINGS & DELAYS

We will observe all holidays, weather closings and delays of the Hamblen County School system. If public schools are closed or delayed due to snow or other inclement weather, PDO will be closed/delayed for that day, as well. There may be a few exceptions, but they will always be given to you in writing, or you will receive a phone call, text, or email from your child’s teacher or the program director.

<u>Hamblen County</u>		<u>Parents Day Out</u>
Closed	=	Closed
1-hour delay	=	Open at 10am
2-hour delay	=	Open at 11am

Early Dismissal: We will dismiss 1 hour prior to an announced public school dismissal. In this case, you will receive communication from your child’s teacher.

Illness Closings: If the program closes due to a contagious illness, your child’s teacher will notify you as soon as possible. If Hamblen County schools close for any illnesses, we will only close if we need to.

Sick / Absent / Vacation: We pay our teachers whether your child attends or not. Therefore, we do not allocate sick, absence or vacation days for your child. Full tuition payment is expected each month to keep your child’s spot in the program.

CLASSES

We believe in high-quality early education for every child. Our teachers use Experience Curriculum in the classroom. This curriculum is research and evidence-based, aligned with early learning standards in all 50 states. Students will also participate in gym time, music, outdoor play and a variety of special events throughout the year.

Classrooms: Classes are arranged to accommodate children from 4 months old to Pre-Kindergarten. The number of children per class depends on the age of the children in the classroom. **Two teachers will permanently be assigned to each class.** Occasional exceptions are at the Director's discretion. The following is the grouping for our classrooms:

Classes	Ratio	Max Class Size	Teachers
Babies (4-18 months)	1:3	6	2
Toddlers (18-24 months)	1:4	8	2
Two Year Olds	1:5	10	2
Three Year Olds	1:6	12	2
Pre-K (4-5years old)	1:8	16	2

Age on or before August 15, 2025

Potty Training: This is a big step in the life of a child and parent. We want to partner with you to make this transition as smooth as possible. We will do all we can to help your child develop independence and self-confidence in the bathroom, but we need your help, as well. Listed below are a few requests we have from each parent with a potty-training child:

- Please work with your child at home for at least two weeks before sending them to school in "big kid" pants.
- Please put your child in a side released pull-up when you begin to potty train.
- Please send a full set of clothes to leave at school. This includes socks and shoes.
- If your child has repeated accidents, you may be asked to place them back in pull-ups for school. We do not desire to do this, but it may be necessary for a while. Teachers are allowed to put a pull-up on your child after 2 accidents in one day.
- Our preschool class (4 & 5 year olds) should be fully potty trained.

Personal Toys: We strongly discourage bringing personal toys to school. It is hard to share toys with other children. If your child needs a toy or item for security, we understand. We will keep it in a safe place until you return. Please leave toys such as guns, holsters, bullets, knives, ghosts, beasts, war toys, and such at home. These toys do not do well in a large group setting, as they tend to invite aggressive behavior.

Appropriate Dress: We encourage you to dress your child in washable play clothes. We strive to play outside anytime the weather is above 45 degrees and not raining. Layers are good since it is easier to take off something rather than put on something you do not have. Rubber soled shoes are required as we play in the gym on cold or rainy days. Remove all drawstrings from jackets for safety reasons.

Extra Clothing: Accidents happen! All children must have a seasonally appropriate change of clothes (including underwear, socks and shoes) sent in a gallon sized Ziploc bag, labeled with your child's name - to be kept at school. We will send home a note to change these out as the seasons change. **LABEL ALL ITEMS THAT COME TO SCHOOL.**

Naptime: All children will have a nap time based on their classroom schedule. If most of the children in the classroom do not nap, this will be used as a quiet time in that particular class. PDO has a limited number of nap mats we can provide, or parents may provide one. Parents will provide a fitted crib sheet to place over the mat. Sheets will be sent home to be washed monthly. You may also send a blanket for your child.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

Student Arrival: Teachers will begin receiving children at **8:50am** each day. You may drive through and drop off at the designated awning or park and bring them inside to the hallway. The classroom doors will open at 9:15am to welcome children.

Student Dismissal : Our program **ends at 2:00pm**. Our teachers will escort each child directly to your car. Please make sure your child's security car tag is visible during dismissal. To help dismissal run smoothly and avoid any potentially dangerous situations, we ask that you please stay in your car.

Check-In & Check-Out: Parents will use your child's 4-digit code provided by Brightwheel to check your child in and out each day. In the event of an emergency, this system will help us see how many students are in the building at any given time. Checking out when you pick up your child gives us a record of the time your child left the building and who picked up your child for our state required records.

Pickup Authorization: We will not allow your child to leave with anyone who is not listed on your approved pick-up list. A photo ID will be required to verify the identity of the person picking up your child. In the case of an emergency, the director can get verbal consent from the parent.

Parental Supervision: Please plan to have your children remain with you when entering and exiting the building. The church office is at the entrance to our classroom area and will host a variety of visitors throughout the day. Therefore, we ask that children be kept with you or an authorized adult at all times.

Late Pick-Up: Our program ends at 2:00pm. Children must be picked up no later than 2:15pm. Most of our staff have school-aged children that need to be picked up from school as well. Parents will be charged **\$5.00 per every 5 minutes late after 2:15pm**. This fee will be added to your next month's tuition.

Termination from Program: We strive to work with each child to succeed in the classroom. Examples that will necessitate removal of a child from the program include (but are not limited to):

- Excessive disruptive behavior where the safety of others is at risk (ex. habitual biting, hitting, etc).
- A child requiring constant one-on-one attention, taking attention from the other children in the teacher's care.
- Tuition is over a month past due.
- Habitually late pick-ups from school.

HEALTH & ILLNESS

Immunization Forms: All immunization records must be on file in the PDO office before a child may attend school. A doctor must sign the records. All records should be on the immunization form provided by your physician or the health department. These can be e-mailed to us from your doctor's office at: pdo@fumcmorristown.org

NOTE: Speak with the director if you are following a delayed immunization schedule.

Illness: For your child to progress he/she needs to attend regularly. However, there will be times when your child will need alternate care. Please keep your child home if they are experiencing any of these conditions:

- Fever, listlessness, sore throat, upset stomach, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, bad cough, pink eye, flu, COVID, green or yellow discharge from the nose, or any infectious disease.
- If your child has a runny nose due to allergies, we must have a doctor's note stating that condition and that your child is not contagious.
- If you have taken your child to the doctor and they are prescribed antibiotics, they must take them for a full 24 hours before returning. All children must be **fever-free for 24 hours** before returning to school.

Medication

We will not give your child any medication while in our care unless it is an emergency. Some examples include asthma, or seizure meds. We must have written permission and directions from the doctor to administer this medication. Medication must also be in the original bottle. Antibiotics, antihistamines, cough medicines, fever or pain reducers cannot be given out by us at any time for any reason.

DISCIPLINE

We aim to provide consistent positive reinforcement, encouragement, and praise to manage classroom behavior. Disruptive classroom situations, such as biting, kicking, etc., are unacceptable.

- Redirecting a child is the first method used in the classroom. Teachers will explain to the child why this behavior is inappropriate.
- If the child does not respond positively to redirection, they will have an age-appropriate time out (1 minute per year) in a quiet area.
- After several instances of misbehavior, a visit with the director is required. Parents will be notified if persistent, negative behavior continues.

Biting Policy

While children bite for many reasons (and it is normal for young children), continual biting is not allowed in the program. If a child bites someone three or more times in one month, the parent will be asked to attend school with their child, or the child will be asked to take a break for two weeks. If the child continues to bite, the child will be asked to sit out for one month. The last step is removal from the program at the director's discretion.

FOOD

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy, please let the teacher know immediately so we can make adjustments. Some classrooms may have to be designated as "Nut Free".

Lunches

Parents are responsible for sending a water bottle and sack lunch for their child each day. Clearly label all cups and containers with first and last names. Please remember that "less is best"! Finger foods are great. When sending fruits and vegetables, please have these cut and manageable for your child to eat. We are unable to heat lunches due to time restrictions. If needed, please heat your foods at home and send in a thermos.

Snack

DO NOT SEND

- carbonated beverages, hard candy, or gum
- red drinks or glass containers (due to stain and breakage problems)
- fast-food meals (this makes for a room full of unhappy children, smelling a treat that is not for them)

Birthdays

If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday at school, please notify your child's teacher in advance. Any food for the party must be store-bought. If you are having a party somewhere else, please mail your invitations unless you plan to invite the whole class. Parties are to be held with or after lunch.

CHILD SAFETY

Church Building

No child will ever be left unattended in the church building or on the children's playground during programming, classes, or childcare. PDO Staff are prohibited from being alone with an individual child in any room, building or isolated area of the playground.

Playground

Volunteers and program staff are to circulate, watching children during play periods, giving particular attention to isolated areas which are not easily seen from all viewpoints.

Suspected Abuse & Reporting

Based on our belief that all persons are of sacred worth, we declare that it is the right of individuals of all ages to be free of victimization. It is the responsibility of those who witness victimization to stop it and/or to speak to a trusted adult or pastor.

Everyone in Tennessee is a mandated reporter under state law. Any person with reasonable cause to believe a child is being abused or neglected must, under the law, immediately report to the Tennessee Department of Children's Services or to local law enforcement. The reporter can remain anonymous.

Any verbal or physical abuse, by parents or children, directed toward staff will not be tolerated.

LICENSING

Tennessee Code Annotated (TCA 71-3-527a) states that: *"Parents Day Out" or similar programs carried on by churches or church organizations which provide custodial care and services for children of less than school age for not more than two (2) days in each calendar week and for not more than six (6) hours each day, and the conducting of any such program shall not be construed to constitute the operation of a child care center.*

Parents Day Out at First United Methodist Church is **not licensed** and is **not required to be licensed** by the state as a childcare agency.



2025-26 CALENDAR

Aug 5	Open House 6pm
Aug 7	First Day
Oct 7 & 9	FALL BREAK (NO SCHOOL)
Oct 30	Halloween Party (1:00pm)
Nov 20	Thanksgiving Feast (1:00pm Classrooms)
Nov 25-27	THANKSGIVING BREAK (NO SCHOOL)
Dec 16	Christmas Program (1:00pm Sanctuary)
Dec 18	Christmas Pajama Party (1:00pm Classrooms)
Dec 22-Jan 5	WINTER BREAK (NO SCHOOL)
Jan 6	Classes Resume
Feb 12	Valentine's Day Parties (1:00pm Classrooms)
Mar 24 & 26	SPRING BREAK (NO SCHOOL)
May 5	CITY ELECTION (NO SCHOOL)
May 14	Spring Program Pre-K Graduation (1:00pm Sanctuary)
May 19	LAST DAY! Water Play (12:00pm Playground)

NOTE: We follow Hamblen County School calendar and school closings.