



PARENT HANDBOOK

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Epworth Beliefs, Policies and Philosophy

Purpose

Epworth Preschool is a community of children, teachers and parents where children's cognitive, emotional, social, and physical growth is fostered in developmentally appropriate ways. We believe that preschool children learn best through play and when they are fully and actively engaged in open-ended exploration.

A Statement of Epworth Preschool's Philosophy

Epworth Preschool's goal is to foster the cognitive, emotional, and social development of the child in a developmentally appropriate way. To achieve this goal, we provide a warm, accepting, and stimulating environment. Learning situations are set up so as to enable the child to experience mastery and a sense of competency and good self-esteem. There are opportunities for children to express themselves verbally, musically, artistically, emotionally, and physically. Children are encouraged to explore, think, and create. Play is valued as children's real "work," and teachers provide opportunities to enhance and extend quality play.

Our classrooms are organized in centers, which are set up with activities to realize these goals. Centers found in most rooms include Blocks, Manipulatives, Art, Dramatic Play, Books/Language, Sensory Table and Science/Discovery. We also have a weekly music program for ages three to five and many of our classrooms conduct frequent cooking experiences. Classroom curriculum is structured around the use of themes (holidays, dinosaurs, seasons, the rain forest, and community helpers are some of our favorites) to foster a sense of home, family, school, and our broader world. Children ages three through five take field trips, which allows them to develop an awareness of other environments. Daily circle or group times allow the opportunity for self-expression and sharing with others. Socializing, specifically sharing and caring, is a major emphasis in all aspects of our program.

Our classrooms are each self-contained and our low teacher-student ratios provide the opportunity for teachers and the children develop a warm, strong relationship. Our day is structured with a balance of teacher- and child-initiated

activities. This balance allows children to gain a sense of security from the regular routines in their daily schedule while exploring their environment through free-choice activities.

As part of our philosophy of respect for the dignity and worth of each individual child, family member, and colleague, we at Epworth have long observed the practice of using first names for teachers as well as children. At Epworth, children are respected as whole human beings in their own right and seen as unique, incomparable individuals developing along a continuum that really never ends rather than seen as incomplete pre-adults. Childhood is not seen as merely preparation for the “real world” of mature adulthood, nor is it merely a series of developmental stages that are only as good as the one that follows. At Epworth, teachers and children work as partners in the learning process and share decision-making, thereby supporting children’s autonomy and sense of competency. We have a basic commitment to helping children and adults achieve their full potential through relationships that are based on trust, respect, and positive regard for one another.

Our objectives are:

1. To provide a warm, respectful, caring and stimulating environment that enables each child to experience mastery, a sense of competency and good self-esteem.
2. To provide opportunities for self-expression verbally, musically, artistically and emotionally.
3. To develop a sense of respect for others and self and to foster a sense of trust and respect between child and teacher.
4. To expose children to numbers through open-ended exploration of spatial reasoning, puzzles, blocks, measurement, shape and form, classification and sorting.
5. To increase language skills and vocabulary by providing a stimulating, active and diverse linguistic environment through dramatic play, story time, puppetry, peer interactions, social experiences, field trips, and other enriching activities.

6. To provide opportunities for problem solving and experimentation through the use of scientific methods of questioning and predicting.
7. To provide frequent exposure to various forms of music, musical instruments and rhythms.
8. To provide a variety of experiences in art where process, not product, is the main goal, allowing for creative, original and independent exploration by each child.
9. To provide a variety of health, safety and nutrition experiences.
10. To convey these objectives to the parents of our children.

Program

Our objectives are achieved by a daily plan that is balanced across cognitive, social/emotional and fine and gross motor skills. We foster the development of gross motor skills daily through movement activities, rodeo riding days and use of our playground equipment. All classes have playground time for at least 30 minutes per day. Fine motor skills are fostered through use of scissors, glue, markers, crayons, pencils, puzzles, beading, play dough and other manipulative materials.

We are aware of the importance of being good role models. Children and teachers are treated with respect and sensitivity. Positive behavior is praised and when needed, discipline is provided with a firm but gentle voice. Children learn to play and work with others, share, take turns and adapt to a group environment. We teach them to deal with aggressive behavior in an acceptable way and to solve conflicts verbally.

Strategies for effective and developmentally appropriate classroom management utilized in our classrooms include redirection, flexibility with the routine and the schedule, assisting children in dispute settlement, and modeling appropriate language and behavior for them. No form of physical punishment is ever employed.

We provide intellectual stimulation to 1) encourage each child to think for him or herself and 2) furnish information that challenges each child and encourages each child to draw his or her own conclusions.

Religion at Epworth Preschool

Epworth Preschool is a ministry of Epworth United Methodist Church. It is a private, non-profit organization which is organized under the jurisdiction of the church. We welcome children of any race, religious belief, national heritage or special need. Our mission is to provide an inclusive, nurturing Christian environment which strives to provide an engaging and stimulating setting to encourage creativity and initiative. We are a community where all children are celebrated and seen as unique and precious. The Preschool Board Mission Statement includes this: "Epworth Preschool believes that all children are children of God, and the expression of religious beliefs and cultural attitudes reflecting racial, national, and economic diversity is welcomed as an opportunity to enrich the personal and spiritual lives of children."

Twice a month, a short Gathering Time connects Epworth's pastors and staff with the three-year-old through five-year-old children of the preschool. Age appropriate songs, finger-plays, and stories are shared during Gathering Time to foster the children's spiritual growth. Children also will be led in singing or saying an appropriate blessing before snacks and meals.

Epworth United Methodist Church welcomes the families of its preschool students and is enthusiastic about sharing information about worship, church programs, and family/children related activities with interested parents.

Day-to-Day Operations

Arrival and Departure

**** August 2021 Update: Please review our 2021-22 Policies and Procedures for revised pick up and drop off procedures.****

- Epworth Preschool cannot legally have children under our supervision for longer than four continuous hours a day and is therefore unable to open the doors to accept children before 9am. Please do not enter the building until that time.
- All persons coming to Epworth for the preschool are asked to make all entrances and exits via the Oxford Road entrances and exits only. The Hope Valley entrance is reserved for church staff, congregation, and visitors only.
- Parents may either park and walk children into the classroom or drop them in a car line where staff is on duty to assist. When dropping children off, parents are asked to form a car line, driving in the Oxford entrance and driving out the University Drive exit (right turns only) with the children exiting the car only at the appropriate door. Car line operates between 9:00 and 9:15. Car line is single file only—never pass another car. When advancing in car line, please do not block the church driveway. If you arrive after 9:15, you will need to park and bring your child into his/her classroom. Parents who park and walk in should park in the middle parking areas of the lot and exit out using only the exit by the picnic shelter. This facilitates flow of traffic with the car line.
- Please make every effort to bring your child on time. It is very important to the success of the day!
- One and two-year-old classrooms will observe a graduated dismissal time during the first two weeks of school. It is our philosophy that very young children adjust to school best by gradually lengthening the time that they are separated from parents and other care-givers. Teachers will assess the classes' readiness and may decrease the number of shortened days.
- When picking up children, all parents are asked to come to the classrooms. When you arrive, come in and exit from Oxford Road. Please use extreme caution at all times in the parking lot, and remember to pay special attention when backing up. Please park only in designated parking spaces in the lot and not against curbs or other non-designated areas.

- Teachers have other responsibilities and duties after school and children need to be picked up on time. There is a \$5.00 late fee for any child not picked up within five minutes of their classroom dismissal time and \$1.00 per minute after that time. If you encounter unavoidable delay, call the office to alert us of your circumstances.
- If your child plans to go home with another child after school, he/she must have written permission from home. Children will not be released to anyone that is not on the pick-up list without written permission. Someone who is unfamiliar to a teacher will be asked for identification before the child is released. Please also notify the teacher when the child is staying for Lunch Bunch.
- After children are picked up in their classrooms at the end of their school day, they should not be in the building without adult supervision. Teachers are cleaning up, planning for the next day, and/or having conferences, and cannot be responsible for unsupervised children at the water fountains or in the bathrooms.
- Other parking lot guidelines: Bring all children into the building with you, even if they are not enrolled in our program. Do not leave any child in a car unattended by an adult for any reason or for any amount of time. DRIVE VERY SLOWLY! Always hold your child's hand in the parking lot— Remember preschool children are impulsive by nature. Do not gather to talk to other parents in the parking lot while allowing children to play. There are more suitable areas on our campus. Finally, it is best to lock your car doors when you come into the building.
- “Kiss and Go” should be the rule! One of the most important goals of preschool is the growth of independence in all areas of development. Issues of separation are some of the hardest for parents to deal with, but learning to separate comfortably from parents is so crucial to your child's learning and growth! When children are delivered to their classroom in the morning, parents should offer a reassuring good-bye and leave. When parents linger, a number of problems can develop: Most of all, it can make it harder for children to acquire the skills necessary to navigate a smooth separation and transition. Children can be confused by mixed messages and unclear limits, and in some measure the parent's continued presence conveys the idea that there is something to worry about. Your child's

teacher will work with you to develop strategies to ease any on-going separation anxiety.

Parent/School Communication

Epworth Preschool strives to establish good, consistent communication with parents, regarding it as a necessity for creating a partnership to ensure student success. Many different methods are employed to this end.

Classroom teachers will clip day-to-day notices or messages to your child's tote bag, so it is important to check your child's tote bag each day. We request that communications to your child's teacher be handled in the same manner by clipping a note to the bag, or by sending an email or text message. Teachers will also employ various strategies to keep you informed of class activities: A monthly newsletter, class web page, white board and bulletin boards outside the classroom, group emails to parents, etc. Do not hesitate to call or email a teacher if you ever have any questions, however during school hours our teachers are busy caring for and teaching the children in their classrooms. We ask that you schedule an appointment to have a meeting or phone conversation with the teacher for anything more than passing brief information or asking a quick question.

In addition to these regular postings, the preschool observes several special opportunities to check in with parents. Before school starts, your child's teacher will either call or email you to introduce herself and her teaching partner(s) to you and to give you information you need about school starting. Additionally, the Preschool hosts a Parent Orientation Night the week prior to the start of the school year. During this time, there is a school-wide session to review general policies and procedures, as well as a time for parents and teachers to gather in the classrooms for more specific information. Later in the fall, starting in mid-October, your child's teacher will call you to discuss how the child is adjusting thus far to the classroom setting and to receive any feedback. More formal parent-teacher conferences will be held in late January when school will be closed and babysitting will be available. You may also request a conference at any other time you see a need.

The Preschool Office will also regularly communicate through email. "This Week at Epworth Preschool" will be sent periodically to inform you of school-wide

activities and news. Emergency notices, reminders, and announcements will also be sent by email, so it is critical that the office has an accurate, current email address for you. If your address changes, or if you are not routinely receiving emails from the office, please notify the director or assistant director.

Lunch Bunch

If signed up by 9:30 in the morning and until our capacity of 25 children is reached, children enrolled in 9am to 12pm classes may stay until 1pm five days a week. This time is called Lunch Bunch, and children will be grouped with those from other classrooms within the preschool. Children will need to bring a lunch in a labeled lunch box when staying for Lunch Bunch. Students in two-year-old classes will be able to start staying for lunch after the conclusion of their introductory abbreviated schedule and with the approval of their classroom teacher. Lunch Bunch for all other children will begin on the Monday of the first full week of school. Students who stay for Lunch Bunch need to be fully potty trained. Students in the one-year-old class are not eligible for Lunch Bunch.

You may sign up for Lunch Bunch by putting your child's name on the sign-up sheet in the Preschool Office or via our website. We do have a maximum capacity of 25, and there are no guarantees, but you can always call any morning to see if there are any spots if something comes up.

The cost for Lunch Bunch is \$8/day. Children who attend lunch bunch every day they attend school can sign up for a flat fee – see the office about this option. We encourage you to pay by check on a weekly or monthly basis. Please write your child's name and indicate "LB" on the memo line of your check to ensure proper crediting.

After children eat lunch, there is free play outside, weather permitting. If it is raining, they will be playing, reading, watching a movie, etc. inside in the designated Lunch Bunch room. A late fee will be charged if your child is not picked up by 1:05. Again, if something unavoidable or unforeseen occurs, alert the school as soon as possible. Keep in mind that we are not supposed to care for children more than four hours a day!

Health Policies

- All children are required to have a current (within the last 12 months) medical examination prior to the beginning of school. An Immunization Record attesting that up-to-date immunizations as required by North Carolina law have been administered is also required. Parents may bring forms provided by their physician's office or obtain forms from the Preschool Office. For more information on immunization requirements, please visit https://www.immunize.nc.gov/schools/ccf_requirements.htm.
- Parents are asked to notify the teacher of exposure to contagious diseases, head lice, signs of cold, fatigue, or changes in the family schedule. If the child has a fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or pink eye, parents must keep the child home until the child is symptom free for 24 hours. In the case of a communicable infection that requires antibiotics (strep throat, etc.), the child should be on medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school.
- Do not bring your child to school if he or she does not feel well enough to participate in the full program of the school. We are not staffed or equipped to care for sick children and cannot make special arrangements to keep children in from outdoors.
- In the event that a child becomes ill at school or there is another emergency, the following procedures will be followed: 1. We will attempt to contact parents by phone. If parents cannot be reached, the emergency contacts will be called in the order listed on the confidential enrollment forms. 2. In the event of extreme emergency, the Director will call 911 and contact parents the pediatrician listed on the confidential form.

Dress Code

Daily activities include active and sometimes messy play, and we want our children to feel comfortable enough to enjoy themselves without worrying about messing up their clothes.

- We ask that children wear comfortable play clothes and sneakers or other closed-toe shoes. Flip-flops are dangerous for active outdoor play and climbing on playground equipment and are not allowed.
- Easy on, "do it myself" clothing choices are always best for school.

- Please send an entire extra change of seasonally appropriate clothing to be accessible to staff throughout the year, so the child can change if needed.
- Label all belongings with your child's name so that they will not get lost or misplaced.

Inclement Weather Policy

Epworth Preschool may close from time to time due to weather and road conditions. In general, if Durham Public Schools are closed or delayed, the Preschool will close or delay as well. The school system has resources that we do not have in making decisions about school closings and delays, so that is our general guide. There are times when DPS will be closed due to road conditions in another part of the county or due to bus issues. In these instances, Epworth may make the determination that we can open.

Look for emails from the director informing you of the decisions about closures and delays. We always advise parents to heed their own sense of caution and road conditions in their own neighborhood before driving children to school.

Food and Nutrition

NO PEANUTS OR TREE NUTS: Due to the increasing prevalence and severity of peanut and tree nut allergies among our students, we ask parents to observe a no peanut or tree nut policy for snacks and lunches. This means no peanut, almond, or cashew butter or spreads like Nutella that include peanut or hazelnut butter in addition to no actual nuts or peanuts. We also ask that granola bars, trail mixes, or special treats not include nuts—e.g., Reese's cups, Peanut M&Ms, or other such candies or cookies. Sunflower seeds and butters are good substitutes for peanut butter and peanuts.

Snacks at Epworth Preschool are provided by parents daily for their individual children. Classes that dismiss at 1:00 p.m. may opt not to serve snack since lunch is eaten during the four-hour period that the children are at school. Your child's teacher will provide information for the classroom's snack policy.

We value good nutrition in our school, and we encourage healthy snacks and lunches. Here are some tips as you plan and pack your child's snacks and lunches:

- Send a nutritious sandwich: Sandwiches can be the source of whole grains and protein, two of the major food groups. Try to avoid meats that contain heavy loads of salt and nitrites like bologna and salami. Use whole grain bread, tortillas, and wraps as much as possible.
- Send a calcium-rich food from the dairy group: milk, cheese, yogurt, and cottage cheese. Be aware that flavored, sweetened yogurts and milks can carry a major sugar load.
- Send fresh fruits and vegetables: Include easy-to-eat foods such as slices of apples, oranges, or pears and carrot and celery sticks. Consider other easily consumed fruits and vegetables: cucumber slices, cherry tomatoes, clementines, bananas, strawberries, blueberries, and watermelon, cantaloupe, or honeydew chunks.
- Beware of fruit substitutes such as fruit snacks or roll-ups and heavily sugared canned fruits which cannot replace the nutritional value of fresh fruit.
- Avoid juice. Kids tend to fill up on juice and then don't fill up on the other foods they need. Juice, even 100% juice, is not a substitute for fresh fruit and vegetables. Try this rule: Milk at meals and water at other times of the day.
- Consider limiting or even eliminating foods which are artificially colored and/or contain high-fructose corn syrup.

Please note: During lunchtime at Epworth, teachers will support and coach healthy eating. We will encourage your child to eat the "grow" foods first, but we will not function as the food police. That is, we will not regulate the order in which the food in your child's lunch box is eaten. In general, we discourage sending candy and sugary drinks and treats, but we trust you to send in nutritious foods that your child will eat. We thank you for your good judgment and assistance in this important matter.

Snack Suggestions

The following represents a list of possible snacks, but please don't feel confined to these items. We do emphasize nutritious snacks, however, and would appreciate

your cooperation in sending healthy as well as tasty snacks. Our policy, in accordance with our former NAEYC accreditation standards, is to offer choices from two different food groups at each snack. This will usually be a combination of grain, (crackers, breads, cereals), fruits and vegetables, or dairy. We also welcome snacks that occasionally give the children a taste of foods of different cultures (e.g., tortillas, matzos, or pitas, rather than more conventional breads or crackers). From time to time, we may request specific snack items that tie into our curriculum or to a cooking project. Please be sure to work with your teachers when supplying snacks for classes in which there are allergies. This may include requests for specific brands which may be known to be allergen-free. You should also work with your teachers when supplying foods for special occasions like birthdays or holidays.

- Raw veggies and dip (small bottle of ranch dressing or other such) and crackers
- Raw fruit and dip (e.g., vanilla yogurt with cinnamon) (grapes should be seedless and cut in half)
- Popcorn (if age appropriate) and cheese cubes
- Trail mix (raisins, Cheerios, pretzels, other dried fruit, sunflower seeds, etc.—no nuts!)
- Sunflower seed butter and crackers
- Cheese and crackers
- Cheese biscuits
- Muffins or quick breads made with fruit or vegetable—blueberry, banana, pumpkin, apple, carrot, zucchini, etc.
- Bread sticks with soft cheese dip
- Regular or frozen yogurt with fruit or granola, graham sprinkles, etc.
- English muffin or biscuit pizzas
- Cream cheese or sunflower seed butter spread on apples, celery, rice cakes, ½ bagel
- Soup and crackers
- Cereal and milk
- Cheese toast
- Peach or strawberry shortcake made with biscuits
- Instant pudding and vanilla wafers or fruit
- Apple sauce and graham crackers
- Pancakes or waffles with applesauce or other fruit

- Macaroni and cheese
- Mini-pitas stuffed with choice of shredded veggies and cheese
- Cereal bars and fruit
- Frozen half bananas or other fruit “popsicles” rolled in nut-free granola
- Orange “smiles” and teddy grahams

Playground Use

We are very proud of our wonderful playground and enjoy sharing it with our children and their families. All classes will have at least 30 minutes on the playground as part of their regular, daily schedule. All children will go outside every preschool day unless it is pouring rain or there is other inclement weather to necessitate staying indoors. Most classes use the picnic shelter for outside time even when it is raining, so please always dress your child appropriately for outdoor play. It is never too cold to go outside for at least a little while! Please also label jackets, hats, and mittens so that teachers can help your children keep up with their outerwear.

Epworth children and their parents are welcome to use the playground before and after preschool hours (9AM until 1PM). Parents and children who are waiting to use the playground at 1 PM should stay away from the gate and stairs until all the lunch bunch children and teachers are off the playground. We ask that parents observe the same rules on the playground that teachers use during the school day:

- Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times.
- Climb only on appropriate play structures (not the gazebo, fences, etc.)
- Slide feet first, on bottoms, down slides. Do not climb up slides.
- No throwing sand or mulch or carrying it up onto structures.
- Do not carry things on equipment when climbing or swinging—shovels, balls, trucks, etc.
- Please play with sand in the sand area and do not dump it around the playground to mix with the safety layer of mulch.

- No pets are allowed on the playground at any time.
- Food should be kept to a minimum and is restricted to the bench area and gazebo. Please clean up any spilled food and trash.
- Please throw any trash in trash cans. No glass is allowed on the playground.
- Do not walk, sit or otherwise play on the concrete retaining wall.
- The Epworth Critter Garden is for looking only—not playing. These critters are folk art sculptures graciously donated by local folk artist, Clyde Jones. Do not climb or sit on the critters or play in the Garden.

Rodeo

During this favorite time for children, we bring out the big wheels, little wheels, tricycles, scooters, and various other appropriate riding toys for the children to use in the picnic shelter. This is a great way to develop their large motor skills and exert some extra energy.

To ensure their safety while participating in Rodeo, children are required to bring helmets to wear. This requirement is in accordance with recommendations from the American Society of Pediatrics. Children should bring helmets on their assigned Rodeo days and take them home at the end of the day unless another storage option has been offered by the classroom teachers. Parents should properly fit the helmets and adjust them periodically for growth.

Potty Training and Diapering

Epworth Preschool accepts young children who are not yet potty-trained. We do not believe that it is developmentally appropriate to expect all children under the age of three to be potty-trained. We do believe, however, that it is developmentally appropriate that three-year-old children should be working toward independence in this critical self-help area, even if they are not quite there yet. Therefore, we have established the following guidelines:

- Diapering occurs at regular times and as needed in our one year old and two year old classes. Diapering is handled with standard sanitary protocols.

- As children start the process of potty-training, teachers will work with parents to make sure everyone is on the same page.
- Diapering is not a routine part of the three-year-old classrooms. It is our expectation that children in our three-year-old classes are potty-trained or are in the process of being trained.
- In our experience, we have found the most important aspect of training is consistency. We discourage the use of “pull-ups” (which are a form of diaper) because their use sends the child a mixed message.
- Parents are encouraged to talk with their child’s teacher or the director if they have questions or concerns. In addition, information on various techniques and strategies are available through the Preschool Office.

“Accidents” are a normal part of the preschool world, and they will be handled with tact and diplomacy. We view such events as part of the learning process! Please make sure your child always has a seasonally appropriate complete change of clothing on hand at school for such occurrences. Even if you feel your child is very reliable, most children feel most comfortable changing into their own clothes—and events other than a potty accident may prompt the need for a change of clothing.

Tote Bags

We ask that every child carry a two-handled tote bag to and from school. Tote bags are much more accommodating than a back pack for both teachers and children. A lunch box fits nicely in the tote bag, and it is much easier to get artwork home in it. Your child’s name will be attached to his/her bag as well as a clip to deliver notes or other correspondence back and forth between home and school. For your convenience, you may purchase an Epworth Preschool bag with our school logo, but any sort of two-handled tote will do.

Birthdays and Other Special Occasions

****August 2021 Update: Treats brought to school for celebrations must be store-bought. Food items made at home are currently not permitted.****

We welcome special treats at school for birthdays or other special occasions as long as parents make arrangements with their child’s teacher in advance. Please

be considerate of those in your class that may have food allergies or other restrictions. All arrangements for parties outside of school should be made outside of school, including invitations. It is very upsetting when children observe other children being invited to a party from which they have been excluded. Please mail invitations or call parents outside of school unless everyone from the class is invited to the occasion.

Parental Involvement

****August 2021 Update: Parent volunteer opportunities are on hold until further notice.****

Parents are always welcome in our classrooms, and we work to maintain a collaborative partnership with families through on-going two-way communication; through opportunities for families to share interests, customs, and talents; and through an over-all atmosphere of mutual respect, cooperation, and shared responsibility. We do ask that the parents in our youngest classes give the class a month to settle in before coming in to volunteer or share an activity.

Different classrooms structure opportunities for parents to be involved in different ways: special projects, cooking activities, field trips, etc. Your child's teacher will provide information about such activities. In addition, we hope that you will consider adding your name to the list of people who can be called upon to substitute when a teacher needs to be absent. If you or someone you know would be interested, please contact the director.

Our teachers observe strict confidentiality guidelines, and we need you to know that when you are volunteering in a classroom, we expect the same from you. This means that whatever you observe or hear from or about any child is never to be shared with anyone other than the director and/or the teacher with whom you are working.

Please know how very grateful we are to you for the time and talents you share with us!

Children with Activity Limitations or Participation Restrictions

Epworth Preschool welcomes all children and has a limited capacity to serve children with activity limitations or participation restrictions, including physical, mental, behavioral, or learning delays and/or disabilities. Epworth Preschool partners with families whose children receive early intervention services to ensure that their children benefit from a high quality, developmentally appropriate preschool program. This partnership includes sharing necessary information, attending Individual Education Planning (IEP) meetings, Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meetings, or other conferences. All information between parents, staff members, and the director is confidential. Epworth Preschool staff will work with therapists (speech language, occupational, physical) as well as early intervention specialists and facilitators to create an inclusive plan for services. Parents who are aware that their child has a developmental delay or disability should discuss those needs with the director prior to enrollment. At times during the school year, it is recommended to have a child visit their pediatrician or be evaluated by a trained professional to determine if additional support would be beneficial. Parents are asked to share the results of all evaluations with the school in order for Epworth Preschool to appropriately meet the needs of the child. If parents choose not to pursue a recommended evaluation, it can impact the ability of Epworth Preschool to fully and safely support the child as well as the other children in the class. In such cases, withdrawal of the child may be necessary.

While Epworth Preschool provides continuing education training for staff each year that often includes meeting the needs of all learners, it is important to remember that Epworth Preschool staff members do not have formal training in early intervention or special education. If a child needs more support than a class can safely provide, Epworth Preschool will require the child to have a student aide to participate in the program. If this is the case, the parents are responsible for working with the director and teacher(s) in hiring a student aide and for the compensation of the student aid. Both parents and the director will sign an agreement for accommodations as well as compensation.

Security

For the safety of our students, staff and visitors, Epworth UMC and Epworth Preschool utilize camera surveillance equipment for security purposes. While the cameras will be on 24 hours a day, footage will not be viewed synchronously. Only authorized staff will have access to video footage.

Surveillance cameras will be equipped only in public areas where there is no “reasonable expectation of privacy.” Public areas may include building entrances, hallways and parking lots. Surveillance cameras will not be installed in “private” areas such as restrooms, private offices or classrooms.

Financial Matters

Tuition payments:

- We calculate tuition as a yearly amount based on the total number of days in the school year. This is divided into 9 equal monthly payments for convenience; therefore, the amount due is the same regardless of the length of the month.
- Tuition is due on the 5th of each month. A late fee of \$20 will be assessed for any tuition payments not received by the 5th of the month.
- Families may pay tuition by 1) credit card or checking account through our online payment site, 2) online bill pay through your bank, 3) personal check, or 4) with cash. Please **do not** send any payments with your child or clipped to your child’s bag.
- If paying **online** with a credit card or checking account – go to the “Parents” section of our website and click on “Online Payments”. From there you can follow the link to our secure payment site. Credit Card payments are subject to a convenience fee.
- If using **online bill pay** through your bank – address your payment to: Epworth Preschool, 3002 Hope Valley Rd., Durham, NC 27707. Please use your child’s name as the account number. Be aware that your bank has to physically mail a check to us, so be sure to allow enough time for your check to reach us by the 5th of the month.

- If paying by **check** – place your check in the payment box located inside the Preschool Office near the bulletin board. ****August 2021 Update – please submit your check in an envelope to the Director or Assistant Director or mail it to the Preschool****. Please write your child’s name and the month you are paying for in the memo line.
- If paying with **cash** – please place cash payments in an envelope labeled with your child’s name and payment details (tuition, lunch bunch, etc.). Submit cash in person to the Director or Assistant Director so that we can create a receipt for your records.
- Payments may include multiple items: tuition, lunch bunch, etc. Please identify what your check covers in the memo line (for example: *Mary Smith – October tuition + Lunch Bunch*).
- If a family is encountering financial difficulties, payment plans can be worked out with the director and financial director with sufficient notice. If tuition payments are significantly in arrears, the director and financial director with heavy hearts reserve the right to un-enroll a student.

Lunch Bunch Payments:

- Lunch bunch is \$8 per day. Children who attend lunch bunch every day they attend school can sign up for a flat fee – see the office about this option.
- Lunch bunch payments should be submitted monthly.
- Lunch Bunch payments may be included on your monthly tuition check. Please provide details in the memo line.

Payment Receipts/Statements (monthly & year-end):

- Epworth’s Financial Director will generate account statements upon request. Please allow **two weeks** for processing.
- Monthly statements are sent two weeks after end of each month. If needed sooner, please specify.

Withdrawal Policy

- If a family is planning to withdraw their child from preschool, we ask that parents notify the Preschool Director 30 days prior to the date of withdrawal.
- If a family withdraws their child after the first of the month, full tuition is due for the current month and the following month. For example, if a child is withdrawn on October 10th, full tuition is due for both October and November.

Fundraising at Epworth Preschool

Epworth Preschool is a wonderful place for children, families and teachers, and we are constantly striving to improve our programs and offer new and enriching experiences for the children who come here. We have several fundraisers here at the preschool with the following goals in mind: 1) to help keep our tuition affordable, 2) to assist in providing scholarship funds and 3) to acquire new equipment and toys.

A fundraising committee made up of parents and teaching staff members will be organized in the beginning of the year, and this group will work to establish plans for the year. There will be many opportunities for participating in fundraising throughout the year, and we encourage you to get involved and support the school as you are able. In no way are we expecting all families to be able to participate in all fundraisers. As opportunities arise, feel free to participate as you can but also feel free to “pass” on anything.

Our hope is that we can raise funds to improve our program by offering parents opportunities that are fun, easy, and beneficial to families. We will never ask or expect children or parents to be involved in any forms of selling. Information regarding fundraisers will be disseminated through the office and posted around the school. We thank you for your support and investment in your child’s school!