

Fishers United Methodist Church Preschool



Preschool

Parent Handbook

**2025-2026
School Year**

9691 E. 116th Street | Fishers, IN 46037
fishersumc.org/preschool

Welcome

The preschool program is a community outreach ministry of Fishers United Methodist Church. Our classes are made up of children from many faiths and nationalities.

Preschool Vision

The director, assistant director, and teachers shall provide the children with a warm and loving atmosphere in which to learn and grow. All employees shall strive to create a place where each child feels loved and accepted and begins to understand that he/she is one of God's most wonderful creations. Likewise, the Fishers UMC Preschool Parent Board, made up of parent volunteers, provides guidance and support to best fulfill the goals and responsibilities of the preschool and its aims.

Our Bunny, Tiger and Turtle classes, for our youngest students, are dedicated to developing each child's social and cognitive skills according to early child educational foundations in a play-based learning environment while engaging children in structured and unstructured play, hands-on experiences, daily circle time, creative projects and music.

Junior and Senior classes shall be dedicated to developing each child's social and cognitive skills while encouraging all children to be inquisitive and enthusiastic learners. Our teachers shall strive to expose the children to all types of kindergarten readiness experiences including letters, letter sounds, numbers, gross and fine motor activities, singing, story time, and a multitude of hands-on experiences in a play-based environment.

The Fishers UMC Preschool follows age-appropriate educational goals, practices, and areas of focus as outlined by Indiana's Early Learning Foundations. All Junior and Senior classes also utilize the Heggerty curriculum to develop phonemic awareness.

Fishers United Methodist Church Mission and Services

"To Make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World"

To learn more about our church activities, visit the church website, fishersumc.org, or contact the church administrator at 317-849-1805.

Hours of Operation

Fishers UMC Preschool is open 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on school days (as noted on the 2025 - 2026 school calendar published on the preschool website). The preschool office will be open from 9:10 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on school days.

Class and Age Requirements

<u>Class</u>	<u>Age by 8/1/25*</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Teacher/student ratio</u>
Bunny	16 months	M or T/TH	9:30—1:30	2:9
Tiger	2 years	M/W or T/TH	9:30—1:30	2:12
Turtle	2 years	M/W or T/TH	9:30—1:30	2:12
Junior (Monkey)	3 years	M/W or T/TH	9:30—1:30	2:14
Junior (Elephant/Giraffe)	3 years	T/W/TH	9:30—1:30	2:14
Senior (Ladybug or Lion)	4 years	T/W/TH	9:30—1:30	2:16
Senior (Frog/Sailor)	4 years	M/T/W/TH	9:30—1:30	2:16

**If your child's birthdate falls within the months of August or September, and you wish to have them advance to the next class, please reach out to the director to discuss options for your child.*

Registration

Registration for the following academic year's classes will begin in March of the current year. Children are enrolled depending on availability in the most developmentally appropriate class. Children are placed on a waitlist if there is no availability in the most appropriate class. Prior to open registration, children of staff members are registered first, followed by current student and siblings of current students, followed by children who attend Fishers United Methodist Church and past participants. A non-refundable \$50 registration fee is due upon registration.

- Non-refundable payment of the following school year's May tuition is due by May 1st of the current school year. Failure to make payment by this date may result in your child being dropped from the program.
- An equipment fee (as outlined on the following page) is due by August 1st. This is a non-refundable fee.
- Late registration will require payment of the full registration fee of \$50.00, the following year's May tuition, equipment fee, and tuition for the current month.
- A waitlist is formed when a class becomes full. Name and information are maintained according to the order in which they are received and prioritized based on the registration order noted above. Names will be kept on the waitlist for the remainder of the current school year.
- The individual developmental needs of each child are considered when placement decisions are made. We will take all considerations into account and group children into classrooms that may best compliment the needs of each student and the class as a whole.

Brightwheel App

Upon enrollment, you will receive an invitation via email or text to set up your Brightwheel account. Through the app, you can communicate with your child's teachers or the preschool director and assistant director as well as check your child in and out, pay tuition, and view your child's daily activity feed.

- Each parent/guardian should create a free Brightwheel account. When you receive an invitation via email or text, please create a parent account using either the website or mobile app. Make sure to use the same email address or cell phone number to which the invitation was sent.
- Confirm your child's profile. You will see your child's profile after you create an account – you can confirm information such as birthdays allergies and additional contacts. If you do not see your child's profile please contact the preschool.
- Set your account preferences. You can adjust your notification preferences within your profile settings on the app. **Please toggle notifications and alerts to “on” so you can receive important school communication.**
- Add your payment information. Brightwheel offers secure, automated online payments that save time and give you advanced tools, reporting, and receipts.

Family vs. Approved Pick-ups vs. Emergency Contacts in Brightwheel

We ask that you add and edit family members, approved pickups, and emergency contacts on your child's profile. When adding contacts, you are given four options: parent, family, approved pickup, and emergency contact. Each one has slightly different functions and privileges as listed in the chart below. We do not recommend listing anyone as an emergency contact as emergency contacts DO NOT have pick-up privileges. Only parents, family, and approved pickups may check a child out. Please only list the child's legal guardians as a “parent” within Brightwheel.

	Parent	Family	Approved Pickup	Emergency Contact
Can create a Brightwheel Account	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Can check in and check out	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Can view activity feed	Yes	Yes	No	No
Can send and receive messages	Yes	Send Only	No	No
Can view the child's profile	Yes	No	No	No
Can view and pay bills	Yes	No	No	No

Brightwheel Check-In Codes

You must use your individualized check-in code for check in and check out each day for the safety of your children. To make this easier, Brightwheel allows you to customize your check-in code at any time. Here is how to do this from your profile within the app:

1. Tap the Edit icon next to your check-in code.
2. Enter a new 4-digit code.
3. If your code matches that of another parent a warning message will be shown, you can save that code but it is not recommended (if your check-in code is not unique, you will be required to take a second step and enter the last four digits of your phone number to verify your account before completing a check in or check out).
4. Once you enter a unique code, tap the “Set Code” button.

Payment Policy

Tuition is due on the first of each month. If payment is received after the first of the month, you will be assessed a \$25.00 late fee. If payment is returned due to insufficient funds, all fees incurred will be assessed to your account. All payments are to be made through Brightwheel which can be accessed using your Brightwheel app or the Brightwheel website (mybrightwheel.com). With prior communication with the director, late fees may be waived depending on the circumstances. If you choose to pay tuition in semester or annual installments as opposed to monthly installments, please reach out to the director. Payments made by semester or year will be non-refundable.

Once logged into your account within the app, select "Payments" from the menu to access all invoices, make a payment, see past payments/receipts, and/or enroll in autopay which helps you avoid late fees). For assistance setting up your account, please email Jen Miller at jmiller@fishersumc.org.

Refunds or credit will not be given for days when your child is absent, nor will tuition be prorated for extended absences or school holidays or closures. Annual tuition is broken down into nine equal payments. Therefore, monthly tuition remains the same even on "short" school months such as December.

Should it become necessary for you to withdraw your child from the program, we request four (4) weeks written notice. Refunds will not be given for any payments already received.

If tuition remains unpaid, then the child(ren) can be considered for disenrollment. If the account remains unpaid for sixty (60) days, then the child(ren) will be automatically disenrolled.

Requirements for Enrollment and Student Forms

For the current school year, the preschool office must have each of the following for each student:

- A completed Student Information Form
- A signed Release and Consent for Medical Treatment Form
- A record of immunization or a completed exemption form
- A completed medical action plan (if applicable)
- A completed medical condition form (if applicable)
- Up-to-date payment on all current preschool invoices

Student Information Form

This required form has all your contact information and also lists if your child has any allergies.

Release and Consent for Medical Treatment Form

This required form gives us permission to administer first aid and/or seek professional medical assistance if needed.

Immunization Record or Completed Exemption Form

The Indiana State Board of Health requires us, as a childcare facility, to keep annual records on each child's general health and immunizations.

Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival

- Families/Guardians will line up on the sidewalks by door #4. The doors will open at 9:30 a.m. for children to enter the building. Parents/guardians will not enter the building at drop off. Families will use the Brightwheel app to check their child(ren) in each day they attend school by scanning the QR code posted outside the building and signing each student in. All students will be provided a lanyard, with their name and class, to wear into the school building each day they attend school. Staff will be positioned in the hallway to assist children to their classroom.
- Parents/guardians must accompany their child to the entry doors and remain with their child until the child has entered the school doors.
- Please plan to bring your child to school by 9:30 a.m. When children consistently arrive late, they miss out on educational opportunities and fun activities that the teachers have carefully planned.

Dismissal

- Families/Guardians/Approved Pickup Individuals will line up on the sidewalks by door #4 WITH THEIR PICKUP SIGN IN HAND AND VISIBLE FOR PRESCHOOL STAFF MEMBERS TO READ. Before reaching the door, approved pickup individuals/guardians are required to open the Brightwheel app, scan the QR code outside of the building, and check their student(s) out. Preschool staff will begin dismissal at 1:30 p.m. by calling student names over the radio. One staff member will escort each child to the door and release them to the designated adult.
- For safety purposes, please hold hands with your student(s) in the parking lot as they exit the building and walk to your vehicle.
- Parents will incur a base late pickup fee of \$10 for pick-ups after 1:40 p.m. plus a fee of one dollar per minute after 1:40 p.m.

Health and Safety Policies

The school makes every effort to prevent and control the spread of communicable illness. Our staff practices safe hygiene procedures such as hand washing and routine disinfecting of toys and surfaces. This helps to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for all children.

It is the expectation of parents/guardians to only send **healthy students** to school each day throughout the year. If they exhibit the following symptoms, students must remain home, and parents/guardians must contact the school using the absence reporting steps outlined in this handbook. Students may return to school once the below symptoms have not been present for over 24 hours.

- Fever $\geq 100.0^{\circ}$
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

If your child cannot comfortably participate in the day's usual activities or your child needs to stay indoors and/or have additional rest, these signs are generally indicative that the child should not be at school. If your student has a contagious condition diagnosed by a doctor, please do not send our student to school until the doctor specifies a return date. This can include strep, pink eye, or hand foot mouth disease. It is always helpful if you can provide the preschool with a doctor's note when applicable. The preschool reserves the right to request a student be picked up if the student is exhibiting signs of communicable illness or is unfit to participate in classroom activities.

* If your child has a chronic condition which presents with any of the above symptoms, a doctor's note stating such is required so that your child will be permitted to remain in school following your physician's instructions.

*** If your child has a highly communicable illness, it is recommended that any siblings living in the same household also remain home from school if they are currently enrolled at Fishers UMC.

Illness While At School

If your child becomes ill during the school day, or the above symptoms are observed by the preschool staff, a parent/guardian/emergency contact will be called or texted to come pick them up. The preschool is not able to provide arrangements to care for sick children. Parents are required to respond as soon as possible concerning the sick child when contacted by the preschool staff. If the staff cannot reach the parent within thirty minutes, we will reach out to the family's emergency contacts designated in Brightwheel or on the Release and Consent for Medical Treatment Form. If all parents/guardians/emergency contacts are unavailable, the preschool staff may reach out to the child's pediatrician with inquiries related to the child's symptoms.

Injuries

If a child sustains a minor injury, they will be treated by their teacher and/or preschool office staff. The most common treatment is ice on bumps, soap and water cleansing, and a bandage on a minor wound. A parent will be sent an "incident" message via Brightwheel outlining details related to the injury. In the event your child is involved in a serious accident or becomes seriously ill at school, a parent or emergency contact will be notified. If an accident/injury is more than minor, a parent/guardian will be called to discuss the need for possible medical treatment. If the accident is more serious, a parent will be contacted and requested to come immediately. In the event of a time-sensitive injury and/or a life-threatening illness or injury, an ambulance will be called. In the event of a serious injury, the parent/guardian will be asked to complete a Fishers United Methodist Church Accident/Injury Report Form and return the form within 24 hours to the preschool director.

Medication

Whenever possible, we recommend that parents administer medications and supplements at home rather than school. The director or assistant director may administer medication in its original container as provided and instructed by the parent/guardian via written instructions from a doctor outlining the dosage and time to administer. Prescription medications must be brought to school and stored in the original tamper-resistant container in which they were dispensed with pharmacy labels that specifies the child's name, names of the medication, the amount and frequency of dosage, and the date the prescription was filled and the expiration date. All medicine should be handed to the director or assistant director and should not be stored or transported into the school in diaper bags, lunch bags, backpacks, or any other personal belongings. Medication will be stored separately for each child within the office. Medication forms will be added to the child's file after the medication request is completed. Supplements are not allowed at school. Fishers UMC Preschool reserves the right to refuse the administration of medications.

Chronic Health Conditions

For any child with health care needs such as allergies, asthma, or other chronic conditions (ex: seizures, G-Tube, etc.) that require specialized health services, a medical action plan shall be provided by the parents/guardians to the preschool. The medical action plan must be updated annually and when changes to the plan are made by the child's parent or health care professional. The medical action plan shall be signed by both the child's parent and the health care professional and must include the following:

- A list of the child's diagnosis or diagnoses, including dietary, environmental, and applicable activity considerations
- Contact information for the child's health care professional(s)
- Medications to be administered on a scheduled basis; and
- Medications to be administered on an emergency basis with symptom and instructions

Reporting Absences

All absences must be reported via the Brightwheel app in the form of a "staff and admins" message. This notifies your student's classroom teachers as well as the director and assistant director. Please include the reason and anticipated duration of the absence.

Child Safety and Staff Training

The preschool security doors are locked during school hours. All preschool visitors are required to use the buzzer system at door 4 to enter the building.

All teachers and volunteers/visitors who are in the classrooms or engage with students must have an approved police background check on file and complete the Fishers UMC Abuse Protection Policy Training. This is a church-wide policy.

The preschool staff members are carefully selected, trained, and evaluated. They maintain and update their skills by participating in professional development training programs and utilizing our wide variety of classroom resources. All staff members have a background check, intruder training, and are CPR and AED certified.

Behavior Guidelines

Our foundational goal at Fishers UMC Preschool is to help students develop strong social and emotional skills. Teaching staff will respond to challenging behavior, including physical aggression in a manner that provides for the child's safety and the safety of others in the classroom. Our response will be calm, respectful and give the child information on what is acceptable behavior and what is not. Teacher-parent discussions regarding a child's behavior shall be held in private.

Fishers UMC Preschool does not condone or tolerate the use of physical punishment of any kind on church property. This policy restricts parents and staff from using physical punishment on church property. Also, Fishers UMC Preschool will not tolerate psychological abuse, coercion, threats, derogatory remarks, withholding, or threatening to withhold food as a form of discipline.

If a child is exhibiting concerning behavior that is unsafe to themselves, other students, or staff, or requires consistent one-on-one assistance by a staff member to ensure the safety and well-being of others, Fishers UMC Preschool reserves the right to ask the parent to pick up the child for the day and/or, should the behavioral concern be ongoing, suggest resources for the student and/or unenroll the student from the preschool.

Smoke-Free and Weapon-Free Environment

Fishers UMC Preschool and its drop off and pick up lines are smoke-free and tobacco-free environments. Smoking and the use of any product containing, made, or derived from tobacco, including e-cigarettes, cigars, little cigars, and smokeless tobacco shall not be permitted on the premises. Additionally, firearms, ammunition, and weapons of any kind are prohibited in the preschool and its drop off and pickup lines unless carried by a law enforcement officer.

Toy weapons (guns, water pistols, swords, or other items that resemble weapons) are not permitted at Fishers UMC Preschool.

Your Child's Day

Dress

Children should be dressed in casual, comfortable clothes. Craft materials, markers, and paints are used, so be sure clothes are washable.

As a safety precaution, and because of the mulch on the playground, children should wear closed-toe shoes to school.

Children are asked to bring a complete set of extra clothing. Older children who are fully potty trained or potty training should wear clothes that allow them to be self-sufficient at bathroom time.

Children still in diapers should be dressed in clothes that do not make diaper changing a challenge. Our younger-age classroom teachers change dozens of diapers each day, and anything you can do to make the task easier will be greatly appreciated.

Toilet Training

Children in the younger classrooms (Bunny, Tiger, Turtle) do not need to be toilet trained. Families supply diapers or pull-ups for children not yet toilet trained. The preschool provides wipes. The teachers work with your child once training has begun. It is recommended that all Junior and Senior preschool students be toilet trained by the time classes start in the fall. Children who continue to have consistent accidents will need to be in a pull-up and may need to be picked up from preschool at the discretion of the director and/or assistant director.

Lunch

Parents need to provide a lunch for their child each day they attend school. **Please label your child's lunchbox and all inside pieces and drink containers with your child's first and last names.** Students are asked to use reusable drink and food containers in lieu of juice boxes, juice pouches, and other drinks in disposable containers. Lunches are not refrigerated at school so individual ice packs are encouraged if parents wish to keep their child's lunch cold. **Fishers UMC Preschool is completely peanut and tree nut free. Please do not pack anything that contains or "may contain" any nuts.** If you choose to pack a nut-free butter, please be sure to add a note to your child's lunch to inform teachers it is not a nut butter. Likewise, if you are sending a store-bought, prepackaged item (i.e. granola bar, snacks, etc.), please leave the item in the original packaging so we can be certain it meets the nut-free standards. Questionable items will be sent home uneaten if we cannot contact you during lunch.

Backpack

Children need a backpack at school each day. We strongly encourage the use of a large backpack, which allows the children to be more independent in putting their papers away, and helps keep each child's personal belongings together. Be sure your child's name is clearly printed on the bag.

Birthdays

Birthdays will be celebrated at school in a variety of fun ways. However, birthday treats will not be served during the school day due to allergies and food restrictions. You may send in non-food treats or goodie bags to be sent home with all children in the class if you wish. The preschool will not send home any birthday items that include food or candy.

Chapel

All classes will participate in chapel one to two times per month. Chapel will be lead by church staff and will include songs, Biblical stories or themes, and is a time for children to grow and learn in Christian fellowship.

Communication with Parents

Daily/Regular Communication

Most communication will come through Brightwheel messages or on your child's activity feed. **Please be sure all alerts for messages and notifications are toggled on within the app to receive important communication from the school.** A monthly school-wide newsletter will be distributed via Brightwheel messaging to inform all families about upcoming programs, events, and happenings. Classroom staff will post pictures and/or any updates of the classroom day by utilizing student feed within Brightwheel. Parents and staff may also communicate via messaging in Brightwheel. Timing of communication to parents about daily activities is at the discretion of the classroom teacher. While we ask classroom staff to communicate and post daily, the safety of the children is the top priority. On occasion, some messaging and activity posts may be delayed.

Disagreements between parents/guardians and preschool staff may occur, even with the best of intentions. Open communication is key to maintaining positive relationships. The adults must demonstrate the cooperative, compassionate communication we want our children to imitate. If you have a concern, please discuss it with your child's teachers or the staff involved. If the concern is not resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, a meeting can be arranged between the persons involved and the preschool director.

Conferences

Parents of Junior and Senior preschool children will also receive a monthly calendar of class activities and will be invited to participate in a parent/teacher conference. Fishers UMC Preschool uses conferences to offer family support and communication. Family conferences are designed to:

- Guide families and teachers with a way of sharing valuable information about the child.
- Individualize the planning process for each child in the context of their family, culture, and community.
- Explore ways to use a child's family's strengths to promote growth and development.
- Create an ongoing process for recording the growth and development of the child.

For the Junior and Senior preschool students, we schedule formal conferences each year, but for all students we encourage parents/guardians to reach out to the child's teachers at any time with questions, concerns, or seeking an update on the child's progress. While conferences are not mandatory, they are encouraged, as they allow parents the opportunity to follow the progress that their child is making. During the conference, parents will be provided with a written report about the child's strengths and areas for growth.

Developmental Concerns

If at any point you have developmental concerns for your child, please reach out to your child's teachers to discuss. We are happy to recommend strategies, resources, or community programs that may be of support.

Parent Volunteers/Family Involvement

All volunteers must complete the abuse protection policy training each year and have a current background check on file. The abuse protection policy training includes watching the training video and reading/signing the code of conduct. The background check must be conducted through the church's platform and is considered current for three years. All volunteers must complete the above requirements prior to the date they are volunteering.

Opportunities for family involvement include:

- Classroom volunteering as requested/scheduled by the classroom teachers (specifically in Junior and Senior preschool classes).
- Class events as scheduled by the classroom teachers (dependent on classroom age)
- Preschool Open House in August
- Schoolwide social events and volunteer opportunities as they arise

Fishers UMC Preschool volunteers/families are expected to treat all children, families, and staff with respect and dignity. Inappropriate language directed toward staff and/or families in front of children will not be tolerated.

Weather Delays and School Closings

Fishers UMC Preschool follows Hamilton Southeastern School's delays/closings. If a closure occurs during the school day and HSE students are sent home, the school will contact parents via a Brightwheel alert to close and dismiss students as their parents/guardians arrive. Fishers UMC Preschool does not make up any days missed due to inclement weather.

Class Day	Adjusted Schedule
HSE 1 hour delay	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Classes start at 10:30• Classes dismissed at 1:30
HSE 2 hour delay	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Classes start at 11:30• Classes dismissed at 1:30
HSE 3 hour delay	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All activities and school are closed
HSE closed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All activities and school are closed

In the event that Fishers UMC Preschool will be delayed or closed; information will be sent via Brightwheel alert. **Please make sure you toggle on "alerts" on your Brightwheel account to receive these important messages.**

Outside Employment of Preschool Staff by Preschool Families

Any employment arrangement between a family and a Fishers UMC Preschool employee for employment services outside the program and services of the preschool is an individual endeavor and a private matter, not connected to or sanctioned by Fishers UMC Preschool.

Emergency Procedures

We regularly schedule, carry out, and document emergency drills. Our staff is trained in all emergency plans which include fire, tornado, and intruder. Emergency evacuation plans are posted in each room. In addition, our building is inspected each year by the local fire department

*Thank you for taking the time to read this parent handbook. Should you have any questions or concerns about the information contained in this handbook, please contact the preschool office at **317-842-4052**.*