



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN PRESCHOOL

Handbook 2024 - 2025



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First Presbyterian Preschool Handbook

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ABOUT

OUR MISSION

The mission of the First Presbyterian Preschool is to provide a nurturing Christian setting for your children during their initial school experience. The Preschool will serve the children of the First Presbyterian Church of Lake Forest and also provide an outreach to the children of families within the community. To fulfill the mission, the Preschool will focus on:

- Developmentally appropriate classroom environment that exemplifies Christian values and behavior.
- Christian outreach to the community-at-large offering open enrollment, financial aid, parent education, service projects, informational newsletters and a DCFS licensed program.

CURRICULUM FOCUS

Our unique child-centered emergent thematic curriculum addresses all aspects of a preschooler's development.

By utilizing multiple conceptually stimulating themes across age levels throughout the year, our teachers actively encourage the development of social, emotional, cognitive, physical and spiritual awareness by:

- Nurturing independence, competence, confidence and trust
- Sparking personal creativity
- Promoting social and emotional growth
- Stimulating conceptual thinking, cooperative problem solving and intellectual risk taking
- Instilling the love of learning
- Participating in weekly Faithbuilding
- Providing monthly Art Appreciation
- Engaging in weekly interactive music classes

Our goal is to address each child's needs and life experiences through a curriculum based on developmental principles and Christian values.

PHILOSOPHY

The First Presbyterian Preschool engages children in their own growth and learning by presenting age-appropriate materials and social opportunities in classrooms with low student/teacher ratios. While considering each child's individual needs and interests, the Preschool consistently provides a rich project-based learning environment inviting exploration, discovery and social interaction facilitated by nurturing, highly qualified teachers.

Creative teaching set in a framework of play encourages individual participation using materials that enhance learning and stimulate intellectual curiosity and growth.

We strive to provide a positive Christian early childhood experience that facilitates the development of happy, independent, confident children eager to embrace life's adventures and challenges.

FAITHBUILDING

Each week, students meet to share Bible stories, songs and prayer. The children are introduced to broad Christian concepts while developing a personal relationship to God and Jesus through praise, prayer and worship. Faithbuilding provides an ecumenical Christian focus and nurtures each child's awareness of his/her existence as a beloved spiritual being created by God.

LIBRARY

In our effort to nurture early literacy, we have Library Day for the Voyager and Odyssey classes. Library begins mid-October. The children may check out a book from our school library each week to take home. The books are due back the following week and can be returned on or before check out day. If the book is not returned, children cannot check out another book until the first is returned. Parents will be billed at the end of the year for all lost books. To avoid loss or damage, it is suggested that you have a safe place to keep your child's library book at home while it is checked out. If you do not wish to have your child participate in the library program, please inform the Director. Gifts of library books to celebrate a child's birthday or other special occasion are always welcome!

FINE ARTS

We are proud to introduce young children to the fine arts. Opportunities are provided to increase appreciation and enjoyment in this creative enrichment area. Beginning in late September, weekly music and movement classes start. The children explore rhythm, tempo, timbre and tone while actively participating in group singing, dancing and games. In addition, daily classroom music and movement activities extend each child's musical awareness and involvement. Music classes are led by Ami Crawford. She has an extensive academic background in music education for young children.

Students participate in an outstanding art appreciation/visual literacy curriculum led by Sue Peecher. Children will have monthly meetings with Sue to explore masterpiece art through slides and music, sharing their insights and responses to various pieces. An annual parent/child trip to the Art Institute is scheduled for the Friday after the last day of school.

In February, all Preschool children participate in a Saturday morning Art event in which each child displays pieces of original art work for the enjoyment of parents, siblings and friends. It is our goal to present engaging first experiences in the fine arts, opening doors to a lifetime of awareness and enjoyment.

FIELD TRIPS

Voyager and Odyssey may take field trips throughout the year. Transportation will be by school bus. These trips are entirely supervised by teachers. Parent volunteers are not needed since one of the goals of a field trip is to encourage each child's independence and self-reliance, this is accomplished most effectively in this manner. Due to state seat belt laws, Explorer and Discovery students are limited to walking field trips near the Preschool.

In-school field trips are also planned throughout the school year. Local in-school programming is brought in for the children at each age level to experience hands-on learning in their classroom. Some examples include the Cosley Zoo, Wagner Farm, and Frog Lady. Curriculum comes to life right before their eyes in the comfort of their environment with their teachers.

We will also have different community events, including visits from the local fire and police departments and community walking trips for Voyager and Odyssey into downtown Lake Forest and to the Lake Forest Library.



ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

CELL PHONES MAY NOT BE IN USE DURING DROP OFF AND PICK UP. This is a safety issue as both teachers and children need the driver's full attention at this time. Please inform all individuals picking up your child of this procedure. *Children will not be placed in a car when the driver has a cell phone in use.*

- Each child must be accompanied by an adult upon arrival, and at dismissal will be individually signed out by staff. No child will be released to any person not on record . Written permission, email or a message sent to the Director on Bloomz is required for exceptions.
- A Release permission form must be on file. Under no circumstances will a child be released to a non-adult sibling or unauthorized person.
- School begins promptly at 8:45 am for the Voyager class (9:00 am on Fridays for 5-Day) and 8:55 am for Explorer, Discovery and Odyssey classes.
 - If your child's class begins OUTSIDE, please wait for a teacher to unload from your vehicle.
 - Please REFRAIN from entering the playground before school hours.
 - For OUTDOOR dismissal, please wait for a teacher to load your child into your vehicle and then pull ahead to fasten seat restraints or seatbelt.

***When dropping off or picking up children on the playground, please enter only from Deerpath Road heading east and continue north through the fire lane to Sheridan Road. Please do not attempt a U-turn left in the adjacent parking lot to exit onto Deerpath Road after picking up children. This is extremely dangerous!**

Children must not exit vehicles until unloaded by a teacher. Handwashing will be supervised by the staff following outdoor time. Sign-out will be outdoors at pick-up.

Voyager & Odyssey

Car line drop-off for Voyager and Odyssey:

As each car arrives, one of the head co-teacher(s) will take your child out of your car. Your child will exit the car and join their other teachers on the playground.

The **Voyager** class will start outside on the playground at 8:45 am (9:00 am on Fridays for 5-Day) and **Odyssey** will start at 8:55 am. Beginning the first day of class, parents should drop their children off at the playground gate with a teacher. When dropping off or picking up children on the playground, please enter only from Deerpath Road heading east and continue north through the fire lane to Sheridan Road. *Please do not attempt a U-turn left in the adjacent parking lot to exit onto Deerpath Road after picking up or dropping off children. This is extremely dangerous!*

Car line pick-up for Voyager: 11:25 AM

1. The children will be picked up from the Preschool Side Door.
2. As their parent/caregiver arrives, a teacher will escort them to the car and help them up into the backseat.
3. Parents are asked to pull up and secure their child into their car seat.

Car line pick-up for Odyssey: 11:30 AM

1. The children will be picked up from the Sheridan Road doors.
2. As their parent/caregiver arrives, a teacher will escort them to the car and help them up into the backseat.
3. Parents are asked to pull up and secure their child into their car seat.

Explorer & Discovery

Explorer and Discovery children start the day indoors. Parents/caregivers are requested to help their child(ren) use the toilet upon arrival and supervise their child during hand washing. Both of these classes end their day on the playground. Parents are requested to drive up to the playground gate for pick up, and teachers will sign-out children as they are put into vehicles. We will transition to a carline drop-off at the Sheridan Road doors after Columbus Day in October.

Car line pick-up for Explorer and Discovery: 11:30 AM

1. The children will be outside on the playground for pick-up.
2. As their parent/caregiver arrives, a teacher will escort them to the car and help them up into the backseat.
3. Parents are asked to pull up and secure their child into their car seat.
4. In the event there is inclement weather, the alternate pick-up location will be the Sheridan Road Doors at 11:35 AM.

Explorer and Discovery parents should pick up their children at the playground gate beginning the first day of class. **When dropping off or picking up children on the playground, please enter only from Deerpath Road going east and continue north through the fire lane to Sheridan Road. Please do not attempt a U-turn left in the adjacent parking lot to exit onto Deerpath Road after picking up children.** This is extremely dangerous!

NOTE: Teachers are not permitted to secure children in car seats due to liability. Please pull ahead and park if it is necessary to assist your child.

INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURE: During inclement weather when the children cannot play outdoors, Drop Off and Pick Up is at the Preschool side door entrance. For Voyager, children will be playing in Fellowship Hall those days, and it is a much shorter (and drier) trip to the cars for both children and staff. Please enter off Deerpath Road and proceed through the fire lane to the side door entrance (second door north of the playground). At dismissal, please pull far ahead to assist with car seats, so that other cars may continue to load while others needing to assist children may pull up behind you. If you are late dropping off your child at the start of the Voyager and Odyssey classes during inclement weather, teachers will only be able to stay at the Preschool side door until 9:00 am for Voyager (9:10 am on Fridays for 5-Day), and until 9:10 am for Odyssey. After 9:00 am and 9:10 am, you will need to park and call the Director at 847.691.5733 to meet you at the Sheridan Road doors.

When walking through the parking lot, children must have direct supervision at all times.

Please try to be prompt at both arrival and dismissal as children may feel uncomfortable when class has already begun or when parents are late.



ALTERNATE DISMISSAL SCHEDULE

There are times the Church may have a Memorial Service or an event is taking place that we would need to use an Alternate Dismissal schedule. For the Explorer and Discovery classes, please enter off Deerpath Road and proceed through the fire lane to pick up your child from the playground. After loading your child, please pull far ahead to assist with car seats, so that other cars may continue to load while others needing to assist children may pull up behind you. Proceed and exit through to Sheridan Road. **Explorer and Discovery class will be dismissed at 11:25 am from the playground. In inclement weather, pickup will be from the Preschool side door at 11:25 am.**

The Voyager and Odyssey classes will dismiss from the Preschool side door. Please enter off Deerpath Road and proceed through the fire lane to the Preschool side door entrance (second door north of the playground). After loading your child, please pull far ahead to assist with car seats, so that other cars may continue to load while others needing to assist children may pull up behind you. Proceed and exit through to Sheridan Road. **Voyager class will be dismissed at 11:15 am from the Preschool side door and Odyssey class will be dismissed at 11:35 am from the side door.**

Please come at your classes scheduled time. If you come early, you will be blocking the flow of traffic for the class that is currently in the dismissal process. It is unsafe for other cars to pass or to move around you.

EXTENDED DAY OPTIONS

SNACK AND PLAY

Monday through Friday, we are offering Snack and Play from 11:30 am – 12:30 pm. This will consist of a small snack provided from home, story time and outside play, weather permitting. In the case of inclement weather, play will be held in Fellowship Hall. Two to three Preschool teachers will staff this program based on the number of enrolled students.

All food items must be nut-free and ingredient lists may NOT say “made on shared equipment” or “packed in a facility that also processes nuts.” We will have the ability to store food items from home but recommend them being packed in a sealed lunch container that has a cold pack option.

All sign ups for this program are on our website preschool.firstchurchlf.org/extended-day.

Snack and Play is filled first by students enrolled in the enrichment program offered that day then the remaining spots are available on a first-come, first-served basis. The dismissal for Snack and Play will be from the **playground or side door at 12:30 pm**. When picking up children on the playground, please enter only from Deerpath Road and continue north through the fire lane to Sheridan Road. *Please do not attempt a U-turn left in the adjacent parking lot to exit onto Deerpath Road after picking up children.* This is extremely dangerous. **Inclement weather** pick up will be from the **Preschool side door**. Please enter off Deerpath Road and proceed through the fire lane to the side entrance (second door north of the playground). At dismissal, please pull far ahead to assist with car seats, so that other cars may continue to load while others needing to assist children may pull up behind you.

ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

This program will run for three trimesters:

- Trimester 1 is September 16 – December 17
- Trimester 2 is January 8 – March 21
- Trimester 3 is April 2 – May 16

These are wonderful STEM/STEAM programs that will be staffed by our Preschool teachers and will be 45 minute sessions, with pick up at 1:15 pm at the Preschool side door or playground. Enrichment offerings will comprise of some of these mentioned based on the trimester:

Train Like a Superhero
Lil Dreamers
Literature

Game On!
Collective Dance
Amazing Athletes

Enrichment is offered on a first-come, first-served basis through each program’s sign-up procedure.

ELIGIBILITY FOR EXTENDED DAY OPTIONS

The first trimester of Extended Day programming will be offered to the children in our Voyager, Odyssey, and Discovery programs. Children in Explorer who are 3 years old and older may register for classes beginning January of the school year. Your child must be 3 years old before the trimester begins to register for this programming.



Your child must be fully toilet-learned; please no pull-ups. Your child should be socially and emotionally ready to participate and enjoy Snack and Play and/or Enrichment activities. Try it and see! If your child is not fully ready, we may request that you try again later. If your child enters mid-trimester we will prorate the amount for the program based on number of days attending.

EXTENDED DAY POLICY

There are no make up sessions for days missed at your discretion, sick days or emergency closings.

GUIDELINES

EMERGENCY CLOSING

The Preschool follows Lake Forest District 67 emergency closures for any reason. In the event of an emergency closing due to weather or an emergency event, you will be contacted through BLOOMZ. This may be very early in the morning. When Lake Forest District 67 schools are closed due to weather, the Preschool is also closed, and this includes Extended Day. In the event that District 67 has an emergency late start, please watch for communication from the Preschool as, depending on weather conditions, school may be canceled or have a delayed start. We **do not** have makeup days for snow days or for any type of an emergency closing.

SECURITY SYSTEM GUIDELINES

*To ensure the safety of all children enrolled in the Preschool, a state-of-the-art security system is in operation during school hours. The following is basic information regarding the system:

1. Exterior church doors will be unlocked during Preschool hours. However, in case of an emergency, all exterior doors can be locked simultaneously by the church.
2. Security cameras are installed throughout the church campus.
3. One card will be issued to all Explorer/Discovery families during the evening Parent Meetings. Each card is individually coded and works only on the upstairs Preschool doors adjacent to the elevator. All cards will be collected when Explorer/Discovery classrooms begin classroom dropoff.
4. The Preschool doors will be locked at all times with entrance only by card. Cards must be scanned by the card reader outside the second floor doors near the elevator.
5. If you forget or lose your card, please go to the Hospitality desk on the main floor for an emergency entrance card. **That emergency entrance card must be returned to your child's classroom teacher or the Director.**
6. **If your card should be lost or stolen, please notify the Preschool immediately so that your code can be expunged and a new one issued.**

We ask all parents and caregivers to please not prop the door open at drop-off or pick-up to ensure our security procedure is implemented and effective. Thank you for your cooperation!

CARPOOLS AND RELEASE FORM

A separate Release Permission Form must be on file for each child. The forms are valid only for the school year in which they are filed. These forms are always available from the Director and on our website (located in Parent Resources) throughout the year. Changes/updates may be made at any time.

The Preschool legally cannot be involved in the organization of carpools. Please set them up at your convenience. For safety reasons, we ask that you limit the number of children to 3 or 4 (including your own infants or toddlers). All classes may begin carpooling at the start of school.

All children must be properly restrained in child safety seats.

CLOTHING

Many Preschool projects are messy, involving water, paint and physical activity. Please dress children in comfortable clothing that is durable, washable and can get messy. We use smocks and washable paints, but accidents happen. Ease of removal for toileting is also important to encourage self-help, competence and confidence in each child. We want children to feel good about dressing independently. Please avoid difficult zippers, buttons and snaps whenever possible. ***Soft-soled shoes with backs are required for safety reasons. Flip-flops and open-back clogs are not permitted.***

All classes play outdoors daily unless it is raining or the temperature/wind chill falls below 15 degrees. Please be sure your child is appropriately dressed for the outside, remembering that we are close to Lake Michigan and its breezes. Manageable snow gear is a must for winter, with mittens or gloves often needed as early as October. (It's a great idea to tuck a pair in the backpack.) Boots, gloves and warm hats are necessary for outdoor play in winter and spring. **Please mark all clothing and boots as many children have identical items.** Regarding winter outerwear, please choose items that can be put on and removed with minimal assistance.

BACKPACKS

Each new student will receive a Preschool backpack at their Open House session, which will be personalized at that time. Backpacks should be brought to Preschool each session. We ask that children not use other types of backpacks or totes. This helps teachers in keeping track of your child's belongings.

SNACK POLICY

The Preschool will be providing all snack items. For Voyager and Odyssey, a student will be assigned snack days by their classroom teacher throughout the school year. Your child will be asked to select one from two snack options. On your child's snack day, your child will be recognized and thanked by the whole class for choosing the snack, and leading the prayer.

If your child has food allergies, please make arrangements with your child's teachers to keep alternative snacks on hand at school. Your child will still be recognized for their snack day even if they need to have a snack that is allergy free for them.

DRINKS: The school provides chilled, filtered water.

BIRTHDAYS: Snack days are not assigned related to birthdays. On your child's birthday, ice cream is provided by the school, and a parent may wish to read a book of the child's choosing to the class. This is available for the Discovery, Voyager, and Odyssey classes. If your child has a summer birthday, or one that falls over a break, please talk to the teacher about a "special day" that you can schedule.



CALLING THE SCHOOL

Please feel free to contact the Director at any time should you have questions or concerns about your child or the program. The Director may be reached at 847.295.1214 or 847.691.5733 between 8:00 am – 3:30 pm on days when school is in session. Voicemail will receive calls if the Director is unavailable or on another line. Your call will be returned as soon as possible. In case of an emergency, please call the church office at 847.234.6250.

ABSENCES/LATE ARRIVAL

Please call the school at 847.295.1214 if your child will be absent or will be arriving more than 15 minutes late. You may also send a message via Bloomz to the Director. **Please let your teachers know of any planned absences, as we often wait to begin until all are present.**

ILLNESS

PLEASE KEEP A POTENTIALLY ILL CHILD AT HOME. In cases of vomiting, diarrhea or suspected fever at preschool, it is our policy to contact the child's parents and request that their child be picked up immediately. Your child's wellbeing and comfort, as well as infection control for other students and staff, are primary concerns at FPP.

If your child has experienced any of these symptoms the night or morning before school, please keep them at home. **Children should be free of fever and/or vomiting for 24 hours before returning to school.** Any contagious diseases other than common colds (strep, chicken pox, hand, food and mouth) must be reported to the Director. A determination will then be made as to notifying the classrooms in compliance with Public Health regulations. Certain illnesses are reportable, by law, to the Health Department by the Director in a confidential manner. Please read our current Illness Policy which was included in your August mailing.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

Please instruct your child in the proper manner for cleaning himself/herself after urination and defecation. **DCFS regulations now prohibit teachers from routinely performing these tasks in the Preschool setting.** In case of an emergency, there is a protocol in place to avoid emotional upset to the child.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

The purpose of all discipline at First Presbyterian Preschool is to assist children in developing self-control and responsibility for their behavior, and to protect the rights and safety of others. We are committed to helping children become an integral part of a group through teaching them to express feelings appropriately, to develop empathy for the needs of others and to independently and positively negotiate conflicts and differences.

Positive discipline that relates directly to behavior and which encourages the child's participation is used consistently. Problematic behavior is discussed openly with the child, and the teacher and child work cooperatively to generate acceptable solutions. Through this process, individual empowerment and negotiation skills are nurtured and modeled. The dignity and privacy of the child shall always be respected and maintained, with appropriate interventions occurring privately. Discipline will be the responsibility of teachers who have an ongoing relationship with the child. A termination of enrollment may result when repeated interventions fail. Corporal punishment, for any reason, is strictly forbidden as is verbal abuse and withholding food as punishment.

REMOVAL FROM PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

All parents are to receive a copy of the Discipline Policy as written in the Parent Handbook upon enrollment of their child. A receipt of such will be kept at the Preschool in each child's file.

In order to best help a child and his/her family, guidelines have been established for behavioral intervention purposes. When the mission and philosophy of the school have been breached it will become necessary to enforce these guidelines. Removal from the First Presbyterian Preschool is a serious matter and will only occur after all other developmentally appropriate attempts to correct the behavior(s) have been exhausted. No specific length of notice will be required or enforced.

The following guidelines are for behavioral intervention and MAY result in a transition from the First Presbyterian Preschool program. This document is required by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

- At all times, the wellbeing of the child and groups are foremost.
- At NO TIME is it acceptable for a child to intentionally hurt another child, him/herself or a staff member.
- Parents may be asked to be available for a Parent-Teacher conference. This request may come from the parents as well.
- Teachers will note behaviors and carry out the Discipline Policy adopted by the Preschool.
- Teachers will work together to form a specific and individualized plan for the child. (May be flexible and altered when needed.)
- The parents are to be informed of both the behaviors that are inappropriate as well as the developmentally appropriate interventions the teachers have agreed to implement.
- Behaviors are to be documented along with interventions, parent communications, etc., put into the child's file and will be kept confidential. (Files are maintained for 5 years after the last day of enrollment per DCFS.) The Director is to make this document available to parents if behavior interventions go beyond implementing the stated Discipline Policy.
- The Director may become involved through classroom observations, teacher consultations, and/or parent communication at any time.
- Parents may be asked to participate in observations, evaluations or other referrals in order to maintain enrollment status.
- Evaluations, referrals and outside opinions may be sought following proper parental notification procedures.



- Per Public Act 100-010 Preventing Expulsion of Children Birth – Five, we are committed to providing a nurturing and inclusive environment for all children. This act emphasizes the prevention of expulsion of children from birth to five years of age in early childhood programs. We firmly believe that every child deserves the opportunity to learn and grow, regardless of their unique circumstances. Our transition policy ensures that children and families receive the necessary support and resources to prevent expulsion and address challenging behaviors. We work collaboratively with families, educators, and specialized professionals to develop individualized behavior support plans, implement positive behavior interventions, and provide ongoing coaching and training. By fostering a supportive and understanding atmosphere, we strive to create an inclusive community where every child can thrive and reach their full potential. In cases where it is determined that a child's unique needs are better suited to be met in a different program, we understand the importance of a smooth and seamless transition. Our transition policy includes provisions for assisting families in finding and transitioning to a program that can better cater to their child's specific requirements. Our primary goal is to ensure that every child receives the appropriate care and educational environment that best suits their individual needs, promoting their growth and success.

PLEASE NOTE: These are guidelines, not steps and their order will be determined on an individual basis.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

It is important that parents know what is occurring in the classroom and how their child is responding to that environment. This year the preschool is continuing to use Bloomz, an innovative electronic media program supporting a direct and purposeful communication stream between parents and school. Photos and messages are integral features of this system. Individual or group messages as well as emergency notices may now be sent as text, email or both. This is a secure, code protected system with individual photos/information going only to designated recipients or classes. It is private, not public. This interactive program is free to our parents who are being urged to participate. This program or others similar to it are currently used in the Lake Bluff and Lake Forest public schools.

Note: Our focus is always on teaching and interacting with your children. Therefore, no communication will occur during class hours except in an emergency. Posting will, however, occur before and after class. Also, please visit our website at preschool.firstchurchlf.org.

COMING UP:

- Intake meetings in August and fall conferences in November are opportunities for parents to communicate with their child's teachers. Parents will be scheduled via Bloomz email for your Zoom meeting and there is NO SCHOOL on the day your class is assigned.
- Father's/Special Friend's Nights are in late October for Discovery, Voyager, and Odyssey classes.
- Tentatively, Mother's/Special Friend's Days and Nights are in April during school hours for Explorer and in the evenings for Odyssey, Voyager, and Discovery.
- Parent Teacher Conferences are held the second Wednesday and Thursday in March. There is NO SCHOOL.
- End of the Year Summary Reports will be emailed to parents after the close of school in May.

GIFT AND CONTRIBUTION POLICY

All financial gifts/donations to the Preschool are completely voluntary. We wish to communicate this policy to every family concerning holiday giving, fundraising and special events that occur throughout the year. **Participation is the choice of each individual family.**

FINANCIAL AID

Funds for financial aid come from Preschool fundraising, benevolence funds of the church, and special gifts made to the Preschool financial aid fund. As funds are limited, financial aid is granted to those most in need. The process is confidential. Applications for financial aid are decided a week after acceptance letters are mailed. Any requests after that time would be subject to what funds were available on a first-come, first-served basis. Financial Aid does not apply to Voyager 5-day option, Extended Day options and Summer Enrichment.

ENROLLMENT 2025 – 2026

Registration for 2025 – 2026 may be done online. Beginning Tuesday, November 7 you may fill out your registration forms on the Preschool website at preschool.firstchurchlf.org/registration-form. Registration forms will be dated as they are received. The deadline to be considered in the first lottery pool is the middle of January. Applications received after that time will be considered on a space available basis. **These must all be completed online by January 16, 2025 to maintain preferred status.**

If you would like to learn more about the Preschool, please attend our **Open House Session on the first Thursday in November or the third Thursday in January**. There will be a presentation led by the Director and Enrollment Manager.

BIRTH CERTIFICATE / DCFS GUIDELINES

All parents will sign a receipt of the Parent Handbook stating they have read the DCFS Birth Certificate Guidelines below. A copy of this document is kept at the Preschool in each child's file.

The day care center shall:

- (A) Provide a written notice to the parent or guardian of any child to be enrolled for the first time that within 30 days of enrollment the parent or guardian must provide a certified copy of the child's birth certificate or other reliable proof of identity and age of the child. The center shall make a duplicate and return the original certified copy to the parent or guardian no later than the end of the next business day after receipt. If a certified copy of the birth certificate is not available, the parent or guardian must submit a passport, visa or other governmental documentation as proof of the child's identity and age and an affidavit or notarized letter explaining the inability to produce a certified copy of the birth certificate. The center's notice to parent or guardian shall also indicate that the center is required by law to notify the Illinois State Police or local law enforcement agency if the parent or guardian fails to submit proof of the child's identity within the 30 day time frame;
- (B) Notify the Illinois State Police or local law enforcement agency of the parent's failure to submit a certified copy of the child's birth certificate or other reliable proof of identity. The center shall also notify the parent or guardian in writing that the Illinois State Police or local law enforcement has been notified as required by law, advising the parent or guardian that he or she has 10 additional days to comply by submitting the required documentation;
- (C) Report to the Illinois State Police or local law enforcement agency any affidavit received which appears inaccurate or suspicious in form or content;
- (D) Flag the record of a child enrolled at the day care who is reported by the Illinois State Police as a missing person, and shall immediately report to the Illinois State Police any request concerning flagged records or knowledge as to the whereabouts of any missing child. [325 ILCS 50/51]



PRESCHOOL HISTORY

1963 IMOGENE KAUTZ, DIRECTOR, HEAD TEACHER

School founded as service to the community when public school junior kindergarten was discontinued. It began as a non-sectarian, non-profit, non-discriminatory, fully accredited program by the state of Illinois.

1980 BETTY BOESE, DIRECTOR, HEAD TEACHER

Governing board formed of 10 parents (church members), director, co-director and the assistant minister.

1980 – 1981 MARION FREI, DIRECTOR, HEAD TEACHER

Concept for three year old program created.

1981 – 1986 RUTH LUKE, DIRECTOR, HEAD TEACHER

Three year old class initiated 1981; science-based Odyssey class for older fours and young fives created 1984; classes meeting five mornings and four afternoons each week parent board has 11 members with 60 students enrolled.

1986 – 1990 MILENIE HINIKER, DIRECTOR, TEACHER

Additional three year old (1988) junior kindergarten class (1989) added.

1990 – 1992 DIANA MATTHEWS, DIRECTOR, TEACHER

NAEYC accreditation achieved. Names of age groups changed to Discovery (3's), Adventure (4's) and Odyssey (5's).

1992 – 2001 NORA RUCKER, DIRECTOR, TEACHER

Outreach concept initiated in fall of 1992 as an annual project involving children reaching out to their community. 1996 Adventure II class opened. Enrollment is 116 with a staff of 15 including 2 float teachers. Parent board has 15 members.

2001 – 2017 RUTH LUKE, DIRECTOR

First full-time director hired. Auxiliary Odyssey classroom (Satellite) licensed for seven additional students to meet number of returning children. Enrollment is 62 with a Parent Board of 16 and teaching staff of 13.

2018 – 2019 KRISTINA MILLS, DIRECTOR

Full-time director. Moving all classes to morning time with the addition of offering extended day options; Snack and Play one hour extension following with Enrichment STEM/STEAM programs. Enrollment is 66 with a Parent Board of 16 and teaching staff of 12.

2019 – PRESENT SUZIE BRUNNER, DIRECTOR

Full-time director. Enrollment is 53 with a Parent Board of 15 and a teaching staff of 13.

PRESCHOOL PARENT BOARD

The Board, which consists of 12 parents, preschool director, pastor and director for children’s faith formation, financial manager, enrollment manager, and faculty representative oversees all decisions regarding finances and school policies. The Preschool communicates with the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Lake Forest via the Children’s Faith Formation Committee. The Director is also a member of the church staff and attends staff meetings as a representative of the preschool. The preschool is an integral part of the ministry and mission of the First Presbyterian Church of Lake Forest.

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN PRESCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2024 – 2025

Chair	Caitlin Bourne	847.867.7865	caitlin.b.bourne@gmail.com
Chair Emeritus	Amy Mynhier	913.220.9303	mynhieramy@gmail.com
Secretary	Brittany Smith	847.736.0883	sabjsmith@gmail.com
Communications	Katherine Teske	574.274.2396	katherinemeteske@gmail.com
	Kristi Bernardi	847.436.2651	kristi.t.bernardi@gmail.com
Parent Programs	Alissa Morton	847.363.4566	alissakmorton@gmail.com
	Leah Pavlick	847.345.7489	leahpavlick@gmail.com
	Bethany Stephens	312.443.2653	bethanydstephens@gmail.com
Fundraising	Maren Hussain	847.542.5331	mkwesley@gmail.com
	Mara Lala	847.830.7957	marahilgenberg@gmail.com
	Rachel Pope	847.528.8541	sofyanrc@gmail.com
	Megan Small	847.323.8053	meganbournesmall@gmail.com
Enrollment Manager	Suzanne Carberry	847.207.5745	scarberry@firstchurchlf.org
Treasurer	Alexis Beckley	847.702.2821	ahbeckley@gmail.com
Financial Manager	Lenka Vrazda	224.544.1974	preschool@firstchurchlf.org
Children’s Faith Formation			
Faculty Representative	Kathleen Aberle	847.922.4855	kathleenaberle99@gmail.com
Director	Suzie Brunner	847.691.5733	sbrunner@firstchurchlf.org



Preschool Staff 2024 – 2025

Director <i>sbrunner@firstchurchlf.org</i>	Suzie Brunner	847.691.5733
Explorer	Kathleen Aberle Kelly Haramis	847.922.4855 224.595.4429
Discovery	Jen Redding Annie Ignoffo, Assistant Katie Thomson	773.551.0079 847.530.2997 630.380.4915
Voyager	Lindsay Kelly Brianna Meade Suzanne Carberry, Assistant Colleen Kaminsky, Assistant	312.925.9613 818.383.4574 847.207.5745 773.991.8190
Voyager 5-Day	Suzie Brunner Shannon Martin Colleen Kaminsky, Assistant	847.691.5733 847.372.7516 773.991.8190
Odyssey	Betsy Mackey Leilea Glick Marianne Stride, Assistant	812.989.8441 224.433.4650 847.648.1502
Art Appreciation <i>slapecher@gmail.com</i>	Sue Peecher	847.363.1976
Music <i>amiwcrawford@me.com</i>	Ami Crawford	815.501.1452
Enrollment Manager <i>scarberry@firstchurchlf.org</i>	Suzanne Carberry	847.207.5745
Financial Manager <i>preschool@firstchurchlf.org</i>	Lenka Vrazda	224.544.1974

2024 – 2025

CLASS	NUMBER OF PAYMENTS	PAYMENT DUE DATE
Explorer	1 - \$3,500	April 19, 2024
	4 - \$875 each	April 19, 2024 September 19, 2024 November 19, 2024 January 17, 2025
Discovery	1 - \$4,540	April 19, 2024
	4 - \$1,135 each	April 19, 2024 September 19, 2024 November 19, 2024 January 17, 2025
Voyager	1 - \$5,700	April 19, 2024
	4 - \$1,425 each	April 19, 2024 September 19, 2024 November 19, 2024 January 17, 2025
Voyager 5-Day	1 - \$6,760	April 19, 2024
	4 - \$1,690 each	April 19, 2024 September 19, 2024 November 19, 2024 January 17, 2025
Odyssey	1 - \$6,760	April 19, 2024
	4 - \$1,690 each	April 19, 2024 September 19, 2024 November 19, 2024 January 17, 2025

Tuition payments may be made online or mailed to the preschool. **Please do not hand payments to classroom teachers.**

A due date will be posted on Bloomz.

A \$25 LATE FEE WILL BE ASSESSED ON ALL PAYMENTS RECEIVED 10 DAYS AFTER THE DUE DATE.

*If there is a financial problem, please contact the Director at 847.295.1214.

CALENDAR 2024 – 2025

No Extended Day = No Snack & Play and
No Enrichment Class

April 21	1 Tuition Payment due OR 1 of 4 Tuition Payments due for 2024 – 2025 School Year	Oct 16	Wagner Farm Explorer, Odyssey 9:30 AM
Aug 26 – 30	Intake Conferences: All Programs	Oct 21	No Extended Day
	Open House Explorer, Voyager, Odyssey	Oct 22	Library Begins Voyager 9:30 – 10:00 AM Odyssey 10:00 – 10:15 AM
Sep 3	Evening Parent Meetings Explorer 6:15 – 7:00 PM Voyager 6:30 – 7:15 PM Discovery, Odyssey 7:30 – 8:15 PM Snack and Play Registration begins	Oct 23	Art Appreciation begins Father's Night Discovery, Voyager, Odyssey 6:30 – 7:15 PM
Sep 4	First Day of Classes: Voyager, Odyssey Open House Discovery	Oct 30	Class Parties Discovery 10:30 – 11:15 AM No Extended Day
Sep 5	1/2 Class begins: Explorer	Oct 31	Class Parties Explorer, Voyager, Odyssey 10:30 – 11:15 AM No Extended Day
Sep 6	1/2 Class begins: Discovery, Voyager 5-Day	Nov 4 – 8	No Extended Day
Sep 7	Fall Family Gathering 10:00 – 11:30 AM (tentative), West Park	Nov 4	Walking Field Trip Voyager, Odyssey 10:00 AM
Sep 9	1/2 Class begins: Discovery	Nov 5	Prospective Parent Meeting 9:30 – 10:15 PM, Preschool Classroom
Sep 10	1/2 Class begins: Explorer	Nov 6	No School for Discovery, Voyager, Odyssey: Fall Conferences
Sep 11	Whole Class begins: Discovery	Nov 7	No School for Discovery, Explorer, Voyager, Odyssey: Fall Conferences
Sep 12	Whole Class begins: Explorer	Nov 7	Priority Registration for 2025 – 2026 opens
Sep 16	Trimester 1 of Extended Day Sessions begin	Nov 19	3 of 4 Tuition Payments due
Sep 19	2 of 4 Tuition Payments due	Nov 25 – 26	No Extended Day
Sep 23	No Extended Day	Nov 27 – 29	No School: Thanksgiving Break
Sep 25	Library Training 9:30 – 10:00 AM Music begins Discovery 9:15 – 9:35 AM Voyager 9:40 – 10:00 AM	Dec 2	School Resumes
Sep 26	Music begins Explorer 9:15 – 9:35 AM Odyssey 9:40 – 10:00 AM	Dec 3	Library Voyager 9:30 – 10:00 AM Odyssey 10:00 – 10:15 AM
Oct 7	Class Pictures Discovery 9:15 – 10:15 AM Voyager 10:15 – 11:15 AM	Dec 5	Trimester 2 Extended Day Registration begins
Oct 8	Class Pictures Explorer 9:15 – 10:15 AM Odyssey 10:15 – 11:15 AM	Dec 11	Sing-a-long Discovery, Voyager, Odyssey 10:45 – 11:15 AM No Extended Day
Oct 14	No School: Columbus Day	Dec 12	Sing-a-long Explorer 10:45 – 11:15 AM
Oct 15	Wagner Farm Discovery, Voyager 9:30 AM		

CALENDAR 2024 - 2025

Dec 17	Trimester 1 Extended Day Sessions end Class Parties
Dec 18	Explorer, Voyager 10:30 - 11:15 AM No Extended Day
Dec 19	Class Parties Discovery, Odyssey 10:30 - 11:15 AM No Extended Day Trimester 2 Extended Day Registration ends
Dec 23 - Jan 5	No School: Winter Break
Jan 2	Snack and Play Registration begins
Jan 6	School Resumes
Jan 8	Trimester 2 Extended Day Sessions begin
Jan 9	Prospective Parent Meeting 9:30 - 10:30 AM, South Parlor
Jan 15	Art Appreciation
Jan 16	Priority Registration for 2025 - 2026 ends
Jan 17	4 of 4 Tuition Payments due
Jan 20	No School: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Jan 27	No Extended Day
Feb 3 - 7	Art Studio Week
Feb 7	No Extended Day
Feb 8	Art Fair + Ryan Nyland Toy Drive
Feb 12	Class Parties Discovery 10:30 - 11:15 AM No Extended Day
Feb 13	Class Parties Explorer, Voyager, Odyssey 10:30 - 11:15 AM No Extended Day
Feb 14	No School: Tri District Institute Day
Feb 17	No School: Presidents' Day
Feb 19	Art Appreciation
Feb 27	Trimester 3 Extended Day Registration begins
Mar 3 - 7	No Extended Day
Mar 5	No School for Discovery, Voyager, Odyssey: Spring Conferences No Extended Day

Mar 6	No School for Discovery, Explorer, Voyager, Odyssey: Spring Conferences No Extended Day
March 7	No School: Offsite Teachers Conference No Extended Day
Mar 19	Art Appreciation
Mar 21	Trimester 2 Extended Day Sessions end Trimester 3 Extended Day Registration ends
Mar 24 - 28	No School: Spring Break
Mar 31	Snack and Play Registration begins School Resumes
Apr 2	Trimester 3 Extended Day Sessions begin No Faithbuilding
Apr 16	Art Appreciation
Apr 18	No School: Good Friday
Apr 21	No School: Easter Monday
Apr 24	Mom's Day Explorer 10:30 - 11:15 AM Mom's Night Discovery, Voyager, Odyssey 6:00 - 6:45 PM
Apr 28	No Extended Day: Staff Meeting
Apr 28 - May 2	Alternate Drop-off/Dismissal Schedule
May 2	No School: School Closed due to Church Rummage Sale
May 13	Last Music class Explorer
May 14	Last Music classes Discovery, Voyager, Odyssey
May 16	Trimester 3 Extended Day Sessions end
May 20	Last Day of School for Explorer
May 21	Last Day of School for Discovery
May 22	Last Day of School for Voyager and Odyssey Graduation
May 23	Art Institute Field Trip
May 26	No School: Memorial Day
May 27 - 30	Summer Enrichment



IMPORTANT DATES

NO SCHOOL

Sep 2	Labor Day
Oct 14	Columbus Day
Nov 6	No School for Discovery, Voyager, Odyssey: Fall Conferences
Nov 7	No School for Explorer, Voyager, Odyssey: Fall Conferences
Nov 27 – 29	Thanksgiving Break
Dec 23 – Jan 5	Winter Break
Jan 20	Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Feb 14	Tri District Institute Day
Feb 17	Presidents' Day
Mar 5	No School for Discovery, Voyager, Odyssey: Spring Conferences
Mar 6	No School for Explorer, Voyager, Odyssey: Spring Conferences
Mar 24 – 28	Spring Break
May 2	School Closed due to Church Rummage Sale
May 20	Last Day of School: Explorer
May 21	Last Day of School: Discovery, Odyssey, Voyager 5-Day
May 22	Last Day of School: Odyssey, Voyager Graduation
May 23	Art Institute Field Trip

TUITION DEADLINES

Apr 21	Explorer	1 Payment of \$3,500
	Discovery	1 Payment of \$4,540
	Voyager	1 Payment of \$5,700
	Voyager 5-Day	1 Payment of \$6,760
	Odyssey	1 Payment of \$6,760

OR

Apr 19, 2024	Explorer	4 Payments of \$875 each
Sep 19, 2024	Discovery	4 Payments of \$1,135 each
Nov 19, 2024	Voyager	4 Payments of \$1,425 each
Jan 17, 2025	Voyager 5-Day	4 Payments of \$1,690 each
	Odyssey	4 Payments of \$1,690 each

*A \$25 late fee will be assessed on all payments received 10 days after the due date.

IMPORTANT DATES

EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM SCHEDULE

No Extended Day = No Snack & Play and
No Enrichment Class

Aug 17	Trimester 1 Extended Day Registration begins
Aug 31	Trimester 1 Extended Day Registration closes
Sep 11	Snack and Play Registration begins
Sep 16	Trimester 1 Extended Day Sessions begin
Sep 23	No Extended Day
Oct 21	No Extended Day
Oct 30	No Extended Day
Oct 31	No Extended Day
Nov 4 - 8	No Extended Day
Nov 25 - 26	No Extended Day
Dec 5	Trimester 2 Extended Day Registration begins
Dec 11	No Extended Day
Dec 17	Trimester 1 Extended Day Sessions end
Jan 2	Snack and Play Registration begins
Jan 8	Trimester 2 Extended Day Sessions begin
Jan 27	No Extended Day

Feb 7	No Extended Day
Feb 12 - 13	No Extended Day
Feb 27	Trimester 3 Extended Day Registration begins
Mar 3 - 7	No Extended Day
Mar 21	Trimester 3 Extended Day Registration ends Trimester 2 Extended Day Sessions end
Mar 31	Snack and Play Registration begins
Apr 2	Trimester 3 Extended Day Sessions begin
Apr 28	No Extended Day
May 2	No Extended Day
May 16	End of Trimester 3 Extended Day Sessions





FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
Preschool

First Presbyterian Preschool

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