

Epworth United Methodist Church
Mother's Day Out, Preschool & Kindergarten
Program

Monday—Friday
9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

2020/2021

Parent Handbook



2102 Epworth Drive NE
Huntsville, Alabama 35811

MDO, Preschool & Kindergarten
(256) 534-6100

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Welcome to Epworth UMC Mother's Day Out, Preschool & Kindergarten Program

Thank you for choosing our program at Epworth United Methodist Church. The Epworth staff wants to work together with you to ensure a year of positive social, emotional, physical and educational development for your child. Our doors are always open to parents, and we encourage you to get to know your child's teachers, friends, and school routine. Together we will make this a wonderful, exciting time of growing wonder and wisdom.

The Pastor, Directors, Teaching Staff
& MDO Board

Statement of Purpose

To extend the ministry of Epworth United Methodist Church its' MDO, Preschool, Pre-K and Kindergarten provides a part-day program of educational activities which contribute to the spiritual, social, emotional, and physical development of each child. The program is conducted by a competent and qualified staff in an atmosphere of love and concern for each child while providing the academic tools necessary for your child to succeed in the future.

School Calendar

The Epworth MDO, Preschool, Pre-K and Kindergarten Program follows the Madison County Schools calendar with the possible exception of first and last days of school and certain religious holidays. The calendar is provided to parents at the beginning of the school year.

Staff

The Epworth MDO, Preschool, Pre-K and Kindergarten Program follows the Safe Sanctuary Guidelines as set by the North Alabama Conference of United Methodist Churches. These guidelines require each classroom to have two teachers, regardless of size. Our teachers receive 6 hours of classroom skill training per year, CPR and First Aid & Safety certification, and are taught fire, tornado and intruder preparedness and emergency procedures. A background check is conducted on all church staff members, teachers, and substitute teachers before employment begins with the program.

Registration

*Please see COVID-19 Guidelines and Procedures

Registration is on a **first come, first serve basis**. Enrollment for the upcoming school year begins in early spring for currently enrolled students, siblings and church members, followed by open enrollment. When classrooms are full, a waiting list will be started. A **non-refundable registration fee** must accompany the registration form for your child to have confirmed enrollment. Registration fees are not collected for children on waiting lists.

A certificate of immunization or religious exemption is required by the 1st day of school. If a certificate is not received, the child will not be allowed to return until the blue card is provided to the MDO Program.

Divorced or Separated Parents: Epworth United Methodist Church MDO/Preschool/PreK/Kindergarten has no legal authority to refuse either parent the right to visit or pick up their child. However, we will honor all court orders and injunctions regarding custody which apply to your child or children. We must be furnished with a copy of any such court order. Both parents may make changes to the pickup authorization unless the court order states differently.

Guardianship: If a child is enrolled by a legal guardian or foster care provider, a copy of all legal documents must be held in the child's enrollment folder in the director's office.

Tuition & Fees

*Please see COVID-19 Guidelines and Procedures

Tuition payment is due by the **1st of each month** (August through May). If tuition is not received by the 10th of each month, a \$5 late fee will be charged for each school week until the tuition (and late fees) are paid. If tuition continues to be unpaid after a period of 2 weeks, the parent will be asked to withdraw the child, unless special arrangements have been made with the Director.

Tuition and registration fees are as stated on the registration form. **Tuition will not be adjusted for holidays, weather days, the child's frequent absences, or for any other reason.** Tuition rates are pro-rated for the year and are due in full for each month. All fees are non-refundable and checks should be made payable to Epworth Preschool.

Attendance

The MDO, Preschool, Pre-K, and Kindergarten class times are 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Mondays thru Fridays.

Children in the Caterpillars thru Owls classes may attend 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 days. Days must be set at time of registration. The Pre-K aged children (age 4 by September 1st) are required to attend the 3-day MWF class, or the 5-day M-F class. The Kindergarten/TK class is a 5-day program.

If you need to pick up your child before the end of the program day, please try to inform the teacher so that the teacher will have your child prepared to go home at that time.

Arrival & Departure

*Please see COVID-19 Guidelines and Procedures

Doors will open each day at 9:25 a.m. At this time, you may either walk your child into class or use the car rider line to drop your child off with one of the waiting teachers. So that teachers may direct their complete attention to the children, please do not linger when you walk your child into his/her classroom. It is very important for your child to arrive on time. Aside from the disruption it may cause the class, children may miss out on learning opportunities if they arrive late.

Please keep your child with you at all times when walking from your vehicle into the building. Children running ahead of a parent is a safety concern. Please do not allow them to climb the handrails, hillside, or ramp outside the entry doors. **Safety is our number one concern.**

Parents of **children who still remain at 1:35 p.m. will be charged an initial late pick up fee of \$10.** Plus, an additional \$1 per minute beginning at 1:36. Children, who are picked up after 1:30 p.m. three times, will be asked to leave the Program. Because our Program is a 4-hour program we respectfully ask that you not be late in picking up your child from school. In the event of an emergency, please call the office and make other arrangements for your child.

Your child's safety is our priority, please be patient and aware of your surroundings while using the car line. The car line process may be lengthy at the start of the school year.

Discipline

The guidance of the children's behavior will be conducted in such manner as to assist them in developing self-control and assuming responsibility for their own behavior. Discipline is treated as a positive learning experience. Reminding and redirection will always be attempted. If the misbehavior continues, a "time out", or removal from the activity may be used. Occasionally unacceptable or aggressive behavior may become harmful to the child, other children, or the teachers. A confidential conference with the parents, teachers, and the director will be requested, and enrollment may be terminated if hurtful or dangerous behavior continues.

Withdraw from the Program

Parents are required to give two weeks WRITTEN notice before withdrawing their child. If such notice is not given, they will be expected to pay the next month's tuition.

The Director of Epworth's MDO/Preschool/PreK/Kindergarten may ask that a child be withdrawn when, in her best professional judgment, it is not in the best interest of the child and/or his/her classmates for the child to continue attending Epworth. Depending on the circumstances, it is possible that no advance notice will be given. Any tuition that has been paid in advance will be refunded.

Termination of Enrollment from the Program

Enrollment may be considered terminated if any or all of the following occur. Tuition payment is delinquent and/or arrangements have not been made with the Director. Parents repeated failure to comply with Epworth MDO/Preschool/PreK/Kindergarten Program's policies and procedures stated in the Parent Handbook. The Program, on its sole discretion, determines that it is unable to meet the needs of the child, or that it is not in the best interest of the Program or other children enrolled to have the child in the classroom. Under certain circumstances, this dismissal may be immediate. Any tuition that has been paid in advance will be refunded.

Illness Policy

*Please see COVID-19 Guidelines and Procedures

Your cooperation is needed to keep our children healthy. Parents are asked to keep their children home if the child has a fever of 100 degrees or higher, is vomiting or having diarrhea. Children need to be free of fever, vomiting and/or diarrhea for at least 24 hours before returning to Epworth MDO, Preschool & Kindergarten. If your child develops symptoms of illness during the school day you will be contacted by an Epworth staff member to pick him/her up from school immediately. Please be considerate of our staff and the other children and do not send your child to school ill. If your child contracts a communicable illness, please notify Epworth MDO, Preschool & Kindergarten immediately as to prevent the spread of the illness and other parents can be notified if their child has been exposed.

Epworth teachers are not allowed to give medication with the exception of an EpiPen, inhaler, and other emergency medication. Parents may come to the classroom to administer any non-emergency medication to their child.

Food Allergies

Children with KNOWN severe food allergies must meet with the Director and fill out special medical forms and an emergency medication release form. All medications for these types of allergies will be stored in the Director's office or safely in the classroom and will only be administered by certain staff members designated on the child's forms.

Safety

*Please see COVID-19 Guidelines and Procedures

Since young children are prone to illnesses and other events that may require our getting in touch with you during the course of the school day, **please make sure all phone numbers and emergency contact information on your child's registration form are kept current.** If you are not going to be home or at your usual workplace while your child is at Epworth, please insure that a written notice is given to the teacher or director with the number of where you can be reached.

In the event of an accident or illness requiring emergency medical care, the Epworth staff will NOT personally transport a child to the hospital but will

call HEMSI for transportation to the Huntsville Hospital's emergency room. The Enrollment Agreement you signed, authorizes the Epworth staff to obtain emergency medical care for your child until we can contact you and you can reach the hospital.

Inclement Weather

In case of snow, ice, potential tornado activity, or other inclement weather, you are encouraged to listen to local radio or TV stations. We follow the Madison County School System with regards to delays and/or closings. If the County Schools are delayed by 1 hour; Epworth will open at 9:30 a.m. If the County Schools are delayed by 2 hours; Epworth will open at 10 a.m. If the County Schools are delayed by 3 hours; Epworth will open at 11:00 a.m. If the County Schools are closed; Epworth will be closed. If the County Schools close after the start of the school day; Epworth will close **immediately**.

During times of potential severe weather, Epworth will monitor the weather radio and television news stations for a warning. As soon as a tornado warning is issued, all children and teachers will be immediately evacuated to the safe shelter areas of our building (2nd floor basement and /or 3rd floor bathrooms near gym). For the safety of you and your child, we ask that you DO NOT remove your child from the building while we are under a tornado warning. If you do arrive during a warning, we will strongly encourage you to stay with your child until the warning has passed. If you are uncomfortable with your child being here during severe weather, we ask that you pick your child up BEFORE a tornado warning becomes imminent. We sincerely care about the safety of you and your child!

The staff will make every effort to contact parents in the event of school closing after the start of the school day. We ask that you pick up your child before picking up other children that may attend public schools. This will provide our teachers the time necessary to pick up their own children.

Classroom Visits

*Please see COVID-19 Guidelines and Procedures. No classroom visits at this time.

You are welcome to visit your child's classroom at any time, with the understanding that the teacher's responsibility during class time is to conduct the class. We offer many opportunities for parent involvement throughout the

school year. These opportunities include being a reader to the class, assisting with crafts and helping with special events, parties, and programs. Parents should check in with the director before entering classrooms.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences may be arranged at either the teacher's or parent's request whenever it seems in the best interest of the child.

Communication with Teachers

Any complaints, questions or concerns that you have about activities in your child's classroom should be discussed with your child's teacher. If the issue is not resolved there, please bring it to the Director's attention.

Teachers are often not able to come to the phone during the school hours due to the busy schedule of their classroom but will always return calls when they are free of their teaching responsibilities. If there is a need to speak with your child's teacher during the school day, please call the office at 256-534-6100.

Communication with Parents

*Please see COVID-19 Guidelines and Procedures

Parents will be provided with information pertinent to the MDO, Preschool, Pre-K, Kindergarten program, church and community events through a variety of means including written notices sent home in the child's folder, email and/or social media. Please check your child's backpack daily for these as well as any notes the teacher may include regarding your child's day. Monthly newsletters including important dates and events will be sent home.

Child Abuse & Neglect

Our staff, like all teachers in Alabama, are required by law to report any suspicions of child abuse or neglect to the Department of Human Resources.

Speech, Hearing & Occupational Therapy Screenings

*Please see COVID-19 Guidelines and Procedures. The screenings may be scheduled for later this school year.

Early in the school year, screening for hearing, speech and vision will be offered by a certified screener or health care provider. These tests are optional and are offered at a low cost. Communication regarding these tests will be sent home in your child's folder.

Developmental Screening & Testing

Part of the teacher's responsibility is to assess children in areas of child development: fine motor, gross motor, language, adaptive, social, emotional and cognitive skills. If your child's teacher should have a concern regarding your child's development in any of these areas, they will seek to discuss their concerns with you.

Often it is your child's teacher who is the first to identify concerns during the early years of education. After conferencing to discuss their observations and concerns, they may suggest screening or testing within the public-school system. These screenings are very thorough and can lead to specialized services available at no charge within the school system.

Snacks & Lunches

*Please see COVID-19 Guidelines and Procedures

Children bring their own lunches. Please refrain from frozen meals, microwavable Mac & Cheese cups, carbonated and/or canned beverages. Be certain that your child's teacher has an accurate list of any food allergies your child may have. Some classrooms may be "Nut Free" due to food allergies. You will be notified if your child's classroom is "Nut Free". Snacks and snack time will be at the teachers' discretion, due to children's allergies, classroom time constraints, etc.

Holidays & Birthdays

*Please see COVID-19 Guidelines and Procedures. No visitors at this time and individually wrapped snacks only.

Epworth celebrates with a party during special holidays. You may be asked by your child's teacher to help out with refreshments. Even though all children may not regularly attend on the actual day of the party, all children are invited to come to the party!

Our teachers try to ensure that each child gets special attention on his/her birthday. If you wish, you may send cupcakes or a special treat for the entire class, but please let your child's teacher know at least two days in advance so that they may plan for the special occasion. Children with summer birthdays may choose a day during the school year to be their "special day."

If your child is having any kind of party at home, please do not send the invitations to school unless the entire class is invited. This will avoid hurt feelings of those not invited. Due to privacy issues, we are unable to give out personal information, such as email, phone #'s or home addresses.

School Pictures

*Please see COVID-19 Guidelines and Procedures. School pictures may be rescheduled for later in the school year.

Each fall, Christmas, and spring individual and class photographs are made of the children. You will be notified of the date in advance. If your child does not normally attend on picture day, you may bring her or him to have their picture made. Parents are under no obligation to purchase photographs.

What Your Child Needs Each Day

*Please see COVID-19 Guidelines and Procedures. No special items at this time.

***Lunch:** Each child should bring their own lunch daily. We occasionally have "pizza party" days where your child will not have to bring their own lunch. Again, a note will be sent home in advance so that you may decide if you want your child to participate or not.

Clothing: Children should be dressed in school appropriate clothes. We ask that each child have an extra set of seasonal clothing provided in case of spills or accidents. Extra diapers for our younger ones are requested also. Please no dress up clothing, costumes, or princess gowns except when the classroom is having a special event, of which you will be notified. Girls should wear shorts under their dresses. Each day, weather permitting and the outside temperature is 50 degrees and above, the children will go outside. Please send a sweater or jacket to school with your child every day during the cooler months. There is no provision for a child to stay inside while the rest of the class is on the playground.

Shoes: Tennis shoes are best for school activities. Flip flops, crocs or any open toed slip-on type shoe is not appropriate for the playground equipment, mulch and stairways. We do not change shoes before going outside.

***Special items:** Your child may be asked to bring or wear a special item on certain days; a note will be sent home in advance so that you may prepare.

Potty Training

Children three years old and older, enrolled in Preschool, Pre-K and/or Kindergarten must be potty trained before the beginning of the school year. We do not have the facilities or supplies required to change children in these classrooms and we feel that children of these ages deserve privacy. We understand that accidents will occasionally occur and a teacher will assist the child when needed. If your child is not potty trained when school starts he/she may be placed in a potty-training classroom, if space is available. You may withdraw your child and we will place him/her on the waiting list or you may continue to pay tuition to hold your child's spot until he/she is potty trained.

Thank you for enrolling your children in our program.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns.

Epworth MDO, Preschool & Kindergarten
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Epworth

Mother's Day Out, Preschool & Kindergarten

Mother's Day Out and Preschool children may attend T/Th, M/W/F or M-F. The days are set at registration. The classes are as follows:

Caterpillars: Children ages 6 months to approximately 18 months will have the opportunity to play with other children and receive love and care from our qualified staff.

Butterflies: Children close to 18 months to approximately 2 years will have the opportunity to explore their world through their senses and through age appropriate crafts and activities. We also encourage independence and social skills. Potty skills may be introduced to some of these children.

Frogs: Children between 2 and 3 years of age are encouraged to recognize colors, shapes and explore their world through fun play and activities. We also encourage independence and social skills. They sing, dance, color, paint, read and play together. These children are still trying to master their potty skills.

Preschool-Monkeys, Llamas & Owls: Children 3 to 4 years of age are growing physically, socially and emotionally. We continue learning to recognize colors, shapes, and patterns in addition to introducing numbers and letters in our structured curriculum. We have fun learning in our world and will be prepared for Pre-K. The children in these classes must be potty trained.

Pre-K -Lions & Zebras: Children four years old are preparing for academic and social success in Kindergarten. Children are required to attend the 3-day MWF Pre K Program or the 5-day Monday thru Friday Pre K Program.

Kindergarten/TK-Giraffes: Kindergarten/Transitional Kindergarten is a 5 day per week class. The Alabama course of Study for Kindergarten is followed. We work to prepare students for K and 1st Grade by encouraging all learning styles and using a variety of themes throughout the year. They are the only class that is allowed to leave campus and attend field trips throughout the school year.

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Matthew 19:14

COVID-19 Guidelines & Procedures

Drop Off and Pick-Up

Families will be greeted at the side door or through the car line where they will be met by a director, teacher, or church staff who will escort the child/children to their classroom. Before entering the classroom each child's temperature will be taken. Parents, guardians, and other family members will not be allowed inside the Church building. Parents and guardians must practice social distancing while at the side door.

Children and staff will be required to wash their hands immediately upon entering the building and hourly throughout the day. Upon your arrival to pick up your child, a staff member will bring your child out to you. Doing so will limit direct contact and help us to maintain social distancing.

Health & Safety

Each classroom will be limited to no more than 12 children in attendance each day.

We will not share equipment and will clean equipment between uses.

Children will not drink from the water fountains, please send an easy to open and close water bottle each day. We can refill as needed throughout the day.

All classrooms will remain separated to reduce the number of children in one area and to reduce the possibility of viral transmission. Each class will have a scheduled gym/playground time.

Teachers will disinfect high-touch surfaces, such as door handles, light switches, faucets, toys, and games that children play with at least once daily. We will have access to anti-bacterial hand sanitizers and disposable gloves and use them as needed throughout the day. Our staff will wash/scrub their hands and children's hands a minimum of hourly (noted by the CDC as the most effective preventive measure). We will also perform an enhanced deep cleaning every night in all areas, on all touched surfaces.

No MDO, Preschool, Pre-K, or Kindergarten tours will be given until further notice to reduce the number of visitors in the building.

Snack/Lunch Preparation & Service

All surfaces will be disinfected before snack/lunch preparation and feedings and teachers will wash hands before and after snack/lunch preparation and feeding. Snacks will be individually wrapped, no shared containers of snack foods, and each child's snack/lunch will be plated and served by a teacher.

Child Health

Temperatures will be taken if children are exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms. Children who start to experience symptoms of respiratory illness, including a fever of 100.4 or

greater while at Epworth MDO, Preschool & Kindergarten, will be isolated from other children until they can be picked up. **Children who are enrolled and have a medical condition, such as asthma, will be required to have a letter from their doctor stating they can attend Epworth MDO, Preschool & Kindergarten.** The “Order of The Madison County Health Officer Requiring the Wearing of Face Coverings in Public Places” effective July 7, 2020 requires children 3 years and older to wear a mask/face covering “to the maximum extent possible”. We will notify our families when this order changes.

Until further notice, all Kindergarten field trips will be suspended.

Tuition

If Epworth UMC MDO, Preschool & Kindergarten is open and your child is in attendance, tuition will be due in full. This includes if we are only open for a portion of a week and need to close for the remainder of the week. If you choose to withdraw your child and not pay tuition, there is no guaranteed spot upon a request to return, and we will place your child on our waiting list.

Communication

If the current situation changes and it becomes necessary to update our procedures or close our program temporarily, we will notify our students’ families by email and/or Facebook.

Epworth UMC MDO, Preschool & Kindergarten follows the Madison County School System regarding school closings. The MCSS has implemented Levels of Practice and Prevention. If the Madison County School System operates on Practice and Prevention Levels 1 & 2, we will remain open. If the MCSS operates on a Level 3 the school system will close and the Epworth MDO, Preschool & Kindergarten Program will close. If an individual Madison County school closes due to the spread of COVID-19 we will assess the situation and make a safe determination.

If a child or teacher in our program report a positive COVID-19 test result, Epworth MDO, Preschool & Kindergarten will close for 24-48 hours to disinfect and sanitize.

You may follow our Facebook page and/or your child’s class Facebook page for information and program updates.

As always, feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns. Thank you for your understanding and patience as we implement these new procedures. Our goal is to minimize disruption while at the same time keeping you, your families, and our staff healthy and well.

Acknowledgement of Parent Handbook and New COVID-19 Guidelines & Procedures

Epworth United Methodist Church and the Epworth UMC MDO, Preschool & Kindergarten Program are not responsible for any exposure or spread relative to the COVID-19 Coronavirus.

By my signature, I have acknowledged that I have read, understand, and agree to the policies and procedures of Epworth UMC MDO, Preschool & Kindergarten regarding the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) precautions.

Parent Signature

Date