



Dear Parents,

Thank you for placing your child at Spring of Life United Methodist Church Early Learning Center (ELC). It is an exciting 15th year that we are entering into. We consider it an honor and a privilege to be part of the foundation of your child's development.

The ELC is committed to teaching preschoolers. We are convinced the preschool years are vital to the overall development of your child. Our mission is to teach the foundations of academics, give each child a love for learning, and to show Christ and His love for us in all we do.

Each child and family are important to us. We want to be a blessing to you. In the months and years that you are with us, we hope you will take every opportunity to participate in our program. Let your child's teacher know you want to be involved. Please communicate your concerns, ideas, and suggestions to us.

Each child enrolling in the ELC must reach their birthday on or before Sept 1 for the class they are enrolling in; 2s must be 2 on or before Sept 1 of that year, and so on. 3-year olds MUST be potty trained by the time they enter the 3s class.

This handbook is designed to assist you as you get to know us and the policies and procedures of the ELC. Please read it thoroughly and refer to it when questions arise. The last page of this handbook needs to be signed by you and returned to me at the beginning of school. We are so pleased to have the opportunity to get to know you and share in the life of your preschooler.

In Christ,
Margo Cook
ELC Director
Spring of Life United Methodist Church
11101 Moss Park Rd
Orlando FL 32832
407-282-8689
Margo.Cook@springchurch.org
www.springchurch.org





Mission

The mission of Spring of Life United Methodist Church is Offering the Living Water of Jesus Christ to all who are thirsty, so that they will believe and have life in His name. The Spring of Life Early Learning Center will exist to support that mission of the church by offering developmentally appropriate holistic education which will help children develop physically, cognitively, emotionally, socially and spiritually. It will be licensed, and it will be a ministry of the church and therefore subject to the church's pastoral and lay leadership. Having the school is one of many ways Spring of Life United Methodist Church is seeking to reach our community with the love of Christ and be faithful to our baptismal vows to "surround our children with a community of love and forgiveness that by our teaching and example they may be guided to accept God's grace for themselves, profess their faith openly, and lead a Christian life".

Security

If you arrive after 9:15 a.m. or before 1:55 p.m., the ELC doors will be locked. You will need to use the Church's Main Entrance. This door also remains locked so please ring the bell and someone from the Church or ELC Staff will meet you and take your child

If someone other than you will be picking up your child and the staff does not know them, they will be asked for photo ID and records pulled to verify that they indeed are allowed to pick up your child. If their name is not on our emergency pick-up card or it hasn't been cleared by you, WE WILL CALL YOU TO VERIFY WE CAN RELEASE YOUR CHILD TO THEM.

THIS IS ALL FOR THE SAFETY OF OUR CHILDREN/STAFF. Let the staff know anytime you are authorizing someone new to pick up your child. You are allowed to add someone new anytime to your child's emergency contact list. PLEASE KEEP THIS FORM UPDATED.

ATTENDANCE

MISSING SCHOOL TAKES AWAY FROM YOUR CHILD'S LEARNING. WE ENCOURAGE ALL FAMILIES TO BE AT SCHOOL EACH AND EVERY DAY AND SAVE VACATIONS AND SPECIAL TIME AWAY FOR LONG HOLIDAY WEEKENDS AND SCHEDULED DAYS OFF. WE UNDERSTAND THAT ILLNESS WILL OCCUR, AND WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO KEEP YOUR CHILD AT HOME WHENEVER SICK. PLEASE REFER TO THE HEALTH POLICY BELOW FOR EXAMPLES OF TIMES TO KEEP YOUR CHILD AT HOME.

WE ARE REQUIRED BY DCF [DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES] TO USE THEIR ABSENCE POLICY. IF YOUR CHILD IS GOING TO BE ABSENT FROM SCHOOL YOU MUST EMAIL OR CALL BY 8:30 A.M.

IF WE HAVE NOT HEARD FROM YOU BY 10:00 A.M. WE WILL HAVE TO CALL TO FIND OUT WHY YOUR CHILD IS ABSENT. IF WE DO NOT SPEAK WITH YOU, WE ARE REQUIRED TO CALL EVERYONE ON YOUR CHILD'S CONTACT LIST UNTIL WE PERSONALLY TALK TO SOMEONE. SO IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU NOTIFY US IF YOUR CHILD IS GOING TO BE ABSENT. IF YOU NOTIFY US BY EMAIL, PLEASE EMAIL BOTH THE DIRECTOR AND YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER.

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Tardiness

Being on time for school is of the utmost importance. We want your child to feel successful and we want to teach our children that being on time is expected in anything we do as we go through life. Spring of Life ELC requires that ALL students must be in class by 9:15 a.m; drop-off begins at 9:00 a.m. each morning. The teachers have arrival activities for children to participate in and many daily routines start the moment they arrive in the room. We ask that all parents please be respectful of the arrival time and be punctual.

We understand that from time to time incidents arise and you will be late, when this happens you will be required to come through the main church entrance and walk your child to their classroom door and you will sign them in.

Please notify your child's teacher if you have a scheduled appointment and will be running late. We do ask that you NOT bring your child to school after 10:30 a.m. This causes a major distraction to the class as well as the child missing a majority of the academic day.



• VPK TARDINESS AND ABSENCES

- DUE TO THE EXPECTATIONS OF KINDERGARTEN READINESS AS SPECIFIED IN THE VPK STANDARDS, AND THE BELIEF THAT EXCESSIVE ABSENCES AFFECT LEARNING, A CHILD ENROLLED IN THE VPK PROGRAM AT SPRING OF LIFE SHOULD NOT BE EXCESSIVELY TARDY NOR ABSENT MORE THAN 10 DAYS PER SCHOOL YEAR.
- IF THIS MAXIMUM IS APPROACHING THE PARENTS WILL BE CONTACTED BY THE OFFICE TO DISCUSS ATTENDANCE AND THE CHILD'S PROGRESSION. AT THAT POINT A DETERMINATION WILL BE MADE AS TO NEXT STEPS. PARENTS WILL HAVE THE OPTION FOR THE CHILD TO COMPLETE THE YEAR HOWEVER NON-VPK TUITION WILL NEED TO BE PAID.
- VPK PARENTS AGREE TO SIGN A MONTHLY ATTENDANCE VERIFICATION FORM WHICH IS SUBMITTED TO THE EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF ORANGE. (ELC)
- THE ELC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CANCEL ENROLLMENT IF ABSENCES ARE EXCESSIVE.

Curriculum

The ELC has a curriculum based on age appropriate activities and themes. Each age group has a curriculum structured for them using the WEE Learn Curriculum published by Lifeway. WEE Learn is a faith-based complete daily curriculum, which will give children learning experiences in all areas of the classroom and involving the whole child.

We are striving to have children well prepared for Kindergarten as well as giving them social skills and hands-on experiences that they would likely never have outside of the classroom.

Our preschool is Christ centered and the children will be exposed to a Christian worldview, character development, Bible verses and stories, Chapel worship, prayer, caring about others, and making good decisions.

We pray several times throughout the day, and children are lovingly encouraged to pray along with their teachers and friends. They are not pushed or forced to participate, but taught to respect that in this Christian atmosphere, we will talk to God our Father through prayer and praise, expressing our needs and concerns for ourselves and those around us.

Our weekday Bible Curriculum and Chapel Experiences are from First Look by Orange.

We believe that children learn best through play and that play, and center time is a child's work. Teachers are limited on the amount of worksheets they use and more of our time is spent in small groups and in concrete learning through hands-on experiences.

Many of the activities that your child is engaged in during their day will not be able to be taken home, hung on the wall, or seen with your eyes. Children are exposed to opportunities that allow for interacting socially and working individually, making choices, learning responsibility through using materials and equipment, building self-esteem, and developing problem solving and thinking skills. These skills are learned through playing with blocks, creating art, cooking, playing outside, using puzzles, and listening to stories- just to name a few.

As the children move into the VPK program the students will be using Abrams "The Letter People". Phonics, math, and early literacy skills will still be approached through hands-on experiences to make learning fun. Our VPK program covers all the Sunshine Standards as required by the State of Florida and the Early Learning Coalition.

Our VPK graduates entering Kindergarten will take a Kindergarten Readiness test given by the Department of Education, within the first 30 days of school. The scores that these children receive are reflective of our VPK program and are a major element in what keeps us VPK eligible with the State of Florida.



Evaluation & Assessment Acknowledgment

At Spring of Life ELC we believe that evaluating and assessing the skills and developmental levels of the children are of great benefit to the child, the parent, and the teacher. The curriculum we work on through the year is broken down into skill/developmental benchmarks. The teachers will be developing lessons and activities based on these set benchmarks and then assessing the children on a periodic basis to see where they are.

VPK students will be assessed with a formal State mandated assessment tool September for "PreTest", January for "MidYear", and May for "PostTest".

All scores will be submitted to the Department of Education. You will receive the scores from your child's Mid and Post Test. At anytime the staff or you feel there is a concern with your child's development a formal conference can be called. If our staff believes that further evaluation is needed by outside resources parents will be informed.

Tuition & Fees

Tuition is due on the 1st of each month. There will be a \$30 late fee assessed for each delinquent payment received after the 5th of each month. The first tuition payment of the year is due on or no later than August 1st. The last payment of the year will be due May 1st. Tuition payments are broken up into 10 monthly payments, thus the reason we start August 1st. If you choose to make two equal installments of tuition this payment will be due August 1st for Aug – Dec, and January 5th for Jan – May.

It is highly recommended that you pay your tuition through your bank via online banking. At this time we are in the process of updating our systems. If our options change on how to pay tuition you will be notified via email.

You will need to provide your bank with our mailing address, 11101 Moss Park Rd, Orlando FL 32832 and have your child's name listed on the bank draft, as the account number. Please make the draft payable to SPRING OF LIFE ELC. This can be done one time, to last the duration of the school year. Those who would rather write a check for tuition will drop their check into the tuition box in the school hallway or give it to the Director. Teachers are not allowed to accept checks from parents.

Tuition is the same amount throughout the year regardless of attendance, holidays and days that the school is closed.

There is a 10% sibling discount offered to the lesser tuition amount in any one family. However; if a sibling is enrolled in the FREE VPK class, no discount applies.

Our school reserves the right to dismiss any child for whom fees have not been paid. Should there be a situation concerning tuition payments; please be sure to see the ELC Director for payment plans and or possible assistance.

Health Policy for ALL CHILDREN

Any child,

- running a fever (any temp of 100 or higher),
- having diarrhea,
- vomiting,
- having excessive or green nasal mucus,
- skin rash, or
- any contagious disease may not come to school.

Children must be fever free, symptom free for 24 hours and or be on antibiotics for 24 hours to return to school.

The ELC reserves the right to refuse a child into preschool and/or to ask for a doctor's note upon return to school.

If you are notified that your child is sick you are responsible for making the necessary arrangements to pick up your child within 1 hour of the call.

Specific to COVID-19

If you or anyone in your family shows symptoms of or tests positive to this virus please keep your child home.

Please immediately notify the ELC Director. Together with DCF and the Florida Health Department a decision will be made about the length of time the student needs to stay home. We will continue all cleaning and handwashing practices throughout the school.

Enrollment Paperwork

An email containing the appropriate enrollment paperwork will be sent via email by July 5th each year. After packets are emailed, we will have scheduled days that you can drop off paperwork and August Tuition.

ALL PAPERWORK NEEDS TO BE TURNED IN TO THE DIRECTOR BY THE THIRD FRIDAY OF JULY. IF YOU ARE PAYING TUITION BY CHECK, THE FIRST MONTH'S TUITION IS DUE AT THIS TIME. IF YOU ARE PAYING ELECTRONICALLY THROUGH YOUR BANK, THE ELC MUST RECEIVE THE FIRST TUITION PAYMENT BY AUGUST 1.

Withdrawal

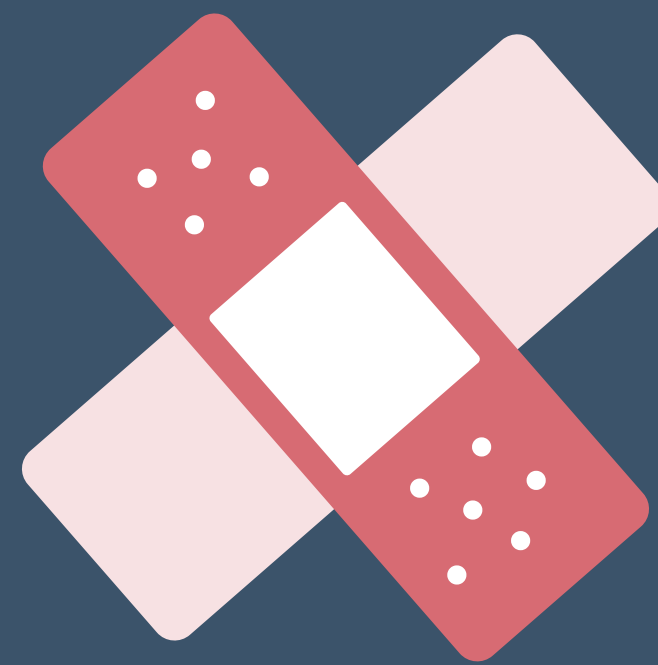
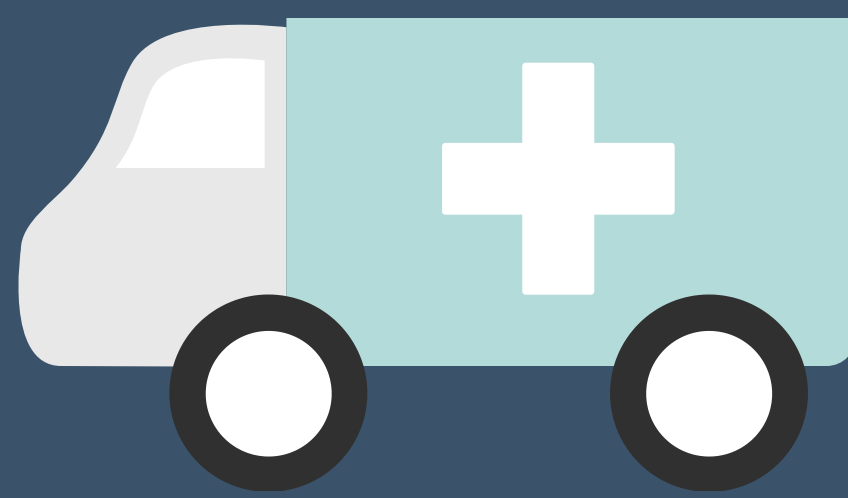
The ELC requests that you give notice, in writing, 2 weeks prior to withdrawing your child. Please note that any fees paid, both tuition and registration fees are non-refundable.

Returned Checks

All returned checks will result in a \$30 check charge and you then are required to pay by cashier's check or money order for all tuition and registration payments from that point through the end of the present school year.

Late Pick up

Dismissal is at 2:00pm M-F. Any parent coming later than 2:10 will be given a one time warning and then will be charged a late fee of \$1.00 per minute. Excessive abuse of this policy will result in dismissal from the school.



Immunization and Physical Examination

The ELC requires that all children have a current immunization and physical examination forms on file within 30 days of enrollment.

If you have chosen not to immunize your child, proper documentation from the State of Florida must be provided with the enrollment paperwork.

During the school year if your child's immunization record and or medical form becomes expired you will be notified to submit updated forms.

Sections 7.1 and 7.2 of the Child Care Facility Handbook, requires a current physical examination (Form 3040) and immunization record (Form 680 or 681) within 30 days of enrollment. The signed copy of this handbook verifies that parents or legal guardians have been notified of this policy.

Section 7.1 of the Child Care Facility Handbook, Immunization Records, requires providers to include written notification to inform parents, at time of enrollment, that some children in care may not have current immunization. The signed copy of this handbook verifies that parents or legal guardians have been notified of this policy.

Toys, Personal Items & Dress

We ask that all toys and personal “treasures” be left at home, unless your child’s teacher has specifically asked for your child to bring in an item for show-n-tell, etc. Toys and other precious treasures could get lost, broken, or taken mistakenly by another child. Items such as coats, sweaters, and jackets should be clearly marked with your child’s first and last name. All children should wear appropriate closed toed shoes for playing inside and outside. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather conditions. The children will go outside every day, unless it is raining.

All children need a zip-lock bag with a complete change of clothes (shirt, socks, pants, and underwear). Please mark the zip-lock bag with your child’s name.

All children need to bring a filled water bottle daily. Please only fill with water. Label water bottle with child’s name. Children will use their water bottle during the day for snack and outside time.





Lunch & Snacks

Lunch will be provided by the parent for their child each day. The ELC cannot refrigerate or heat meal items. We also ask that you please prepare nutritious meals that do not include soda or candy. Be aware that your child will not eat as much at school as they do at home simply due to the time and that so much is going on around them, please keep lunches small and easy for them to handle.

Your child will also need a **SMALL** healthy snack for school each day. We ask that snacks be fresh fruit, crackers, raisins, carrot/veggie stix, granola bars, dry cereal, etc. Snacks should **NOT** be potato chips, cookies, or candy. Please provide a water bottle filled with water labeled with your child's name for your child to use during their snack time each day.

While packing your child's lunch please be mindful of foods that are potential choking hazards. This includes hot dogs, popcorn, whole grapes, etc. Please cut these food items into pieces. As popcorn cannot be cut up, please eliminate it as a snack/lunch option.

****If your child is highly allergic to peanuts, dairy, wheat, etc. you are asked to make sure that your child's teacher and the preschool Director are aware of your child's allergies and how to treat him/her if they should have a problem. If any emergency medication must be given, you will have to submit a Medication Authorization Form, one is available upon request. You will need to use this if medication must be administered at the preschool. ****

Section 7.3, of the Child Care Facility Handbook, requires that the child care facility's food and nutrition policies include language on food safety and food allergens. The signed copy of this handbook verifies that parents or legal guardians have been notified of this policy.



Birthdays

We are happy to celebrate your child's birthday. Please speak with your child's teacher about the day and time for bringing in a special treat. Pick from the following list of approved treats for celebrating:

Mini Cupcakes

Mini Muffins

Cookies

Popsicles

Individual ice cream cups

Donuts or donut holes.

Discipline

We are interested in promoting self-control and appropriate social behavior in our children. The ELC strives to ensure that discipline and guidance throughout the school is consistent and based on each individual's needs and development. Promoting self-discipline and acceptable behavior is primary. We encourage what "they may do" rather than what "they may not do". Positive discipline methods and redirection achieves these goals. There will NEVER be any cruel, harsh or embarrassing treatment or punishment. No staff member may yell at, shake, jerk, pinch or hit any child. Food or drink will never be withheld from the child.

It is our goal to guide families through discipline strategies and difficult times. Be assured that every discipline issue will be handled in a prayerful, loving, and productive way. Our goal is to put the child and his or her family as top priority. If behavior situations arise (abusive/aggressive behavior directed towards other children or staff, kicking, biting, hitting, profanity destruction of property), there are steps to take to help resolve any behavior issues:

1. Any behavior that continues in the classroom will be brought to the attention of the ELC Director.
2. A written incident report will be completed for any of the above-mentioned violations. This report will require a Teacher, ELC Director and parent signature. A copy will be given to the parent and a copy will be kept in the student's file.
3. A parent conference will be held with a corrective plan of action discussed after a consistent pattern of abusive/aggressive behavior occurs. This will take place after 3 incident reports involving the same behavior within a 30-day time period.
4. If there is no improvement in the situation, parents may be asked to remove their child from the Center.
5. If at any time the safety of other children or staff is in question, the ELC Director reserves the right to ask that the child be removed from the center.

"Section 2.8 of the Child Care Facility Handbook requires that all families be notified in writing of the disciplinary practices of the Spring of Life Early Learning Center". The signed copy of this handbook verifies that parents or legal guardians have been notified of this policy.

Biting Policy & Protocol

Although biting is not an everyday occurrence, it is not an uncommon part of child development. Thus we have instituted this policy for all of our families.

If a child bites two or more times in the same day, if a child bites and breaks the skin one time, or if a child develops a pattern of frequent biting attempts, the ELC Director will notify and alert the parent and the following will be acted upon:

* A child who bites will be sent home in either of the following situations:

- 3 bites in one day but does not break the skin
- 1 bite that breaks the skin

At any time that a child bites another child, a Biting Report / Incident Notice will be completed at the time the bite occurs. These will be provided to the parents of both the biting and the bitten child. If the bite breaks the skin, in addition to these reports, the parents of both children will be notified by phone immediately due to the potential exposure of bodily fluids. The parents of both children will be notified of the incident, however, the name of the child who bit and the name of the child who is bitten WILL NOT be shared with either of the families being notified.

If a child has been sent home for biting, upon the child's return to the Center, a meeting will be held with the parent/parents of the child. Prior to this meeting the teacher and ELC Director will discuss possible reasons for the biting behavior and any pertinent information will be presented to the parent at this time. This documentation along with the initial Biting Report and meeting notes will be placed in the child's file. During this initial meeting, and at all follow up meetings, parents will be provided information and potential resources to contact if they choose.

Teachers and staff will immediately begin "shadowing" the biting child as much as possible, beginning after the first bite.

Teachers will begin to log biting attempts as well as bites, as soon as the biting behavior begins, to assist in identifying triggers that may be leading to the biting behavior. These logs will be collected weekly, reviewed by a member of management, and filed in the child's file.

If a child is sent home twice for multiple bites, or because of a bite that breaks the skin, or a pattern of frequent biting attempts are observed and documented, the following plan will be acted upon:

Upon the child's return to the Center, another meeting will be scheduled to discuss possible reasons for the biting behavior. At this time, biting attempts will also be considered in order to determine whether or not a formal Biting Action Plan should be implemented, or if improvement has been observed using normal attempts to deter the child from biting.

If it is determined that a Biting Action Plan is necessary, the Parent/Parents, Teachers, and the Director will complete this plan together during the meeting.

Teachers will implement the Biting Action Plan and document any behavior/progress that has occurred during this one-week period.

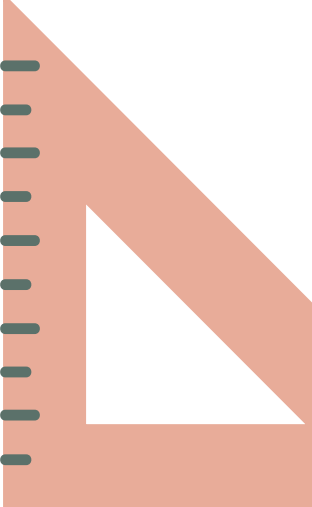
A date will be set for a one week follow up, via telephone, email, or an in-person meeting. This is at the discretion of all parties involved.

If improvement in the first week of the Biting Action Plan has been observed, an additional one to two weeks may be added to the Biting Action Plan to allow time for further progress, and another follow up meeting will be scheduled.


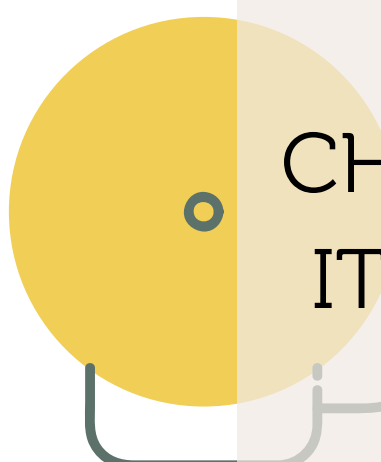
If improvement has not been observed, or is minimal, immediate dismissal from our program is sometimes necessary. Please keep in mind it is not our intent or purpose to disenroll families from our program.



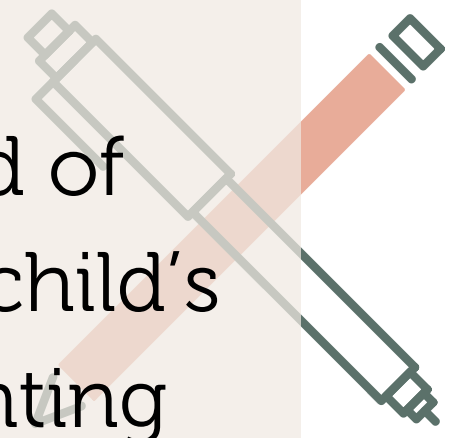
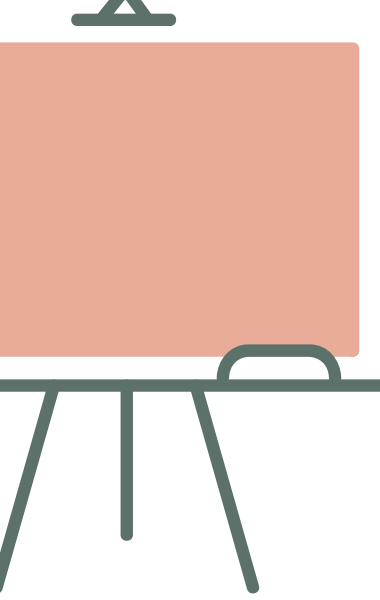
Parent and Teacher Relationship




At the beginning of each school year you will be given a school calendar for the entire year. Please keep this calendar handy, as it contains holidays and days off, and some of the pre-determined events going on during the year. Events may be added or changed as necessary.






Both ELC Director and teachers will send out a Weekly Email that will inform you of events, items, and news that you need to be aware of. PLEASE be sure to read these emails every week. This is the ELC's main form of communication and will give you all necessary information you need. IF YOUR EMAIL SHOULD CHANGE AT ANYTIME, PLEASE NOTIFY THE DIRECTOR TO HAVE IT CHANGED. All of our teachers have an email address that will be given to you, please feel free to contact them this way.



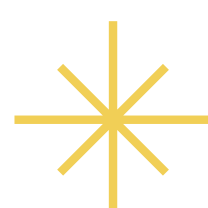
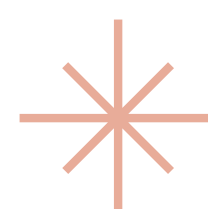

Teachers are required to keep you, the parent, informed of school and classroom information and happenings. Your child's teacher will supply you with a monthly calendar highlighting main activities in the class.



Anytime you have questions or concerns about your child and their class or teacher you are encouraged to speak directly to the teacher. Please feel free to set up a time at dismissal to speak with your child's teacher privately.



The Director has an open-door policy; anytime you have concerns regarding your child, the staff, or the school, please feel free to speak with her.



Student Evaluations

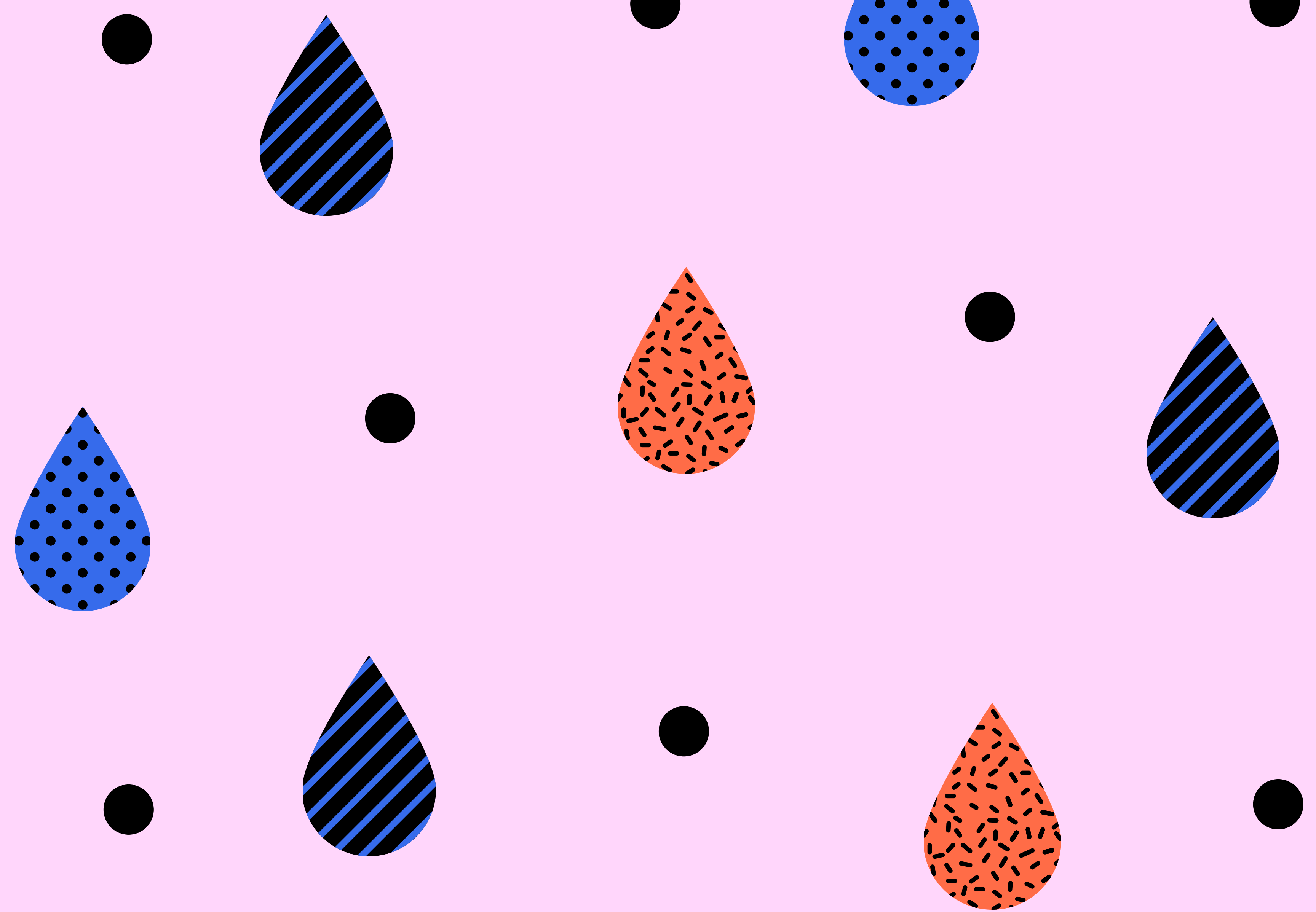
At Spring of Life ELC we believe that evaluating and assessing the skills and developmental levels of the children are great benefit to the child, the parent, and the teacher. The curriculum we work on through the year is broken down into skill/developmental benchmarks. The teachers will be developing lessons and activities based on these set benchmarks and then assessing the children on periodic bases to see where they are.

VPK students are given an internal classroom assessment the first week of school, to give the teachers an idea of where each child is academically and areas to concentrate on. VPK students will also be assessed 3 times a year using the state mandated VPK Assessment Tool. They will have a Pretest, which is required to be administered the first 30 days of school. A Midyear assessment will take place in January, and a Post Test which will be done in May. The scores from these assessments will be sent to the Department of Education. You will also receive a scoring report for each test taken.

Two's and Three's are assessed through a school provided assessment tool. Results will be shared with parents.

You may request a meeting with your child's teacher at any time concerning the developmental progress of your child.

If a Teacher feels that a further speech screening/evaluation is needed by outside resources for any of their students, they will make recommendations to the Director, who will in turn, inform the parents in writing. It is ultimately the parent's decision whether to proceed or not.



Inclement Weather

Spring of Life ELC follows the same guidelines that are used for canceling Orange County Public Schools during a threat of a hurricane or any other serious weather condition. In the event that public schools are canceled due to inclement weather, the ELC will be closed also. Please listen to news on the radio or TV for information regarding possible school closings.

SAFETY DRILLS

To keep our students safe, we will practice several drills during the school year. Fire Drills are conducted monthly. Tornado/Hurricane, Evacuation and Lockdown once each during a school year. Our teachers have been trained on where to go and what to do in each scenario. They know to remain calm, as to ensure calmness in the children. We do not want you to get anxious when your child tells you that they had to go into the bathroom as a group or take cover under some sturdy furniture. These are drills mandated by DCF and we have worked with the Sheriff's Office to ensure the exact locations to take cover. In the event anything should ever cause us to enter into a real evacuation, you will be notified as soon as all children and staff are safe. A school-wide email will be sent to notify you as to what is going on and when to come and pick up your child.



EARLY LEARNING CENTER

Spring of Life United Methodist Church

Early Learning Advisory Committee (EAC)

Spring of Life UMC sees the ELC as a ministry, and as part of the Christian Education of the church.

The mission of the ELC Advisory Committee (EAC) is to provide opportunities for parents to become involved in the life of the preschool by contributing to a positive preschool experience. They will help to create and serve in events to support the developmental learning program; they will be involved with and seek parent help for educational and fun events for the students. They will lend support to the ELC Director and ELC staff as well as the preschool itself. The primary goal of EAC is to ensure that the mission of Spring of Life is fulfilled.

The EAC meets as needed. Parents are asked to serve a 1-year, school year term. If you are interested in learning more about this committee, or want to get involved, please see the Director.



SPRING OF LIFE

United Methodist Church



EARLY LEARNING CENTER

Spring of Life United Methodist Church

Office Hours & Important Numbers

Preschool office hours are: Monday- Friday 8 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Preschool Office: 407.282.8689

Director's Email: Margo.Cook@springchurch.org

Church website: www.springchurch.org

Church Office: 407.282.2855

* Disclaimer: As Spring of Life ELC experiences growth, it may become necessary to make policy changes. Please be aware that a written copy of these changes would be given to you.

Revised June 2022



SPRING OF LIFE

United Methodist Church