

Second Presbyterian Preschool

Newsletter

September 2020



Hello Preschool Parents,

The last week of preparation was a whirlwind of teacher training sessions, family meetings, and teachers finalizing all the special details that help their students experience the magical feelings of being expected, welcomed, and loved. They will absolutely know they belong in their classroom, and that they will be a cherished child of God!

Things That Make My Heart Sing

Each month I hope to share with you a little vignette from one of my joyful interactions with a child in our preschool. Last Friday morning, while I was on my rounds checking in on the TENTTalks I popped outside and noticed a parent chatting with her son's teacher. While the mom was talking, her grumpy 2-year-old son was pulling on her hand with all his might exclaiming "Go Home!"

I sat down on the curb and noticed a dried cherry from a nearby tree resting on the grate that runs along the church parking lot. I asked the child if he wanted to see if he could push the dried fruit through the drainage grate. He was instantly interested! We spent the next 10 marvelous minutes together while he collected dried cherries in his chubby little hand, showed them to me, then hopped off the curb so we could push them through the grate together.

God is Not Done with Me Yet!

1. Correction to the HiMama email sent from me on Friday 8/28: **Early Drop Off is from 8:00-8:10 NOT from 7:50-8:00**
2. Correction to the email sent from me regarding Enrichments: Students do NOT need to bring an additional water bottle for Soccer Shots or After Care.
3. Clarification in the Family Handbook regarding exterior doors for pick up: Twos, Fours (Wise Owls), Threes 3 Day and Threes 5 Day (Honey Bears) students will be dropped off and picked up at their designated exterior doors on the Highland Avenue/playground side of the building. Infants and Ones will enter and exit at their designated exterior door on the Second Street side of the building. Twos+ 3 Day and Twos+ 5 Day (Busy Bee) students will enter and exit through the Mountain Avenue/Main Church entrance.

What is New in the Classrooms This Year?

1. Furniture in the Ones Classroom – to enhance developmentally appropriate play and learning
2. 3 Highchairs- to feed our youngest students safely and securely
3. Double Stroller for the Infants Classroom
4. 150 gorgeous hardcover books spread throughout the classrooms for children to enjoy
5. Developmentally Appropriate, Fun Toys
6. Light table shared by Threes and Fours Classes – a highly engaging play/learning center
7. Replacement blinds in several windows throughout the preschool

COVID19 Specific Preschool Enhancements

The preschool has operated continuously since 1953 but... never during a global pandemic. We are praying for a productive and safe school year. I wanted to remind you of the many new items that have been purchased so that Second Presbyterian Preschool is prepared for your child's arrival and to limit the spread of the COVID19 virus among students and teachers.

1. Touchless Thermometers in each classroom
2. Touchless Student Check In/Check Out in HiMama
3. Individual student supplies cases – to help reduce the spread of germs through the sharing of scissors, glue sticks, crayons, pencils, markers, and playdough.
4. 13 Slow-Closing Potty Lids – to help reduce the spread of germs in the bathrooms
5. 5 Preschool snack/lunch outdoor tables, 2 large snack/lunch/activity blankets- to allow children to eat and learn outside. *A special thank you to Molly and Seth Walters (Prestley-4s), Sarah and Lee Kreger, Pam & Trip Kreger(Wells Twos+ 5 Day), and Meredith and Patrick Robertson for donating the snack/lunch/activity tables!
6. 2 large buckets and 2 x-large white towels in each classroom – the teachers will dunk toys into a bleach/H₂O solution, rinse them in plain water, and spread them on the towels to air dry overnight. Towels will be washed on hot with bleach in the washing machine.
7. Teacher uniforms and school-only shoes- to limit the transmission of germs between teachers' homes and the preschool and the preschool and teachers' homes.
8. Teacher smocks for additional teacher protection.
9. "Smile Masks" for teachers – so that the children can see their teacher's mouth while they are interacting.
10. Disposable adult masks and nitrile gloves for teachers
11. Disposable child size masks
12. Tote of clean bath towels for sanitizing the snack/lunch/activity tables and playground equipment between groups
13. Bathrooms and high touch surfaces will be sanitized by the custodian while children are on the playground

14. Small class sizes- see table below

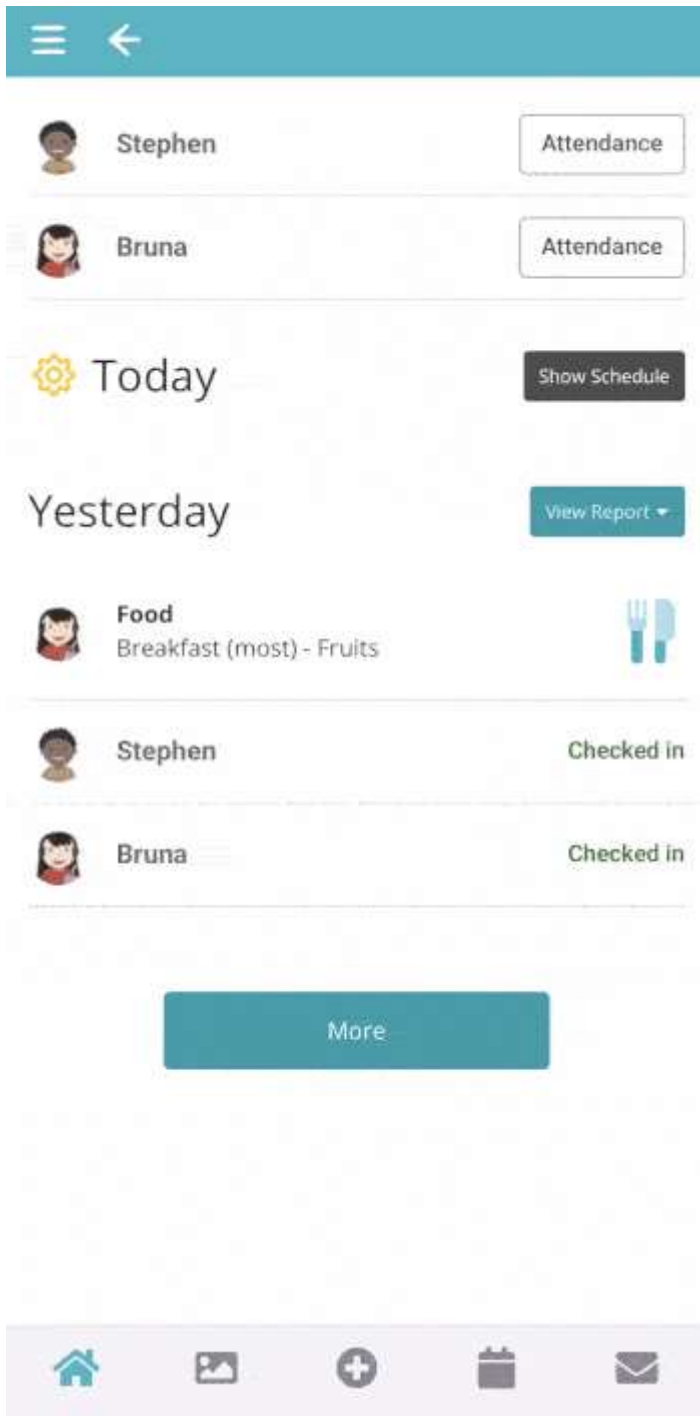
Classes	Current Enrollment
Infants	2
Ones (max 8 per day)	10
Twos (max 8 per day)	8
Twos+ 3	10
Twos+ 5	8
Threes 3	6
Threes 5	6
Fours	12

We still have room for a few students in the Infants and Twos classes and both Threes classes!

Touchless Check In/Check Out

We encourage you to check your child into preschool using the HiMama app! Please see the directions below to refresh your memory of how to complete check in.

- #1: From your home page, tap the 'Attendance' button for the child that needs to be checked in.
- #2: Tap on the 'Check in' button.
- #3: Add any notes if necessary.
- #4: Enter your signature and tap the "Done signing" button to submit it or 'Clear signature' to re-sign.
- #5: Tap 'Confirm' to save it. You will then be redirected to your Homepage and provided with confirmation of check-in.



Things to note

- This feature is not available when using HiMama through a browser, only from the mobile app.
- You can only check the child in for the current day.
- Once you check your child in, you cannot undo it. Please contact the center so they can adjust the Attendance accordingly.

Parent Substitutes

Unfortunately, the preschool's list of subs has dwindled to the point of no longer having a list. Typically, we have had as many as 8 subs who were filling in at the preschool on a regular basis. Most of our subs were retired teachers or stay at home moms. Due to concerns regarding the COVID19 virus, all but one has chosen to "sit out" for this school year.



You can help us by volunteering to serve as an **on-call** substitute teacher in your child's/children's classroom from 8:00-1:15. You will never be called to sub more than one day each month. Teachers, like all of us, have doctor's appointments, funerals, family emergencies, travel, and other events that require them to take a day(s) off. All teachers will leave a great lesson plan for the substitute teacher to follow!

You will never be called to substitute in a classroom where there is a strong suspicion that the teacher, assistant teacher, or a student has the early symptoms of the coronavirus or has been recently exposed to a person with the coronavirus.

Please email your child's teacher your availability to serve as a substitute as soon as possible (e.g. I am available most Fridays, or I am available the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month).

Parents are our **best choice** for substitutes during this school year, because they are a known adult who already has regular, close contact with one child in the classroom. If we all pull together, we can meet the preschool's need for substitute teachers during 2020-2021. Parent substitutes will have the opportunity to spend a half day in their child's classroom and see the wonderful, interactive learning opportunities afforded to the children every day! I will happily work with parents' schedules if they need to arrive closer to 8:30 a.m. or leave closer to 12:00 p.m. For your much needed help, you will get free early drop off and Lunch Bunch for your child/children on the days you sub.

Curriculum Corner

Each month I will be sharing information on an aspect or two of our curricula. My hope is this section will help you feel more informed and connected to the preschool. This month you will learn about the Linear Calendar and Process-Focused Art Experiences.

Linear Calendar

The calendar routines that have become the staple of many preschool classrooms are unfortunately not an activity conducive to children's number sense and counting skill. In the first place, the 7-column, 5-row grid gets filled in a different way each month, since the day on which the month begins, and the number of days is variable. In addition, 7 is a very "unfriendly" number -most people find it very challenging to count by 7s; it is an unnatural break in the 0-9 sequence of digits and does not invite use of our natural counting tools, our fingers and hands. The base-10 structure of our number system is completely lost by the calendar format.

A linear calendar allows students to grasp the concept of increasing the number of days horizontally (like using a number line) until the month ends. The linear calendar reinforces the plus-one structure of the number system. The students track the days of the week above each number and develop an understanding that the number indicating the day of the month is not correlated with the days of the week.

Please do not worry about this new, more modern approach to teaching the calendar; your children will absolutely learn the months and days of the week. This system of understanding the calendar, and the names of the days of the week is much more natural for students as they make sense of tracking time.

Process Art

During the 2020-2021 the preschool is transitioning from predominantly product-focused art experiences to process-art experiences. Offering students open-ended, creative art experiences helps children express their individual thoughts and ideas and encourages them to use their imagination through art. Process-focused art is about what the children learned or gained from the process and keeps the focus on the individual child's growth and development.

Characteristics of Process-Focused Art Experiences

- There are no step-by-step instructions
- There is not a sample for children to follow
- There is no right or wrong way to explore and create
- The art is focused on the experience and on exploration of techniques, tools, and materials
- The art is unique and original
- The art experience is relaxing and calming
- The art is entirely the children's own
- The art experience is a child's choice

Suggestions when asking your child about their process art:

1. Notice and comment on what you see- "Look at all the yellow dots you painted."
2. Ask them to explain their piece- "Tell me about your drawing, painting, sculpture, etc."
3. Explore their creative process-"What were you thinking when you created this?"
4. Understand why they chose certain tools, techniques, and materials -"What did you use to make this?"

Update to Before Care and After Care Routines

Because our enrollment is down from 85+ to 62 students our before and aftercare numbers are quite small. After prayerful considerations, we are combining Early Care for the Infants & Ones, the Twos+ Classes, and the Threes Classes. We are combining the Twos+, Threes and Fours students for After Care 1 and After Care 2. Each group will have its own caregiver. Please see chart below for more details. *Note: children's schedules change frequently so these numbers will fluctuate.

	Early Care	Total# Children	After Care 1 Enrichments	Total # Children	After Care 2	Total # Children
Infants	0	2-4	1	5-6*	1	4-5*
Ones	2-4		4-6		3-4	
Twos	3-4		3-5		3-5	
Twos+ 3 Day	4	2-6	1-2	5-6	1	4-5
Twos+ 5 Day	2				1	
Threes 3 Day	2	5-6	1-2		1	
Threes 5 Day	3-4		1 Th/F		0	
Fours	1-4		1 W/Th/F		1-2	

*Indicates two aftercare workers will be on duty.

- Infants and Ones should be dropped off at their designated doors for Early Care and picked up at their designated door at 1, 2 or 5:30.
- Twos should be dropped off at their designated door for Early Care and picked up at their designated door at 1, 2 or 5:30.
- Twos+ should be dropped off at the Main Church entrance for Early Care and picked up from the playground or gym door at 2 or 5:30. Emerald Pagans, our new Aftercare worker, will text the pickup door to parents in HiMama.
- Threes should be dropped off at the Preschool Entrance for Early Care and picked up from the playground or gym door at 2, or 5:30. Emerald Pagans, our new Aftercare worker, will text the pickup door to parents in HiMama.
- Fours should be dropped off at their designated door for Early Care and picked up from the playground or gym door at 2 or 5:30. Emerald Pagans, our new Aftercare worker, will text the pickup door to parents in HiMama.

Playground Time Update

To meet our goal of having each class outside on the playground for a minimum of 30 minutes every day, the Twos+ classes will share the playground on M/W/F (total of 17 students). The Threes classes will share the playground on M/W/F (total of 12 students). Teachers will endeavor to keep their classes somewhat separated while the student enjoy the fresh air and exercise.

TENTTalks Follow Up

Thank you to the Gunter (Jackson in 3s-5 day), Newman (Riley in 4s, Maren in 1s), and Piemonte (Talia in 4s) families, teachers Ms. Maria (Lead, Ones Class) and Ms. Michele (Lead, Twos Class) and our Church Administrator, Mark Wigginton for donating their tents last week! We were blessed with the sunshine and grateful for the shade the tents provided.

Last Wednesday morning, before the TENTTalks started, the Clark family (Benjamin 3s-5 day, Oliver 1s-2 Day) generously provided a delicious breakfast to thank teachers for their commitment to the preschool. The teachers loved the Panera bagels and cream cheese, cruller doughnuts, blueberries, and mandarin oranges, as well as water and O.J. Thank you, for this thoughtful gift!

Thank you to Mike Nester, Church Custodian, Jake Balsley, Church Maintenance, and Glen Powers, Church Sexton, for getting to the preschool at 6:30 a.m. on Wednesday and Friday to put up the tents, tables, and chairs, and break them down in the heat of the day!

Your thoughts and ideas will help us continue to grow. Please send me your feedback on how we could have made your TENTTalk better. Email me at sally@spres.org with your suggestions.

Dr. Sally

Preschool Director