

The ABCs of
First Presbyterian Community Preschool
Family Handbook



2026-2027

First Presbyterian Community Preschool

Family Handbook 2026-2027



The mission of First Presbyterian Community Preschool is to provide a creative, child-centered program that celebrates growth in all aspects of development (academic, social, emotional, spiritual) within a climate of Christian love and acceptance.

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Contact Information:

Office: (470)782-8272

Email: preschool@fpccov.org

Address: 1169 Clark Street SW, Covington, GA 30014

I. General Information

Creative Curriculum:

We use **The Creative Curriculum**, a comprehensive, research-based curriculum designed to foster children's social-emotional, physical, language, and cognitive development through purposeful play and hands-on learning experiences. The Creative Curriculum encourages exploration, creativity, and problem-solving while supporting each child's individual growth and development. Teachers provide families with information about classroom activities, lesson plans, and learning goals throughout the school year.

Communication:

Communication between school and families will be provided through our primary communication platform. Families will receive important announcements, newsletters, classroom updates, calendars, and other school information electronically throughout the year.

Chapel:

Each week, our children will participate in Chapel, where they will learn age-appropriate Bible stories, songs, and Christian values that reinforce God's love and care for them. Chapel is led by the pastors of First Presbyterian Church and is an important part of our preschool program, helping children grow in their faith while learning to love and serve others.

Class Sizes/Ratios/Tuition:

Rooms	Age	Monthly Tuition	Class Size Ratio
Red	Infant 3 days	\$215	8:2
Red	Infant 5 days	\$270	8:2
Purple	1 year 3 days	\$215	8:2
Purple	1 year 5 days	\$270	12:2
Yellow	2 year 3 days	\$215	12:2

Yellow	2 year 5 days	\$270	12:2
Green	3 year 3 days	\$215	15:2
Green	3 year 5 days	\$270	15:2
Blue	4 year 5 days	\$270	15:2

- Classes are based on the child's age on September 1st.
- 3 days a week = Monday/Wednesday/Friday
- 5 days a week = Monday - Friday

Registration: Registration begins in January. A non-refundable deposit of \$300 is required to complete your registration. There is a \$50 sibling discount for an additional registration fee (\$250). Registration is payable through our BrightWheel app.

Scholarships: Thanks to the generous support of the members and friends of First Presbyterian Church, our preschool offers a limited Scholarship Fund to assist families with tuition. Scholarships are awarded based on demonstrated financial need and the availability of funds and are not guaranteed.

Families requesting financial assistance should submit a scholarship application to the Preschool Director. All applications will be presented to the Preschool Board for review. The Preschool Board will determine the approval or denial of each request, and the Director will notify families of the Board's decision.

Fees/Tuition: Tuition is due on or before the first school day of each month. Although tuition is paid at the start of each month, it is not actually payment for that particular month. As the school days in each month vary greatly, the tuition has been divided into equal monthly payments to be made during the year. Full tuition is due each month regardless of absences for any reason. Our school depends on your prompt payment. On the 5th of the month, a late fee of \$25.00 will be added to any payments not received. All payments shall be made through our BrightWheel App. Note: There is a processing fee on BrightWheel.

Confidentiality: The confidentiality of student and family information is of utmost importance. Teachers are instructed to use every precaution when handling student files and information. The Preschool will NOT share any of your personal information with others without written permission and then, only on a need-to-know basis.

Child Protection Policy: All First Presbyterian Church employees and First Presbyterian Community Preschool employees have completed background checks. All First Presbyterian Preschool employees are First Aid and CPR certified. All employees and volunteers shall participate in the First Presbyterian Church Childcare Policy every two years to work alongside our children. The First Presbyterian Child Protection Policy is available upon request.

Safety and Security: At First Presbyterian Community Preschool, the safety and security of your child is our top priority. We have implemented a range of protective measures to ensure that every child in our care is well-protected and looked after. Our preschool classrooms are located within a secured access zone. Only authorized personnel and guardians with key code access can enter the building, and all exterior doors will remain locked throughout the day. All of our teachers and staff undergo thorough background checks to ensure a safe environment for your child. We are in the process of updating our First Presbyterian Church safety policies to cover fire, weather, and active shooter protocols. This will provide an extra layer of preparedness in any emergency situation. Guardians can have full confidence that we are committed to maintaining a secure environment where your child's well-being is always our first priority.

II. Health and Wellness

Immunization Policy: In compliance with the Georgia Department of Public Health, all enrolled students must have an up-to-date immunization certificate or an approved medical exemption on file with the preschool. Medical exemptions will only be accepted if issued by a board-certified pediatrician. A copy of the medical exemption certificate must be provided to the preschool. Religious exemptions regarding immunizations will not be accepted. All students must meet the immunization requirements as outlined by the state. As part of the admission process, each child must have Form 3231 (the Certificate of Immunization) on file with the preschool. By following these procedures, we ensure the health and safety of all students in our care.

Hand Washing: Hand washing is the most important means of limiting the spread of disease. Children will wash their hands upon entering the classroom and before snack/lunch. Guardians shall wash their hands upon entering classrooms. Teachers shall wash their hands upon entering the classroom, before and after diapering, and before and after snack/lunch.

Diapers/Potty Training: In the Infant, One-Year-Old, and Two-Year-Old classes, we are happy to help your child at any stage of his or her potty-training journey! Please let us

know how we can support you. If your child wears diapers or pull-ups, please keep a supply at school. They will be stored safely, and you do not need to send them each day. Your child's teachers will let you know when it is time to replenish the supply. Children enrolled in our Three-Year-Old and Pre-K Four-Year-Old classes are expected to be fully potty trained before the start of the school year. This means children should be able to use the toilet independently, communicate their bathroom needs, and manage routine bathroom tasks with minimal assistance. We understand that occasional accidents may happen and will handle them with care and encouragement. If your child is not yet potty trained by the start of the school year, please discuss your child's individual needs with the Preschool Director prior to the first day of school so we can determine the best plan for your child.

Illness: If your child has been ill in the past 24 hours (including, but not limited to, fever [100.4 or greater], vomiting, diarrhea, green mucus discharge, pink eye, swollen glands, infection, or rash) it is necessary that he/she be kept at home. If you would not want your child to "get it," please do not expose other children to "it"! We will also follow the Newton County School System policy for lice; students will be sent home, must use treatment, and nits must be removed before the child can return to school. As the safety of every child here is our utmost concern, we will notify you immediately if your attention is needed after your child arrives at school. Please remember that if your child is sent home from school for one of the above-mentioned symptoms, he/she will not be able to return to school the following day. Your child will need to be symptom free without the use of medication for a minimum of 24 hours before they return to school. To let us know about your child's absence, please call (470)782-8272 and leave us a message. You may contact us by sending a message to your teacher through your BrightWheel app. We do reserve the right to send your child home if he/she comes to school with any of the above symptoms or becomes ill at school. For the comfort of your child and the protection of others, we ask that you have someone pick up your child within 30 minutes of the phone call.

Allergies/Medications: Please advise us in writing of any allergies your child has or may develop during the year. Please send written instructions or provide them on your BrightWheel app. Preschool staff may only administer prescription medication that is in the original container bearing the original label with the prescription number, date, physician's name, directions for use and the child's name. All medication must be given with the manufacturer's syringe or cup only. No medication will be administered without a completed form AND authorization from the physician. The physician authorization may be for one year. Preschool staff cannot administer any non-prescription medications without written authorization forms completed.

Sunscreen: Please apply sunblock in the morning when preparing your child for

school. Teachers will not be able to administer sunscreen.

Outdoor Play/Indoor Play: Opportunities for gross motor play are an integral part of the Preschool curriculum. Classroom's daily schedules include opportunities for children to experience outdoor activities except when the outdoor environment (weather, air quality, environmental conditions) poses a health risk to children. Outside walks and Bye-Bye Buggy (Infant class) rides are highly encouraged. A cell phone is required for outdoor walks and Bye-Bye Buggy trips in case of an emergency. Two employees are ALWAYS required when outside.

Sanitation: Classrooms will be wiped down and cleaned at the conclusion of each day. Toys that children have placed in their mounts or that are otherwise contaminated will be set aside until they are cleaned by hand by a person wearing gloves. They will be cleaned with water and detergent, rinsed, sanitized and placed for air-dry time. A cleaning service will assure the bathrooms and floors remain clean. Soft toys, dress up clothes, or any other materials will be laundered as needed. If an additional need arises (illness, etc), we will deep clean the classroom.

Accident or Injury: In the event a child receives a minor injury while at school (scraped knees, bitten lip during a fall, etc), teachers will provide guardians a completed accident/injury form with details of the injury and the procedures taken to assist the child. If a child sustains any bump or bruise that affects the head (falls, hit with block, runs into wall, etc) guardians will be notified immediately via phone call with details of the incident regardless of the seriousness or lack thereof of the event. In the case of an unknown allergy and a severe allergic reaction, guardians will be notified immediately and 911 will be called.

III. Clothing and Personal Belongings

Bags: Each student at FPCP needs to bring a full-sized bag to school each day. We prefer that you use a bag that is easy for your child to handle and that fits easily on the hooks outside each classroom. Please be sure that a folder and/or binder can fit into the bag.

Change of Clothes: Each child must bring a change of clothes in a labeled Ziploc bag. The teachers will store them and have them ready if needed. Please include a shirt, shorts or pants, underwear, and socks in your child's bag.

Dress: Childhood is an adventure! Please dress your child daily in clothes that are comfortable and can get messy. Art activities are a big part of our day; and though we will do all we can to protect clothes from paint, etc., spills, splashes and slips do

happen! Please send your child in comfortable tennis shoes/closed toed shoes that allow them to play without worrying about shoes. Please also note that sandals of any kind become frustrating to students on the playground as mulch gets trapped in them.

Note: All First Presbyterian Community Preschool teachers will be identified by wearing their teacher ID badge daily.

Labels: Please be sure to label EVERYTHING that your child brings to school (jackets, hats, sweaters, etc.). You would be surprised how many identical or similar items arrive here at the same time!

Concerns: We want to walk alongside your family. We understand at times there may be concerns and we want to hear your voice. The process for discussing a concern is as follows:

1. Address with your child's teacher
2. If this does not resolve the issue, please discuss with the Director.
3. If you still feel that the issue is not resolved, please address your concern in writing to the Preschool Board.

IV. Arrival/Departure

Attendance: School is important, and we believe that we are helping to set a good precedent for our children. Whenever it is possible, your child should be in attendance. When a child is registered here, it is understood that the registration is for the entire school year. We are unable to hold a spot for long absences when the tuition is not paid.

Drop-off/Pick-up: Our infant, 1's and 2's classes are to be dropped off by their guardian at our Washington Street/Playground Preschool Entrance. Guardians will need to park and escort their child to check them in. The Drop-off window is from 8:50-9:10. Teachers will then assist the students in their classrooms. At the end of the school day, from 12:50 until 1:10, teachers will have your children ready in the same area for pick up. Please make every effort to be ready to pick up your child on time. For 3s, and 4s – Guardians will need to drop off and pick up at the awning door on Brown Street. Teachers will assist with car rider to help your child in and out of the car. You will be given a car rider number at the beginning of the year. We will review the drop off and pick up procedures at our Information meetings and Open House!

Changes in Pick-Up: If you have a need to change the end-of-the-day pick-up routine for your child, please write a note to your child's teachers and place it in his/her bag AND call the preschool (470-782-8272). The mornings can be confusing, and it is

extremely helpful to the teachers to have the change in writing or to get that information from you at a time other than carpool. If the name of the person picking up your child is not on your registration list, we will make sure that the name on your note and the person's ID match. Please do not email or text same-day changes to the director. All end-of-the day pick-up changes need to occur by 12:30pm.

Late Arrival: We make every effort to begin our day on time, and we appreciate your help. If you are late, please call the director and park outside the Washington Street entrance. Please remember that a great deal of academics is taught at the beginning of the school day when the students are fresh, so it is important to be at school on time.

Late Pick-up: We understand that emergencies arise, but we thank you in advance for your promptness in retrieving your child. At the end of the school day, your child is ready for his/her time with you! Our teachers use the time immediately after school to wrap up the current day and make plans for the next one. This is a vital time for them. Please call the director if you are late and on your way. Upon the third late pick-up, you will receive a bill from FPCP charging one dollar/minute for each minute after 1:10pm.

First Day Fear: We will have an open house closer to the start of school! The whole family is invited to come and spend time in the classroom and meet other students! This helps with the transition to the first day of school! The first day of school can be a scary experience for many children (and many families, too)! Please be assured that we will do everything in our power to make your child safe and happy. Most often, the best way to do that is with a quick and happy drop-off time. Allowing your child to see that you are okay will go a long way in helping him/her feel better faster. Please assure your child that you are happy about all that awaits him/her at school and that you will be back soon to hear all about it. A quick goodbye is better than a long, drawn-out goodbye for both families and children. The whole class will be able to begin its fun when the students and teachers have been left to get busy. **3s, 4s may be walked in the first three days.**

V. Food

Breakfast: Please make sure that your child has had breakfast before arriving at school. Breakfast with you is a special gift. Children will not be able to finish breakfast after arriving at school.

Lunch: Please pack a healthy lunch each day that is easy for your child to access and does not require refrigeration or heating. Ice packs are a great way to keep food cool and fresh until lunchtime. Please refrain from sending "junk food" items such as candy, soft drinks, or similar treats.

For the safety of all children—especially those in our One-Year-Old and Two-Year-Old classes, where choking hazards are a greater concern. Please ensure that all food is cut into small, bite-sized pieces before arriving at school (for example, grapes should be cut into quarters). Children in the One-Year-Old class should also have foods that are easy to pick up and feed to themselves.

The children enjoy eating lunch together, but they often eat less than you might expect, so please pack an appropriate amount for your child.

To help keep all of our students safe, teachers are not able to cut food for your child during mealtime. We encourage all families to review the following resource from the CDC, which provides helpful information about choking hazards and safe ways to prepare foods for young children:

Reducing the Risk of Choking in Young Children

https://wicworks.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/English_ReducingRiskofChokinginYoungChildren.pdf

Food Handling: Guardians are to provide all food for their child. Food needs to be properly labeled. Please do not pack food that requires a microwave. The infant class will have a refrigerator. Please label all items. Teachers will wear gloves when serving food. Teachers will notify their class of any peanut allergies.

Snacks: You will be responsible for providing your child with a snack each day. Please label a snack for your child in a separate bag than their lunch. **Due to food allergies and food sensitivities, we will not be using classroom snack calendars.**

VI. Guardian Involvement and Resource

Guardian Participation: We welcome your help and appreciate your support of projects during the year. There will be many ways for you to be involved here, and we are thankful for your help. If you are chaperoning a field trip or special occasion with your child's class, please help make it a safe and special day for your child by finding alternate childcare for younger siblings. We love to have our guardians volunteer in their own child's class (or in all the classes). Please let us know if you have a special interest or talent that you would like to share with the school or just your child's class (i.e., science experiments, cooking, painting/art, etc.) Your child's teacher will contact you for volunteer opportunities.

Birthdays: We want to celebrate your child, and you are welcome to make special arrangements for a special snack on the day closest to his/her birthday. Please speak with your child's teacher about restrictions and scheduling. We are happy to distribute invitations to celebrations outside of the school given the entire class included.

Conferences with Teachers: If you need to have lengthy discussions with your child's teachers, please arrange to speak with them at times other than drop-off and pick-up. They are happy to make appointments to meet with you when you have questions or concerns. The times in the morning before class and/or in the afternoons after class are busy and hectic for everyone. Your help in quick transitions at those times will help everyone have a more successful day.

Field Trips: We will go on several walking field trips throughout the year on or near the Covington square. Each student will have the opportunity to purchase a school shirt to wear on the field trips. We encourage guardians to attend the field trips with their children when possible, however, we do ask that you not bring siblings on the field trips. This will allow some special time with your child. Field trips for our 1s and 2s may require one parent/adult. Field trips may include an additional fee.

Cell Phone Policy: We ask that cell phones are put away during time spent at the preschool. We want to foster an environment of presence for our children. Teachers are asked to not be on their cell phones during school hours for personal use. We recognize that teachers will use cell phones to communicate with guardians using our BrightWheel platform. All parent communication needs to be done before or after school.

Withdrawal: Guardians who choose to withdraw their child from the Preschool must give a one-month notice (30 days) in writing to the Director. Guardians are responsible for the payment of tuition and fees during the 30-day withdrawal process.

VII. Photographs and Social Media

Photographs: FPCP will update pictures throughout the school year. Teachers may send pictures through the BrightWheel app. Some families have asked that their children not be photographed for public use. To respect that, we ask that you not post pictures of school events that have children that are not yours in them on your personal social media pages.

Social Media/Website: With parent or guardian permission, First Presbyterian Community Preschool (FPCP) may photograph or video students during school

activities for educational, promotional, and communication purposes. These images may be used in school publications, newsletters, brochures, handouts, classroom displays, our website, and official First Presbyterian Community Preschool and First Presbyterian Church social media platforms.

Please note that once permission is granted, photographs or videos that have already been published in print or online will not be removed, and permission cannot be revoked for materials that have already been created or distributed, even if your child is no longer enrolled at FPCP.

VIII. Disciplinary Procedures

At First Presbyterian Community Preschool we are committed to providing a safe, loving, and nurturing environment where children can grow spiritually, emotionally, and socially. As part of our pastoral care, we believe in guiding children to understand and express God's love through positive, age-appropriate discipline. Disciple means to teach. Our discipline policy focuses not only on addressing behavior but also on nurturing the whole child and fostering a supportive partnership with their families. Our discipline approach is rooted in the understanding that all children are uniquely created by God, and their behavior is a reflection of their developmental stage, personal needs, and environment. We seek to offer a loving, consistent, and peaceful approach to behavior management. Our goals for our discipline policy are to:

1. Foster spiritual growth by helping children grow in their knowledge that God loves them no matter what!
2. To promote positive behavior by encouraging children to demonstrate kindness, respect, patience, and self-control.
3. To support emotional development by guiding children in recognizing and managing their emotions in healthy ways.
4. Strengthen the child-family-preschool connection by engaging families in the process to ensure consistency and support between home and preschool.

Biting, hair pulling, hitting, kicking, pinching (or any behavior that is a threat to other children) is not unexpected behavior for toddlers and preschoolers. However, these behaviors can be harmful to other children and staff. We will strive to determine why a

child is exhibiting this behavior and resolve the issue. However, if the issue cannot be resolved, this policy will protect the children that are affected. Names of the children will be kept confidential.

When an incident occurs:

For the child that is affected:

- First aid is given if necessary.
- Guardians are notified.

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For the child that exhibits the behavior:

- The teacher will firmly tell the child, "No!"
- The child will be asked to take a break/take a breath
- Guardians are notified
- An Incident Report is filled out with location, time, participant behaviors, etc.
- The child will be taught to use words instead of actions.

Progressive Discipline Steps

1st incident- Verbal communication with both families

2nd incident- If the second offense is in the same week (within 5 school days), a conference will be scheduled with guardians to discuss the child's behavior and how it may be modified with a written plan. The staff will also shadow the child to determine the cause of the behavior.

3rd incident- If a child has a third behavior issue within a 3-week period, the child will be asked to be picked up from school for number of days to be determined. Another conference will be scheduled to modify the behavior plan.

4th incident- Removal from preschool may be discussed.

If a child, who has been through steps 1, 2, and 3 and goes 3 weeks (15 school days) without a behavior incident, we will go back to step one. The director can modify this policy if the safety of the other children is a concern. Any modifications will be discussed with the guardians and a behavior plan will be put into place.

We will strive to be proactive about preventing further incidents by shadowing a child to try to determine the cause of the behavior. We will communicate with the guardians throughout the process, and we will work together with the guardians to teach the child more appropriate responses.

IX. Inclement Weather Policy

Inclement Weather Policy: FPCP will follow the decisions of the Newton County School System as pertains to weather. If Newton County Schools are closed, we will be closed. If the school system chooses to start school on a delayed schedule, we will follow the schedule they set through 10:00 a.m. If the school system decides to start school later than 10:00, we will be closed. The director will contact everyone through the BrightWheel App. We will also post to our church Facebook page: First Presbyterian Church, Covington.

IXX. FPCP Preschool Advisory Board

Board: FPCP is fortunate to have a superb Board of Directors, made up of church members, parents, and community members who meet to discuss needs/issues important to our school. Board members will be determined in Spring 2025

Church Staff: There is always plenty of action in the school, but there are many people working "upstairs" making this a great place to be, including:

- Neeley Rentz Lane, Senior Pastor
- Riley Taylor, Director of Children and Youth
- Peni Kehoe, Director of Finance
- Catherine Laseter, Director of Communications and Operations

Preschool Staff:

- Director: Denise Gabriel
- Questions? Email preschool@fpccov.org First Presbyterian

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Guardian Acknowledgment and SignaturePage

_____ I have read the 2025-2026 Family Handbook.

Guardian Name:

Student(s) Name(s):

Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

For Office Use Only:

Date Received: _____

Lead Teacher(s):

A copy of this signature page may be requested for the files of the guardian.

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