



**Heritage United Methodist Church  
One and Two Year Old  
Parent Handbook  
2023-2024**

And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him. Luke 2:40

## **Welcome to the Growing Place!**

Our entire staff would like to extend a warm welcome to your family. We are so pleased that you have chosen our program for your child. We are committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment and look forward to continued growth and communication in our new relationship with you.

This handbook will assist you in understanding the philosophy, policies and procedures of our child development program. Please read it carefully. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact your classroom teacher or the front office.

Blessings,

*Jennifer Luck*  
*Director*

## The Growing Place Preschool

2680 Landmark Drive

Clearwater, FL 33761

Phone # 727-479-0420 [www.TGPheritage.com](http://www.TGPheritage.com)

*A Christian Preschool Ministry of Heritage United Methodist Church*

*For One and Two year olds*

## **Safety and Emergency Procedures**

### **Communication**

1. Each teacher carries a two-way radio that puts her in touch with other staff members and the Director at all times.
2. The Director can be contacted by calling 727-479-0420  
Examples would be:
  - a. A parent cannot pick up a child on time.
  - b. A parent has an emergency situation with a family member and needs to notify school.
  - c. A parent needs to reach the school immediately regarding a child.
3. Each class will have a safe and secure BAND site, available by invitation only.

### **Fire, Tornado, Storm Warnings, Etc.**

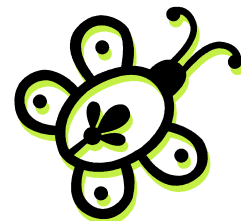
1. Fire drills are conducted monthly.
2. An Evacuation Plan is posted in each classroom. The plan also lists areas for duck and cover for tornado warnings.
3. If our school building needed to be temporarily evacuated, children would be taken to Leila Davis Elementary School at the south end of the parking lot or to Fellowship Hall in Building A at the north end of the parking lot.
4. Identification tags are prepared for each child with emergency phone numbers of parents listed on the back. Children will wear them whenever there is the possibility of an emergency situation.
5. A “Lockdown” procedure is in place should the school be threatened by an outside source.
6. A weather radio is on at all times in the preschool lobby.

**The Growing Place is closed when Pinellas County Schools are closed for emergency and weather situations.**

### **Basic Safety Procedures**

1. Parents are notified of playground rules by a listing in the Parent Handbook, and on a sign permanently placed on the playground.
2. Staff is trained in CPR and First Aid.
3. A master list of children with allergies is posted in all classrooms.
4. Emergency Release Forms signed by parent or guardian, and notarized, are placed in each child’s file.
5. A sign-in and name badge procedure is in place for all volunteers at the preschool.
6. All those who volunteer at our preschool, must be background checked through HUMC. These are valid for three years.
7. A dismissal plan is in place, which puts the safety of our children as its first priority.

Note: Parents will be notified in writing of any changes to the above procedures.



## **Curriculum**

We feel preschool children should have the opportunity to work and play with their peers in a Christian atmosphere of love and understanding.

Our primary goal for our Tiny Tots is to develop a love for God, their families and their playmates. We want to help the children become aware of and have an interest in the world around them through hands on activities. We will work to help the children develop their vocabulary and feel at ease expressing themselves in the group. It is our desire that each child enjoy creative activities that will help him/her develop spiritually, physically and emotionally. Each classroom has one teacher and one assistant. The teacher and the assistant are responsible for preparing activities and the curriculum to meet the needs of each child. Observations are made daily and are used to determine the interests and needs of each child. Formal assessments are conducted twice a year to determine where each child is in the academic process at that point of the school year. Those assessment results are shared with that child's parents as a written report. They are kept in a locked location in the classroom or preschool office for confidentiality. Parent conferences are held twice a year or at any time a parent or the teacher may have a concern.

The classes for the one and the two year olds also include Bible moments, outdoor play, music and snack.

## **Enrollment Policies**

All students registering for a class must be the age of the class that they are registering for (or older) by September 1st. Parents must fill out The Growing Place enrollment forms completely. In addition, a \$100 registration fee for children entering the one and two year old program is also required. Registered students are placed into a classroom by the Director of The Growing Place Preschool. When placing students, boy/girl ratios, new student ratios, and balancing birthdays are considered. The Growing Place Preschool retains high quality staff and requires all staff members to receive ongoing early childhood training each year. For these reasons, verbal and written requests for a specific teacher will not be honored.

The Growing Place admits, and does not discriminate against students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. The Growing Place does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, and scholarship program. However, we reserve the right to dismiss a student if the child or the parents are unable to adjust to the program.

## Dress Code

**Dress your child in:** Clothes suitable for art, the playground, etc. that are simple, sturdy, safe, not too tight, and easy to manage. (Label jackets and sweaters.) Please make sure that your child wears closed toed shoes with rubber soles. Socks are advised. They should also be the right size and safe for climbing activities.

## Confidentiality

In order to keep student information confidential, records are kept in a locked cabinet in the preschool office at all times. Only designated preschool staff and regulatory authorities may have access. A file may not leave the Director's office without approval. Parents or legal guardians are asked to notify the Director if they need to make changes to their child's enrollment record.

## Arrival and Dismissal Policies

If your child is to be picked up by anyone other than the parent or individual on the enrollment form, it must be in writing. School begins at 9:00 a.m. Please bring your child to the designated exterior door at your designated time. We ask that you do not arrive earlier than your designated time. However, it is important for your child to be on time. Please take your older children to their three or four year old classrooms first. Children may not be dropped off prior to 9:00 a.m. School will be dismissed at 12:00 p.m. Please be prompt. It is important that your child does not wait to be picked up to go home. **The Growing Place reserves the right to charge a \$5.00 late fee for every 10 minute increment that your child is supervised by a staff member outside of their scheduled class time.**

If a child needs to be picked up before the normal dismissal time, the parent or approved person will come to the front door to do so. Please let the office know that you will be picking up early. Contact the Director if further assistance is needed.

## Supervision

Children are supervised by two adults at all times. This is accomplished through continual visual and auditory observations by the assigned preschool staff or approved substitutes. Children remain with the same teaching staff and group of children for the entire school year in their assigned classroom. The class transitions as a group to the playground and back to their classroom, as well as to other locations as needed.

## Student Teacher Ratio

1 Year Olds	8 students	2 Year Olds	10 students
	1 teacher		1 teacher
	1 assistant		1 assistant

## **Tuition Policy**

All tuition will be paid on a monthly schedule this school year. This will eliminate the need for reimbursements in the event of a closure. All payments are due on or before the ***5<sup>th</sup> of the month.*** Any payment received on or after the 6<sup>th</sup> of each month will be assessed a \$25.00 late fee.

Any parent whose check is returned to The Growing Place by the bank for insufficient funds will be assessed a \$12.00 insufficient funds fee. Payments may also be made through the online system, <https://churchteams.com/m/Register.asp?a=Q1VzYzM3UIINNdzg9>, there is however a service charge of 3%. Problems regarding tuition will be handled in confidence between the parent and The Growing Place Director and Financial Assistant. Tuition must be current in order to register your child for the next school year.

## **Tuition Schedule for the 2023-2024 School Year**

2 day-1 year olds	\$195 per months (9 pays)
3 day-1 year olds	\$280 per month (9 pays)
2 day-2 year olds	\$195 per month (9 pays)
3 day-2 year olds	\$280 per month (9 pays)
5 day- 2 year olds	\$405 per month (9 pays)

## **Supply Fee**

Each one and two year old attending The Growing Place is required to pay a \$200 Supply Fee for the school year. The purpose of the Supply Fee is to cover the rising cost of consumable materials that are used by our children during the school year. *The Supply Fee is due August 1st.* A check may be written, PAYABLE TO HERITAGE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH (HUMC). Please indicate “Supply Fee” in the memo section of your check.

## **Withdrawal Policy**

If your plans change with regard to your child’s attendance at The Growing Place, please let us know as soon as possible. This would greatly benefit another child and parent. Your first tuition payment, due September 1st, will be refunded to you if you notify The Growing Place Director, in writing on or before the child’s first day of school. If it is necessary to withdraw your child between September 1st and the end of the school year, you must provide 30 day written notice and are responsible for that month’s tuition.

## **Health Policies**

### **You MUST keep your child home when he/she has:**

Nasal Drainage	Sore Throat	Rash	Chronic Cough
A fever or chills	Inflamed eyes	Diarrhea	New medication
Nausea or Vomiting	Open Sores	Impetigo	
Head Lice	Earache		

### **Your child must be free of the above symptoms for 24 hours without the use of medicine before returning to school.**

In addition, if your child has a doctor's appointment due to chronic symptoms or conditions, please keep your child home that morning until the doctor can give an assessment on your child's condition. **We require a doctor's note if your child has an ongoing cough and runny nose, due to allergies or to asthma.**

It is at the discretion of the Director if it is safe for that child to be at school. These guidelines are put in place to keep your child healthy as well as the teachers and other children in his/her class.



A child will have their temperature taken during the day if they exhibit any symptoms of illness. If there is a reading at any time of 100.4 or higher that child may not attend school.

If a child has a persistent and/or productive cough, they may not attend school.

If a child has nasal drainage present and/or persistent they may not attend school.

If your child is not well enough to participate in class activities and those on the playground, please keep your child home.

### **It is at the discretion of the Director as to when your child may return to school or be sent home from school. This policy will be adhered to in the strictest manner.**

If a child becomes ill during the school day, the teacher will notify the Director. The child will be removed from the classroom immediately and taken to the isolation area, per CDC guidelines. The parents will be called to pick up their child. **If a child is sent home due to an illness, they cannot return to school the next day.**

Bottles and Pacifiers are not allowed in ones and twos due to health concerns.

Please do not attach or place hand sanitizer in your child's school bag. It is considered a chemical and can be harmful if swallowed. This is a Pinellas County License Board rule.

Epi-Pens are the only medication that can be given at the preschool. Parents must fill out a medication consent form and provide an epi-pen in the original packaging from the pharmacy with the instructions and dose information on the label.

**Smoking is prohibited on the premises of The Growing Place Preschool and Heritage United Methodist Church. This includes the use of e-cigarettes.** This is a Pinellas County License Board rule.

### **Health Related Epidemic Policy**

Based on information indicating an outbreak/epidemic from the Department of Health, the Director will close the preschool. If this should be necessary, the Director will send out an email to all families of the preschool informing them of the closure and the reason. The classroom teachers will also send out a message via the class BAND site. There would also be a message concerning closure on our website. The preschool will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized. The Department of Health will instruct the Director when the preschool should be reopened.

The Director will maintain contact with the families via email and website as to the progress of the closure. When the preschool is considered a healthy environment, follow up emails will be sent out from the Director to all families as to when the school will reopen.

### **Playground Rules**

The playgrounds are only to be used by children enrolled at The Growing Place and their siblings. Posted rules are required to be followed.

### **Attendance Policy**

If your child is going to be absent, please call the office to give that information on the day of the absence. It is extremely important for us to know the reason for the absence.

If a child does not attend a minimum of 6 classroom days in succession, without communication with the school, and tuition is delinquent, the child will be dropped from the class. If a parent communicates with the school, and provides tuition owed, the child will be retained on the class roster. All tuition and fees must be current in order to register a child for the next school year.

### **Conferences**

Parent teacher conferences are held twice a year. This allows the teachers to have individual conversations with families about their particular child's progress. Written documentation from formal assessments will also be shared twice a year. However, families may request a conference with their child's teacher at any time.



## **Discipline Policy**

The ultimate goal of our discipline policy is to promote healthy self-esteem in each child. We do this by:

1. Providing a loving Christian atmosphere for students and staff.
2. Building a positive attitude toward God, self, others and school.
3. Encouraging parental involvement.
4. Setting clear expectations for behavior.

We will not allow children to hurt themselves, others or destroy property. Our purpose is to use natural consequences and redirection. Our staff is prohibited from subjecting any child to discipline which is severe, humiliating, frightening, or associated with food, rest, or toileting. Spanking, shaking or any other form of physical punishment is also prohibited by all child care personnel. If a child's behavior becomes a challenge in the classroom, a parent- teacher conference will be requested. A plan of cooperation will be formulated at this time to correct the challenging behavior.

In the event of an ongoing problem, The Growing Place Director and the HUMC Executive Director will confer with the teacher and parents to develop a plan appropriate for the particular child. If the team of adults feels more professional help may be warranted, an Early Childhood Specialist for the Pinellas County License Board will be consulted. This consultation will require written agreement from the parents, teacher, Director of The Growing Place, and HUMC Executive Director. However, in the event that the challenges are not resolved or that it is determined that the needs of the child are not being met, The Growing Place Director reserves the right to terminate the child from the program.

## **Specialized Consultants**

Periodically a preschool teacher may refer a family to a specialized consultant in an effort to assist a child in participating fully in the preschool environment. The referral may be suggested to assist: a child with special needs or disabilities, a child with suspected developmental delays, or a child with behavior challenges. The teacher may also request a classroom visit from a specialized consultant to assist the teacher with ways to enhance the learning environment for her students as a whole. The specialized consultants primarily used by our preschool are Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources System and The Early Learning Coalition. There is not a fee associated with these consultants.

## **Reminders For The First Day**

1. Have a copy of your child's Birth Certificate in the office before the first day of school.
2. Copies of your child's school physical and immunization record on HRS forms must be in the office before the first day of school.  
**\*\*As of September 1, 2015 exemptions are no longer accepted. \*\***

3. Each child must have an Emergency Release Form filled out, **notarized** and in the office before the first day of school.
4. All other required forms are to be in the office before the first day of school.

On the first day of school and every day, please bring your child's complete change of clothes (including shoes), diapers and wipes, if needed. Also bring your child's individual snack and cup with a lid for their water labeled with their full name.

### **Volunteers**

We welcome volunteers in the classroom. Starting in October, in coordination with your teacher you will be able to come in and assist as needed. You will need to see the front office for background check information prior to volunteering. Please plan ahead the screening can take approximately two weeks to process.

### **Photographs and Video**

Photos and videos can be taken by family members for their own personal use. Under no circumstances are photos or videos of children other than your **own** child permitted to be shared online or placed on any form of social media such as Facebook.

### **Emails**

Our main forms of communication this school year will be via emails, our website and your child's classroom BAND site. Therefore, it is very important that we have a current and correct email address for every family. Paper copies of the school newsletter will not be available but will be posted monthly on our website.

A class list of contact information for families is given out with parent permission to other families in the same class. That information is only to be used to set up play dates or invite children to birthday parties. Please do not use that information to solicit your business.

### **Birthdays Are Special**

You may send in a PEANUT FREE, special treat for your child's birthday. **Please discuss your plans with your child's teacher prior to their birthday.** We ask that you **DO NOT** send in cakes or cupcakes. Your individual teachers can give you suggestions of what to send in. Summer birthdays will be celebrated prior to the end of the school year. **NOTE:** *Please do not send in treat bags for your child's birthday*

### **Classroom Snacks**

Due to Department of Health guidelines, home prepared food items, from staff or parents, intended for distribution among the children, are prohibited. Parents will provide an individual daily snack (this is not lunch) for their child only. PLEASE BE AWARE THAT WE



ARE A PEANUT FREE CAMPUS. Examples of healthy snacks include yogurt, fruit (must be cut to prevent choking), pretzels, etc. Your teachers will provide a more detailed list of peanut free snack options. Parents will provide a cup of water with a lid each day and be sure it is labeled with the child's first and last name. No glass containers.

**\*\*If your child is in a classroom with food allergies, your child's teacher will send home adjustments to what is allowed to be eaten in the classroom\*\***



### **Lunch Bunch Program**

Lunch Bunch will be available to your Tiny Tot once they have turned 3 years old AND are fully potty trained. Lunch bunch is available each day that your child attends school from 12:00 – 2:00. There is a \$15.00 daily fee and each child needs to bring their own lunch.

### **Scholarship Fund-Tuition Assistance Program**

The Scholarship Fund of The Growing Place Preschool is designed to provide tuition assistance for parents or legal guardians who want their children to receive a Christian preschool education but cannot afford the full cost of such an education.

If granted, the scholarship is for a maximum of *50%* of the applicable tuition. The scholarship shall be guaranteed until the applicant is financially able to resume payment of full tuition, or the end of the semester. The scholarship is not automatically renewed the following semester; therefore a new application shall be completed each semester. If you are in need of tuition assistance at any time, please see the Director of The Growing Place. All information concerning our scholarship applicants is confidential.

### **Mission Statement**

The goal of The Growing Place Preschool of Heritage United Methodist Church is to teach children to know Jesus through a personal relationship with Him. We strive to teach children to love as Jesus loves and to develop compassion for those around them. We stress the importance of diversity in activities as well as teaching styles in order to reach each child at his or her level of ability and understanding, preparing them socially, physically and academically for the next step. It is our responsibility to nurture these children and their families as they grow spiritually, so they can live for Jesus in our community and in our world today.

### **Vision**

Growing in God's Love.

## **The Growing Place Student Calendar 2023 - 2024**

Wednesday, August 30	Parent Orientation
Thursday, August 31	Children's Open House
Tuesday, September 5	First Day of School
Monday, September 25	Prof. Dev. Day – <b>No School Students</b>
Monday, October 16	Prof. Dev. Day – <b>No School Students</b>
Friday, November 3	Conferences – <b>No School Students</b>
Monday, November 20 – Friday, November 24	Thanksgiving Holidays – <b>No School</b>
Wednesday, December 20 & Thursday, December 21	Family Christmas Parties & Shortened Day for Students
Friday, December 22 – Friday, January 5	Christmas Holidays – <b>No School</b>
Monday, January 8	School Reopens
Monday, January 15	MLK Day – <b>No School</b>
Friday, February 16	Prof. Dev Day – <b>No School Student</b>
Monday, February 19	President's Day – <b>No School</b>
Monday, March 11 – Friday, March 15	Spring Break – <b>No School</b>
Friday, March 29	Good Friday – <b>No School</b>
Friday, April 26	Conferences – <b>No School Students</b>
Friday, May 17	<b>Last Day of School</b>

### **Hurricane Make-up Days (if necessary)**

**September 25, 2023**  
**October 16, 2023**  
**November 20 – 21, 2023**  
**February 16, 2024**

**\*\*THESE DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE\*\***