

A message from the Preschool Director

**We must be sure that in this busy,
overscheduled, hurry-up world
in which we live,
our children always have time
for
Dreaming & Playing.
It will help to grow their hearts,
their minds,
and their spirits,
So that they will be able to fully enjoy
all the wonders & gifts
of God's world!**

Table of Contents

Mt. Zion UMC Vision for Ministry.....	3
Purpose & Philosophy of Mt. Zion Preschool.....	4
History of Mt. Zion Preschool	5
Entrance Requirements.....	5
Arrival	6
Carpool vs. Walk-Ins.....	7
Adjustment to Preschool.....	8
School Days & School Closings	9
Safety Drills	9
Snack Calendars.....	10
Snack Suggestions.....	11
Tuition Payments.....	12
Potty Training	13
School Tote Bags.....	14
Parent Participation Opportunities	15
Holiday Parties.....	16
Health, Safety & Sick Children.....	17
The ALTA Tennis Rule	17
Plan Ahead Advice & Medications	18
Child Abuse Reporting	18
Illness Guidelines	19
Biting -Policy.....	20
Class Schedules & Routines.....	21
Classroom Visits - Animal & Pets.....	21
Proper Dress for Preschool.....	22
Conferences.....	22
Assessments	23
Registration for the Next School Year.....	24
Fighting Toys & Aggression Policy.....	24
Specials Classes.....	25
Children with Special Needs.....	26
Dismissal.....	27
Non-Parental Pick-Up from School.....	28
Outreach Activities & Fundraisers.....	29
General Curriculum Guidelines for 12 to 30 month-olds.....	30
General Curriculum Guidelines for 2 ½+ year-olds.....	31
General Curriculum Guidelines for 3 year-olds.....	32
General Curriculum Guidelines for 4 year-olds	33
Young 5 year-olds, Purpose & General Curriculum Guidelines.....	34
What Can A Child Learn From Play.....	35
Helpful Resources for Parents of Young Children.....	37
Notes	38



Mt. Zion United Methodist Church
Vision for Ministry

We have been
called into being by God's grace,
and empowered by the Holy Spirit.
Mt. Zion United Methodist Church
is a dynamic and diverse church family.
We reach out to all people in Christ's name
in an exciting ministry of help, hope, and healing.

We challenge each other to discover,
develop and use our God-given gifts and graces,
in loving witness to the world.
We experience the joy of God's promises
and celebrate the miracle of God's presence.



Mt. Zion Preschool & Mother's Morning Out is a weekday ministry of this church. We serve the needs of children in our church and in our community, believing that each person is a child of God.

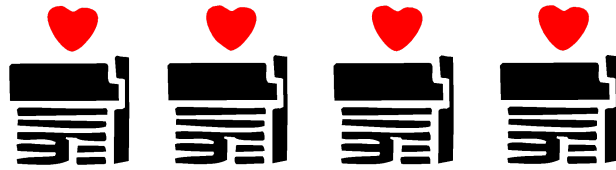
Purpose and Philosophy of Mt. Zion United Methodist Church Preschool



The purpose of Mt. Zion's early childhood program is to provide a loving and relaxed learning environment where each child feels secure, comfortable, and special. Our staff is dedicated to making this first venture away from home a safe and happy experience for each child. We respect the special nature and magical time of childhood, and we understand that "play" is important in the healthy growth of children. We believe that children have an active and a natural curiosity about the world around them, and given opportunities to explore and succeed, will develop a life-long love of learning. We know that each family and each child is unique, and is deserving of our respect and our support. We will work together to foster a caring community. Our preschool program is one of the many ministries of Mt. Zion United Methodist Church. We welcome children and staff from all faiths, races, and nationalities.

Mt. Zion Preschool is exempt from licensing by the state of Georgia, as a program that operates not more than 4 hours per day. This exemption does not alter our responsibility to maintain the requirements of a full day licensed program. Mt. Zion Preschool does to the best of our ability, maintain all established state standards.

History of Mt. Zion Preschool



Welcome to Mt. Zion Preschool and Mother's Morning Out. In 1973, Mt. Zion United Methodist Church opened one of the first preschools in the East Cobb area. Today our program continues to be known for its commitment to quality early childhood-education and loving care for children from 12 months through 5 years of age.

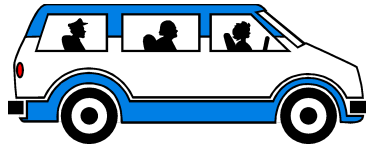
The teaching staff at Mt. Zion brings many years of experience to the task of providing each child with a balanced program of art, music, science, language development, and creative play, coupled with an age-appropriate curriculum.

We believe that we are in partnership with you in helping your child to develop a love of school and a desire to learn. We will work to provide opportunities for parents, teachers, and children to become a loving and mutually respectful community. We thank you for the trust you have placed in us by allowing your child to be a part of our program.



ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

Your child's birthday must fall on or before September 1st of the current school year to qualify for each of the respective class-age groups.



ARRIVAL

Our regular school hours are from 9:30am until 12:30pm, with an optional extended hour, called "Lunch Bunch" for our 3 & 4 year olds, which meets until 1:30pm.

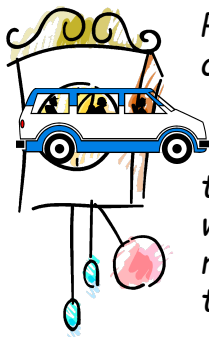
Some of our classes, including Young Fives, attend 9:30 to 1:30. Students will bring a lunch from home and eat with their classmates. Please remember that we have a no peanut policy.

The doors to the preschool will remain locked until 9:25am to allow the staff to get ready for their busy day. When the preschool doors open, we will be ready to greet your children and begin our busy day.

The younger children, (ages 12 months through 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ yr. olds) must always be walked to the classroom by parents.

The older children (ages 3 through 5 years) may either use the morning carpool drop-off option, or park and walk your children to class. Some parents use the carpool every morning, some only during inclement weather, and some choose to always walk their children to the classroom - the choice is yours.

If you arrive after 9:40am, the preschool doors will be locked. You must ring the doorbell, and when the door is opened, you must walk your child to the classroom door.



Please remember that it is important to get your child to school on time. Those first few moments of the morning are what set

the tone for the rest of your child's day at school. Children who are chronically late can have difficulty adjusting to the routine and activities of the day. Tardiness is also disruptive to the whole class.

If you choose to use the morning carpool, please read the following information carefully:

The carpool line forms at the end of the lower level FMC building, and continues along the side of the building to the double red doors, at the main entrance to the Preschool.

There will be two teachers stationed at the red doors to help your child out of the car, and walk them into the building.

Have your child ready to get out on the passenger side of the car. Before getting in the carpool line, please have finished breakfast, have shoes & jacket on, schoolbag packed, etc.

Before the teacher opens the car door, **put your car in PARK and take your foot off the accelerator.**

After your child is safely out of the car, exit the carpool line to the left, and return to Bishop Lake Road to exit the campus.



If you choose to walk your child to class, please read the following information carefully:

Park your car in the area adjacent to the playground, and beyond the Clubhouse. Please follow the one-way signs and arrows in the parking areas.

Always hold your child securely by the hand when in the parking lot.

Walk your child into the building using the door at the end of the lower level hallway - and be sure you walk your child all the way to the classroom.

When exiting the campus, **do not drive into the carpool area.**

Adjustment to Preschool

We know the first days and weeks of preschool can be difficult for many children. Young children can be anxious about the separation from parents when they first begin attending preschool. If your child is frightened and cries when you first come to preschool, try to remain calm and cheerful yourself. **DO NOT GIVE UP** and just take your child home. Give your child a loving and firm promise that you will return. If you wish, ask your child's teacher what the last activity of the day is going to be, and tell your child you will be back at that time. When you come back, make sure you remind your child that you kept your promise, and came back when you said you would.



Continue with this routine each morning - do not prolong your goodbye with your child — experience has taught us that a cheerful and loving hug works best. If your child is still distressed when you leave, please feel free to call the preschool office after a while for reassurance that your child has settled down and joined in the fun.

If a child has a prolonged period of adjustment with separation, we will work with you to help him become comfortable with coming to play with his teachers and friends. For a week or so you may be asked to pick your child up early - perhaps after just 45 minutes in the classroom. This will give your child frequent reassurances that Mommy always comes back. After about a week of these shorter days, we will gradually add to the length of time he stays at preschool. The 2nd week you will be asked to phone us before coming to pick up your child, and if things are going well, we will tell you to wait and come at our regular dismissal time. This approach of gradually longer stays is generally all it takes to help your preschooler become comfortable and trusting that preschool is indeed a fun place!

We know that every child is unique, and we will work with you to meet those individual needs to the best of our ability, to help each child be successful.



SCHOOL DAYS & SCHOOL CLOSINGS

We begin our school year in August, the week after Cobb County schools begin, and we finish in May, the week before Cobb County schools end for the summer.

We follow the Cobb County school calendar, including teacher work days, student holidays, and early release days. However, there are a few other days that the preschool will be closed for teacher training, which are not Cobb County school closing dates. These days will be noted on the preschool calendar. Specifically, November 9 and Good Friday will be holidays that do not coincide with Cobb Co.

Whenever Cobb County Schools dismiss early, whether for conference week or Early Release Days, the preschool will dismiss at NOON. Missed school days will not be made up.

In the event of inclement weather, Mt. Zion Preschool will close if the Cobb County schools are closed. Listen to your local school closings on the radio and television—if **Cobb County schools are closed then Mt. Zion is also closed**. You will not see the preschool listed individually. We will also notify you via email. This is our most efficient means of communication, so update your information as needed.



Safety Drills

All classes will participate in monthly fire drills. In the first two months of school, they will be announced, and we will carefully explain to the children why we are practicing leaving the building quickly & quietly. For the remainder of the year, the drills will be unannounced.

The children will also practice what we would do in the event of a tornado. Each exterior class is paired with an interior, windowless classroom, where the classes will go in the event of a tornado.



SNACK CALENDARS

Each month you will receive a calendar from your child's teacher, which will inform you of the units of study, special programs, and pertinent classroom information, as well as, snack leader assignments.

Your child will be assigned a day once or twice a month to provide snack for the whole class plus two teachers. The teacher will send home the class "Snack-Sack" when it is your child's turn to provide snack. Be sure to send enough food to satisfy the children's hunger and hold them until lunchtime. Please provide one slightly sweet item, and one slightly salty item, so that there is something to appeal to every palate. Suggested snacks are listed below. If your child enjoys a favorite snack unique to your family culture, we welcome you to share it with us. Sharing new foods is one way to introduce the children to the variety of different countries and cultures around us.

DO NOT SEND JUICE - the children will have ice water as their beverage, which they will learn to pour for themselves.

Very sugary sweet snacks should be saved for special celebrations such as class parties or your child's birthday. It is strongly suggested that for birthdays & parties, you send in a big "cookie-cake", donuts, or muffins or home-baked cupcakes. We've learned that the bakery/store bought cupcakes usually have too much frosting and the children end up just throwing them away. It is an expensive waste of food & money.

In the 3, 4, and 5-year-old classes, your child will be the **CLASS-LEADER** on his snack day. That means being the line leader, the weather and calendar person, the teacher's helper, and, the show & tell person. [This is the only time your child may bring a toy from home] ***This is an important day for your child, and it is your responsibility to remember when it is your child's turn.*** Be sure to post it on your family calendar, or wherever you keep important reminders. In the younger classes, the teachers will assign leader-tasks as appropriate for the children's age.

IMPORTANT TO NOTE: Mt. Zion UMC Preschool strives to be a **PEANUT-FREE-ENVIRONMENT**, because so many children have a severe sensitivity to peanut-related snacks, including peanuts & peanut butter.
****If your child has a food allergy other than to peanuts, you will be asked to send a safe snack for your child each day to avoid exposure to the allergen in other products****



SNACK SUGGESTIONS

On the SALTY side

- * Snack Mix (without nuts)
- * Goldfish Crackers
- * Cheese Sticks
- * Assorted Crackers
- * Small Pretzels
- * Mini-Bagels/Cream Cheese
- * Bread Sticks
- * Cut-up Veggies
- * finger sandwiches
- * English Muffin Pizzas
- * Quesadillas

On the SWEET side

- * Applesauce Cups
- * Cut-up Fruit
- * Oatmeal Cookies
- * Vanilla Wafers
- * Graham Crackers
- * Yogurt Cups
- * Rice Crispy Treats
- * Jell-O
- * Raisin Boxes
- * Bananas
- * Muffins

We strive to provide the children with nutritious snacks. As a general rule, please read labels and look for snacks that are about 150 calories or less per serving, less than 5 grams of fat, and less than 275 mg of sodium.

All snacks should be "ready to serve" so the teachers will not need to heat, wash, slice, etc. in preparation for snack-time. Send appropriate utensils (plastic spoons) when needed.

We cannot serve items that are considered a choking hazard. This includes: hot dogs, whole grapes, carrots, raw peas, hard pretzels, or popcorn. [Exception: If hot dogs, grapes, and carrots are sliced lengthwise then we can safely serve them]

Store bought snacks must be sent to school unopened, in the original package, with the ingredients list on the box/bag and expiration date clearly visible. Home baked snacks must be sent in with a list of the ingredients used in the recipe.

In the event that you forget to send in snack on your child's day, or your child is sick and absent from school, don't panic. Each class maintains a small "pantry" of snacks for this purpose. You will be asked to replenish whatever was used from the classroom pantry, so we'll be ready for our next "snack -emergency."



TUITION PAYMENTS

Tuition is payable by cash or by check. The preschool does now take credit cards through Paypal. You can access this option through our website www.mtzionumc.org/preschool and scrolling below tuition to find the link. Tuition will be divided into 10 equal payments.

Tuition is due the first of each month. A tuition envelope will be sent home with your child before the first class day of each new month. You will simply put your tuition check in the envelope and send the tuition envelope back to school with your child on the next class day.

Tuition is considered on-time if it is in the preschool office by the 10th of the month. **If the 10th of the month falls on a weekend or holiday, it is still your responsibility to get the tuition payment in by the last school day before the 10th.**

Any tuition payment received after the 10th of the month will be considered late, and you will be charged with a \$25.00 Late Fee.

If you have more than one child in our program, and they are in different classes, we ask that you pay by **separate checks** for each child's tuition payment, if possible. Twins, etc. in the same class may pay with one check.

If you use an automatic bill paying service, please be sure that your bank mails out your tuition payment early enough to arrive in our office before the 10th of the month.

The preschool is always willing to try to work with families if a financial need arises during the school year. Please do not hesitate to speak with the preschool director if this should occur. Financial assistance is confidential.

A \$25 service fee will be charged on each returned check.



POTTY TRAINING

Potty training is not required for children in the younger classes, from 12 months old through 2½+ years old. Children aged 3 years old through 5 years old **must be reliably toilet trained** * to take part in the Preschool portion of our program.

* **Reliable toilet training** is defined as: "a child who can ***tell an adult*** when he needs to use the bathroom." A good example of being reliably potty trained is The little girl you would trust to sit on your mother-in-law's new sofa in her new big-girl underpants, or the little boy you'd trust to sit on the bride's lap at the wedding reception wearing his new big-boy underwear!

Potty training often occurs in the spring for the 2 to 2½+ year-old classes. If you let your child's teachers know that you are working on potty training at home, they will try to help you and your child during this transitional time.

None of the 3 & 4 year-olds should be wearing "pull-ups" to school as a "just in case" measure.....reliably potty-trained children are past this need.

It is helpful if you have your child use the bathroom right before coming to school each day. If you walk your child to class in the morning, please take your child to the bathroom before coming into the classroom. The classes will make trips to the bathroom as a group, and a teacher will accompany a child when needed between group trips.

Our Policy for Repeated Toileting Accidents

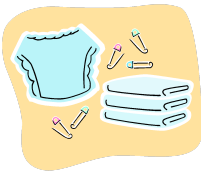
While accidents will occasionally occur, children in the preschool program with frequent toileting accidents will need to be withdrawn from the school for one month to work on successful potty training. A half-tuition rate will be charged for one month, to hold the child's spot in the program. If, at the end of a month, the child is still not reliably potty trained, the parent will need to withdraw the child from the preschool program.



PRESCHOOL TOTE BAGS

The preschool will give a school tote bag to every child enrolled in our program, which your child will need to bring to school each day.

(Do not use any backpacks or diaper bags.)



Children under 3 should always have a full change of clothing in their bag (clothing changed as the seasons change), as well as 3 diapers, a "sippy" cup with a lid, and any comfort items such as a pacifier or a blanket that may help make their adjustment to the program a little bit easier. Please have

your child's name clearly written with permanent marker on all items, including cup, lid, and diapers.



The children aged 3 and up must always have a complete change of clothing in their bags, including socks (clothing changed as the seasons change).

If you lose your school bag, a replacement bag must be purchased. The cost of replacement is \$5, which can be purchased from the preschool office.

Do not allow your child to keep a toy in the school tote bag unless it is for "show & tell".

Never put any medication in your child's school bag - not even cough drops.



Parent Participation Opportunities

We welcome and encourage parents to take an active role in the preschool community. Our program has a parents' organization, called **Parents of Mt. Zion**, otherwise known as POMZ. It is a way for our families to become more involved in supporting the preschool program and the staff in a variety of ways, both in and out of the classroom.

POMZ is comprised of parent volunteers who provide help or leadership in some of the following areas:

- Coordinate "Room Parents" to assist classroom teachers
- Help with fundraising activities
- Provide treats for the staff during monthly staff meetings.
- Assist with the book fair
- Help with school-wide celebrations like the Thanksgiving Feast and the end-of-the-year Carnival
- Help host our "New Parent" coffee to welcome new families
- Assist with outreach and charitable activities
- Help with Mt. Zion Preschool Bazaar in October



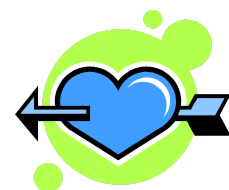
Other ways that parents can be involved include:

- Volunteering to serve on the Preschool Board
- Signing up to be a "Mystery Reader" in one of the classrooms
- Providing dessert for the staff to enjoy during monthly meetings
- Volunteering to help in the classroom during conference
- Signing up to be a room party-coordinator



HOLIDAY PARTIES

All classes will celebrate 4 holiday parties during the year: Halloween, Christmas, Valentines, and Easter. These parties are generally scheduled



for the last 30 minutes of the school day. Party helpers should arrive in time to set up and carry out the festivities. Other parents may join during the last 15 minutes. Please note that siblings are not accounted for in planning for party supplies.



Typically, four parents will be asked to help with each class party. We ask that you sign up for only one party so every parent will have a chance to be involved. Help is provided in areas: 1] party plates & napkins, 2] a party snack, 3] a story to read, and 4] a game to play.

DO NOT plan a craft activity - parties are not long enough to complete these.

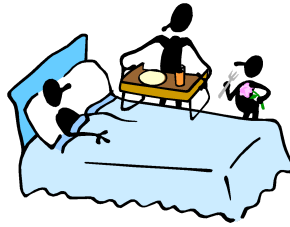
BALLOONS are a serious safety hazard & are not allowed.

Do not bring balloons to the parties.



If your family celebrates holidays or traditions other than those listed above, we welcome an opportunity for the class to learn about those celebrations as well. Parents are encouraged to speak to the teacher about a convenient time and opportunity to come and share these family traditions with the children in the class.

At Thanksgiving, we traditionally enjoy the day by inviting whole families to join us for a Thanksgiving Feast. Families are also welcome to come to our Christmas Music Program & our Spring Music Program. These events are great fun, and help strengthen our relationships as a learning community.



HEALTH, SAFETY, and SICK CHILDREN

The children in our care are our first and most important priority, and your child's health and safety govern every decision we make here at Mt. Zion.

Mt. Zion's entire teaching and administrative staff have received training in CPR and pediatric first aid, and have had criminal background checks done.

Each member of the Mt. Zion staff follows mandatory health and hygiene procedures which include: frequent hand-washing with anti-bacterial soap, use of waterless cleaners between hand-washings, use of disposable gloves for each diaper change and for any contact with bodily fluids, frequent disinfecting of classroom surfaces & toys using a hydrogen peroxide based sanitizing spray, and use of gloves when handling food.

The State of Georgia and the Preschool Board require that we have on file the Georgia Department of Human Resources Form #3231, which can be obtained either through your pediatrician or the Cobb County Health Department. As a NAEYC accredited preschool program, we also require an additional medical form indicating overall health of each child. Both of these forms, signed by a physician, must be on file in the preschool office no later than 30 days from date of enrollment in order for your child to be permitted to attend class.

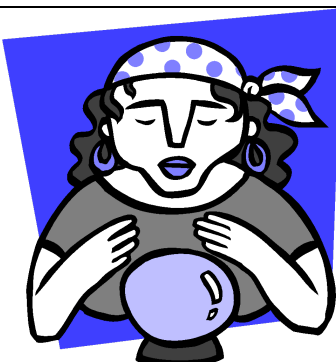
If, for religious or special health reasons, your child has not received the routine early childhood immunizations, you must pick up a waiver form from the preschool office, which must be notarized, and will be held on file in the preschool office.

You will be asked to provide two emergency back-up phone numbers of friends or relatives that we can call in the event your child becomes ill at school and we are unable to reach either Mom or Dad. Please let them know that you have given us their names & numbers.



The ALTA Tennis Rule - If you play ALTA tennis on Thursdays, do not use other ALTA members as your emergency numbers. This is because the odds are good that when you are on the tennis court on

Thursday mornings, **they are, too.**



Some Plan Ahead Advice.....

If you have something *important* coming up, that you simply cannot miss, and you have scheduled it during preschool hours -- be very sure that you have a **"JUST IN CASE PLAN"** spelled out with your neighbor,

grandparent, friend, or spouse - in the unlikely chance that your child wakes up ill on the morning of your BIG PLANS! A sick child will be sent home immediately..... for the good of all our families, this policy is non-negotiable.

Our policy concerning sick children is quite simple:
Sick children need to be at home!

Any child who appears ill on arrival at school will not be permitted to stay. This is in the best interest of the sick child, as well as the staff and all the other children and families in our program.

If you will regularly be attending a class, lesson, or other activity during school hours be sure the classroom teacher and the preschool office have the phone number where you can be reached.

Be sure to keep your cell phone **charged, on, and with you** during school hours so we can reach you if needed.

Reporting Child Abuse & Neglect

We are required by law to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The law requires teachers to be alert to unexplained bruises, cuts, or burn marks. Please be sure that you keep the preschool staff informed about any recent accidents or injuries concerning your child that, if left unexplained, might be cause for alarm.

Medication



Teachers are not permitted to administer any medication to a child, with the exception of an epi-pen or Benadryl for emergency allergic reactions. If your child requires regular medication, such as an inhaler, during the school day, written permission & instructions must be on file in the preschool office, along with a "school supply" of the medication. The preschool director will be authorized to administer the medication, with appropriate written permission from parents or guardians. **NEVER send any medication in your child's school bag - not even cough drops!** If your child needs sunscreen, please apply it at home before coming to school.



Mt. Zion Preschool's Guidelines for Sick Children

Make certain that your child's immunizations are up to date.

DO NOT send your child to school with any illness/rash that could be spread to other children.

DO NOT send your child to school when taking medication that causes drowsiness or diarrhea.

If your child has been diagnosed with any highly contagious illness, please alert the preschool office. We will then notify other families in the program to be on the lookout for any symptoms or warning signs.

Your child should stay at home if exhibiting any of the following symptoms:

vomiting	frequent sneezing	fever
diarrhea	discolored sinus drainage	sore throat
constant cough	unidentified skin rash	pink, weepy eye

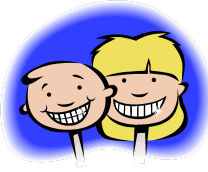
In the case of fever, vomiting, or diarrhea, the symptoms must be gone for a **FULL 24 HOURS** before your child can return to preschool. Keep in mind that some medications can cause diarrhea, and so until the medication is finished, and the stool has returned to normal, your child should not return to school.

If an illness requires an antibiotic, your child must have completed **24 HOURS** of medication prior to returning to preschool. Antibiotics must be given before and after school, not during program hours.

A note from your pediatrician's office is needed for the following illnesses, before your child may return to preschool:

infectious hepatitis	meningitis	ringworm
impetigo	scarlet fever	whooping cough
head lice	scabies	measles
mumps	rubella	tuberculosis

These requirements are posted outside of every classroom. Please work with us to keep Mt. Zion Preschool a healthy place for our staff and for all of our children.



Our Biting-Policy

Although it is not uncommon for very young children to bite, it is a behavior that is taken very seriously, and is strongly discouraged. Whenever a child is bitten, the teacher's first task is to comfort the child. Next, the wound will be washed with anti-bacterial soap. If the bite has broken the skin, the parents will be contacted immediately. However, if the bite is superficial, and the child has returned to play, then both sets of parents will be advised of the incident at dismissal.

When a child under the age of 2 bites, it is generally for one of the following reasons:

- Out of curiosity - "what will happen if I.....ouch!"
- Out of affection - starts with a hug, ends withouch!
- Out of ownership - trying to get something from another child.....ouch!
- Teething - these are textural biters, looking for comfort.....ouch!

In the instance of these youngest children, the teachers will try to determine which type of biting scenario has taken place. Then, they will closely monitor the situation, hoping to intercept the next "need to nip" - accompanied by a stern "NO". If the biting becomes a chronic problem, then it may be necessary for the child to withdraw from the program for a month, in an attempt to break the biting cycle.

If this occurs, the parents may choose to pay for $\frac{1}{2}$ month tuition to hold the spot in the class for a month, while they work on the problem at home. When the child returns after the month, if the biting is still an issue, the child will be withdrawn from the program for the remainder of the year.

When children are older than 24 months, biting is less common. Language is beginning to become the tool of choice, with "No!" and "Mine!" being used most frequently. These verbal warnings alert the teachers that it may be time to intervene, and redirect the playmates involved in another direction. When an older child bites, the preschool's policy is:

- **1st offense** - the child who bites will quickly be placed in "Time Out", while the teacher comforts the child who has been bitten, and attends to cleaning the bite. Then, the teacher will return to "Time Out" and speak with the offending child about what has happened. The child is reminded that teeth are for eating food & smiling, not for biting. Both sets of parents will be told of the incident.
- **2nd offense** - The child's parents will be asked to keep their child at home for the same number of days that the child attends preschool each week, and focus on helping the child understand that biting is unacceptable.
- **3rd offense** - The Preschool Board will meet to determine whether the next step will be further time at home, or removal from the program for the remainder of the school year.



CLASS SCHEDULES & ROUTINES

Because children are most comfortable in a predictable environment, each class will follow a general schedule that includes the following activities:

- Group time - group time that starts & ends each day
- Outdoor/Gym/Big Wheel playtime for 20 to 30 minutes each day
- Free play in learning centers: table toys/puzzles, art, reading, home living/dramatic play, blocks/floor toys, and sand/water play.
- Story time at least twice each day
- Bathroom/hand washing as a group & individually as needed
- Snack time, which is everyone's favorite
- Individual/small group projects in a teacher-directed setting

The schedule of these activities specific to each class is posted outside the classroom, by the door or on the bulletin board.

In addition to these classroom activities, there will be opportunities for Music, Creative Movement, Science, Spanish and Chapel, which will vary depending on each child's age and the days each child attends preschool.

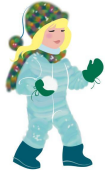
At the end of each day, the teacher will post a "What We Did Today" note outside the classroom door, detailing some of the events of the morning. Take a moment to read the note at pick-up and you can enjoy a more meaningful conversation about their day with your children on the ride home.



VISITING IN THE CLASSROOM

When you come for a visit, please be sure to check in with the preschool office before going to your child's classroom. Parents are welcome to visit in the classroom at any time, but we do request that you *do not bring siblings on these visits. Also, please do not bring pets or animals into the building with you. For the health and safety of the children, animals are not permitted in the building at any time.*

PROPER DRESS FOR PRESCHOOL



Each child should arrive at school dressed in simple play clothes. Many of our activities tend to get a little messy, and we want the children to be able to enjoy themselves, without having to worry about their clothing.

ALL CHILDREN MUST WEAR RUBBER SOLED SHOES TO SCHOOL.

There are many opportunities for climbing and running on our playground and in our gym, and the children must be able to participate in activities safely. Please take special note: **SANDALS, FLI-FLOPS, ETC. ARE STRONGLY DISCOURAGED.**

ALWAYS be sure your child has a jacket, sweater, or sweatshirt available to wear at school. The weather may be fine early in the morning and chilly later on in the day. During winter months, be sure to add gloves and a hat to the school bag. **Unless the weather is bitter cold, it is rainy, or the air quality is deemed unsafe, the children will go outside every day.** Please be sure your child is always prepared for a comfortable playtime at school every single day.



CONFERENCES

Parents are kept well informed about all of our activities at Mt. Zion Preschool through classroom calendars, bulletin board announcements, notes, newsletters, and e-mail.

Twice each year, in the fall and again in the spring, parents will be offered the opportunity to schedule an individual conference with teachers, to discuss their child's adjustment and progress in the program.

Additional conferences may be scheduled at any other time, at the request of the parents, teachers, or director, as needed.



ASSESSMENTS

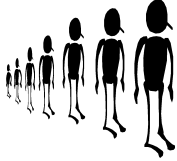
Assessment of each child's growth and development is an ongoing process in the preschool classroom. It is the process of observing, documenting, and evaluating what a child knows, what a child understands, and what a child can already do. Assessment opportunities are embedded in the various activities the teacher has planned for the day. Ongoing assessment occurs in the context of the daily classroom activities.

Assessment has two main purposes. The first is to help the teacher create a plan for instruction to meet the individual needs of each child. The second is to provide a clear picture of each child's strengths and weaknesses to the child's family.

Teachers use a variety of techniques and materials to collect information about each child's progress, including observation, anecdotal notes, work samples, photos, checklists, and communication from the child's home and family culture. The teachers will use this information to help plan meaningful learning opportunities for each child. Curriculum and lesson plans can then be adjusted to meet the needs of individual children

Our program does not use norm referenced assessment tools. Our assessment tools are teacher developed, and engaging for young children. For young children, "performance-testing" or "on-demand" assessment does not always give the teacher an accurate picture of what a child knows or can do. Our assessment approach of gathering information is systematic, but informal and non-stressful for the child.

Should a teacher have some concerns about a child's cognitive ability, behavior, or health issues, the parents will be informed of the concerns. Families will be provided information about local screening and diagnostic service through Babies Can't Wait or the public school system's Early Intervention Services. If the child qualifies for special needs services, the preschool and classroom teacher will work together with the agencies to provide for the child's needs, to the best of our ability. If the child does not qualify for county services, the preschool may adjust its teaching strategies to try and provide for a successful preschool experience.



REGISTRATION

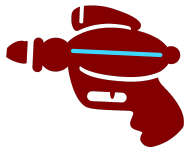
Each January registration is held for the following school year. Knowing in advance when we register each year should allow families to budget ahead for the double expense of tuition & registration in February. Registration fees are not refundable under any circumstances.

The fee paid at registration is $\frac{1}{2}$ the amount of one month's tuition. The registration fee is non-refundable. The first tuition payment will be made in June, prior to the start of the new school year. Due to the special nature of the Young 5's class, the registration will be refunded if the request is made prior to March 30th before the new school year. After that date, it will not be refunded.

First preference for placement is given to our currently enrolled families. If parents do not re-register during this in-house week, then the preschool cannot guarantee a place in the program for the fall. After this courtesy week for our current families, enrollment will open to previously enrolled/returning families, then church members, and finally the community.

Following pre-registration, the program will continually enroll children until all spots are filled. The preschool will not accept any new children after Spring Break of any given school year. We found it to be too disruptive to introduce a new child with only weeks remaining to the school year.

FIGHTING TOYS and AGGRESSION



We believe that children internalize early the difference between what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. Our program does not allow any "fighting toys" such as swords, knives, guns, etc., to be brought into the school. These items are not to be brought for "Show & Tell" - please help your child make a better choice. Pretend play involving shooting, kicking, karate, and so on will be redirected into non-violent, school appropriate activities. Continuous aggressive behavior will be cause for a conference, and if aggression is prolonged, possible withdrawal from the program.

SPECIALS CLASSES



In addition to the learning going on in the classrooms, we have several special classes that enhance the children's day at preschool, and stimulate their desire for fun and learning in the fine arts and sciences.

Music The significance of music as an enhancement to learning is well documented, and we are proud of the important role music plays in the Mt. Zion program. All classes will visit the music teachers each week for additional music and rhythm experiences.

Movement All classes will go to a movement class once a week for a special time of group games and gross motor activities. Balls, beanbags, streamers, and hoops will all add to the fun of the movement class.

Science The 3, 4 & 5 year-olds will make a weekly visit to the Science room. Our Science Teacher will help the children learn how to conduct simple experiments and explorations.

Spanish The 2 $\frac{1}{2}$, 3, 4, & 5 year olds will visit the Spanish class weekly for songs, games, and basic vocabulary.

Art The 4 & 5 year olds will also have a weekly visit to the new Art classroom, where they will learn the use of different art mediums and the appreciation of art related concepts.

Chapel The 3 through 5 year olds will attend chapel together twice each month for a time of Bible related stories and songs, lead by the Mt. Zion Ministry Staff and/or Ms. Kristi. The younger groups have chapel in their classrooms.



CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Mt. Zion's staff believes in the value and effectiveness of early intervention, and will work to the best of our ability with parents and children's professional support services toward the goal of inclusion of children with special needs in the regular preschool classroom setting. We maintain a close relationship with the community based early intervention specialists from Cobb County Dept. of Education. Children with mild handicaps are regularly included in our classes. Children with moderate to severe handicaps may be included in our program, if it is appropriate for both the child with special needs and for the cohesiveness and productivity of the entire class. This placement will be reviewed on a regular basis throughout the school year. Any additional expenses incurred with placement, such as a facilitator, will be the financial responsibility of the child's parents / legal guardians. If you would like for us to accompany you to your child's IEP meetings, we will be more than happy to attend.

If we have concerns about the progress of a child already in our program, we will put the family in touch with the proper professionals to see if further evaluation might be needed. The preschool staff will work with the family and with the child's specialist to determine the best course of action to meet the child's individual needs, making adjustments as needed to the curriculum and daily lesson plans.

We believe that all children learn best in an accepting and nurturing environment. In an inclusive community, children learn about compassion, understanding, and our mutual humanity.

Mt. Zion Preschool is also proud to have access to the knowledge and expertise of Adaptive Learning Center. ALC partners with Mt. Zion Preschool to consult the staff on room arrangement, sensory-rich learning environments, and other topics. Their representative have also consulted with teachers and parents about the needs of individual students upon request. You will see facilitators throughout our building from time to time. These are trained professionals who work with students with special needs within the classroom setting. We are happy to continue developing this relationship.



END of the DAY DISMISSAL

We ask all parents to park and come into the building at the end of the school day.

By coming into the building at least once a day, you and your child's teacher have an opportunity to communicate with one another about a common love - **YOUR CHILD**.

It is important to us that your child's departure from school be as wonderful and loving as those first moments of arrival. Because of this commitment to doing what is best for children we do not offer a carpool "pick-up" system. This allows your child an additional 15 to 20 minutes more of valuable activities with the teacher and friends. We are certain that you want the best for your child, and we are confident that this calm and loving finish to a busy day is best for all of our children.

Another meaningful benefit from coming inside to pick up your children is that parents have the opportunity to get to know one another a little better. As parents gather outside the classrooms waiting for the teachers to say good-bye to the children, we see connections, relationships, and a sense of community develop among our families.

We expect all of our families to be on time for pick-up at the end of the school day. Just like you, our teachers have their own appointments to keep, families to return to, and schedules that are just as important and busy as yours. We know an occasional delay may occur. However, we will not tolerate consistently late pick-ups. If this becomes a chronic problem, then we will strongly suggest that you find another program that better fits your family's scheduling needs.

You must hold your child's hand when you pick them up from the classroom until you put your child into your car. **Do not let your child wander the halls or cross the parking lot alone!**



NON-PARENTAL PICK-UP

Using the form in your parent packet, you will be asked to provide the names and relationships of everyone who will pick up your child from school on a regular, or "as needed" basis. Include both Mom's & Dad's name on this list. You may have as many names on this list as you wish, and may update during the year as arrangements change.

For your child's safety, until the teachers become familiar with the people on your pick-up list, **a photo ID** will be required before we release your child. This policy applies to our Lunch Bunch program as well as the regular school day hours.

If you plan a play-date for your child, and the play-date parent is not on your pick-up list, you must send a note that is signed & dated on the day of the play-date. **We will NOT let your child leave school without written permission, even if it is with another parent in your child's class that we already know.**

If there is any person or persons who should not be allowed access to your child, you must let your child's teacher and the preschool director know in writing, provide a photo if possible, and discuss in advance how the situation should be handled, should it arise.



If unexpected circumstances keep you from picking up your child on time, call the preschool office as soon as possible, so that we can prepare your child for the delay. If you have asked someone else to come who is not on your current permission list, you must let the preschool office know the name of the person you are sending. Inform your pick-up person to come to the preschool office with a photo ID. Someone will be sent to your child's classroom to bring him to the office.

We will NOT release your child unless a photo ID is supplied to verify identification.



OUTREACH ACTIVITIES & FUNDRAISERS

Mt. Zion Preschool is funded through tuition and registration fees. We rely solely on those revenues to pay for all of our salaries, materials, training, utilities, maintenance, and expansion. We do not receive any financial assistance from the church.

Traditionally, Mt. Zion has two fundraisers each year, which we hold for the pleasure & convenience of our families. These fundraisers are school pictures and the book fair. Additionally, this year we will be having a Honeybaked Ham fundraiser. You will receive more information later.

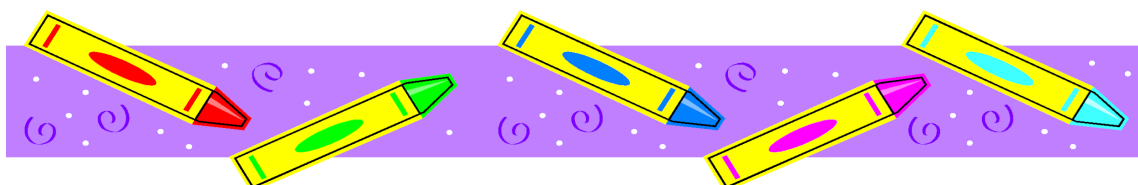
We are registered to participate in the General Mills **BOXTOPS for Education program**. By sending us the BOXTOPS coupons, we earn hundreds of dollars to make extra equipment purchases to improve the program.

We are also part of the PUBLIX Partners in Education Program. Each family will be given several Publix keychain scan-cards. Every time you shop at Publix - whether you spend \$5, \$50, or \$500, the preschool will get a percentage of your spending. We receive these checks quarterly - and we apply these funds to special non-budgeted projects that the children will enjoy!

Throughout the school year, we also provide our preschool families with a variety of opportunities to reach out to others in need of help. In past years, some of our outreach opportunities have been:

- Trick-or-Treating for UNICEF at Halloween
- Samaritan's Purse "Operation Christmas Child" Shoeboxes
- Collecting books for a school in Kenya
- Collecting quarters to buy a bicycle for a boy in South Africa
- Collecting clothing for children in the Dominican Republic
- Heifer International "Project Noah's Ark"
- Easter baskets for M.U.S.T. Ministries

Support of these and other projects is strictly voluntary. Our hope is that our children, who live in a very comfortable & affluent community, will begin to understand that not everyone lives like we do. There are many ways we can offer our love and our help to the greater world outside of East Cobb.



Mt. Zion Preschool's General Curriculum Guidelines

The classes for the younger children in our program, from 12 months through 30 months of age are divided into six-month increments, allowing us to keep developmental and skill levels closely grouped. The curriculum we use, *The Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood*, is play-based and age-appropriate, and assures continuity over time for the children who go through our program. The children in these classes do not have to be potty-trained.



The 12-18 month olds will be learning how to manage separation from Mommy & Daddy for several hours at a time, as well as learning how to navigate in a room with other young toddlers. Our warm and loving teachers will help these older babies negotiate this period of separation and trust. The teachers at this age level will be busy encouraging each child's emerging language skills and early peer social skills. These are all very big steps for your one year old!



The 18-24 month olds will have many opportunities to run and play, both indoors and out. These middle toddlers will be busy exploring the world around them. Language skill will continue to grow as the children hear stories and learn finger plays, rhymes, and songs. Puzzles, coloring, and watercolors will exercise those small muscles, while dancing and climbing will work on their bigger muscles. This will be a year of many changes as the children's large motor skills become steadier, and their fine motor skills continue to mature.



The 24-30 month olds will enjoy learning Nursery Rhymes, simple games, and the exploration of art materials. They will grow at an incredible rate, moving from "babyhood" into "childhood." Taking turns and sharing will continue to be a challenge for these older toddlers. As each child's patience and attention span increases, there will be more opportunities for small group activities. Pretend play and dress-up will become a great way to spend their mornings at school. This is an exciting time for parents and teachers, as each day brings new growth and change.



The 2- $\frac{1}{2}$ + year olds will have many chances to use their ever-increasing desire for independence. They will be encouraged to make choices and decisions, and become more involved in taking care of their own needs. There will be many opportunities to use a variety of art materials during the day - cutting, tearing, pasting, painting, and coloring. In this class, the children will be progressively encouraged to participate in small group, and finally large group activities. As their play skills begin to move beyond parallel play, to more meaningful interaction, the children will learn how to

solve problems, negotiate with one another, and use their language skills to make their wants and needs understood.



The curriculum in the younger portion of the program includes the following areas of exploration & development:

Some of the themes & units are Me, Friends, Families, Nursery Rhymes, Seasons & Holidays

Language arts skills include following verbal directions, listening to stories and responding to questions, increasing vocabulary, using pronouns, possessives, and plurals, repeating rhymes, and learning songs

Pre-Math skills such as recognizing same and different, distinguishing between one and more than one, recognizing descriptive differences like big/little, tall/short, over/under

Fine motor skills using blocks, peg boards, beads for stringing, pasting, tearing paper, "Play Doh"

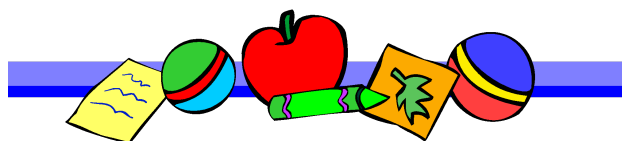
Gross motor skills jumping, dancing, climbing, pedaling, throwing, and catching

Social skills development learning to be happy away from home and family, making friends, trusting teachers, becoming more confident in a group, sharing, taking turns, and following and anticipating class routines



The Preschool's Older Classes

The children in this portion of our program are 3, 4, and 5 year olds. The curriculum we follow for our classes provides progressive, age appropriate activities, offering program continuity, while children move from the 3 year-olds, into the 4 year-olds, and if indicated, to the young 5 year-olds class.



The curriculum for the **3 year-olds** includes some of the following areas of exploration and development:

Some of the themes & units are Home & Family, Real & Make Believe, Good Nutrition, Bears-Bears-Bears, Things That Go, and more

Language Arts skills such as extending vocabulary, recognizing rhymes, recognizing name in print, listening for information, recalling details in stories, following directions with more than one step, learning color names and shape names

Math skills including block building, identifying shapes, drawing shapes, counting objects, demonstrating an understanding of number concepts for from zero through five, sorting and classifying objects, determining greater than and less than

Fine motor skills are snipping, cutting on a line, stringing beads, pegboards, puzzles, Play Doh, painting, and drawing

Gross motor skills include running, jumping, hopping on one foot, climbing, pedaling, and dancing

Social skills development include being part of a group, understanding the difference between real and pretend, good manners, the importance of giving, sharing, working together, honesty, promises, and taking care of God's world



The curriculum for 4 year-olds includes some of the following areas of exploration & development:

Some of the themes & units are Making New Friends, The Four Seasons, Farms, Native Americans, My Community, Plants, Butterflies & Birds, and Under the Sea

Language arts skills include recognizing printed letters and letter sounds, opposites, rhyming words, using left to right progression, recognizing their first and last name in print, sequencing story cards, and listening for information. We are also incorporating Phonemic Awareness activities.

Math skills practiced by counting and recognizing numbers from zero to twenty, comparing size, sorting by more than one attribute, following and creating patterns, recognizing sets of greater than and less than, recognizing equal and unequal sets, and simple graphing

Fine motor skills improve when block building, writing, drawing, painting, handling smaller manipulative materials, lacing, pegboard, beads, etc.

Gross motor skills include running, jumping, tumbling, skipping, hopping, climbing, throwing, catching, and kicking a ball, teamwork during group games

Social skills development is improved by working together, learning the importance of sharing, recognizing that we are all God's children, we are all different & the same, understanding that sometimes we talk and sometimes we listen, and by learning to control and talk about our feelings



Our Young Fives Class



The young fives class is designed for the child with a summer birthday; the child who might not be emotionally or socially mature enough for the rigors of a full-day public kindergarten. This unique class will allow the older preschooler an extra year to master the social, emotional, and academic readiness skills that will carry through the child's entire school career. There will be many opportunities to learn about the importance of personal responsibility. This

class is **NOT** intended to prepare a child for **1st grade!** The Young Fives class is a "bridge" from a half-day preschool setting to a full-day, regular kindergarten classroom experience. The first half of the year the structure and routine will be very similar to an older 4 year-old classroom. There will still be ample time for play, because young five year olds still have difficulty sitting still for extended periods of time. However, the second half of the year the pace will pick up, in order to keep these 5 year- olds excited and engaged in learning.

Each child in this class must be 5 years old on or before September 1st of the school year. This is a 4 hour class, from 9:30am to 1:30pm.

Some of the themes & units might be Fire Safety, My Amazing Body, Hibernation, Naps & Sleep, Our World in the Solar System, Tall Tales & Funny Stories, and Kites & the Wind

Language arts skills such as listening for information, retelling a story, describing and comparing objects, translating ideas into pictures or actions, using left to right progression in reading words and in writing, following multiple step directions, and participating in class discussions

Math skills include one to one correspondence from zero to twenty, manipulating sets and regrouping, recognizing numerals from zero to 31, sequencing

Fine motor skills such as cutting shapes, writing, duplicating a drawing, painting, using stencils, doing dot-to-dot pictures, continuing to use manipulative materials

Gross motor skills develop with many more opportunities for team play & group skills

Social development skills such as helping one another, cooperating to solve a problem, helping to generate the class rules, and following those rules

What Can a Child Learn From Play?



When children build with blocks.....they learn to use their imaginations - to create something from their own thinking. They have the satisfaction of being able to make something where nothing existed before. They learn about size, shape, weight, height, depth, and balance.



When children paint.....they learn about colors and how to use them. They exercise and improve their smaller muscle skills as they handle a paint brush. They learn to transfer ideas from their imagination to paper. They learn how to express themselves and their feelings in a new way.



When children play with dolls.....they better understand the roles of mothers, fathers, and children. They learn to empathize as they role- play, pretending to be someone else. They learn to nurture. They learn to compromise with others, take turns, and play cooperatively.



When children play on the playground.....they learn to use their whole body effectively. They experience the joy of achieving new skills, such as pumping on the swings or crossing the monkey bars. They learn to enjoy the fun and relaxation found in physical activity. They learn the limitations of their own bodies. They learn about safety and caution. They practice patience as they wait for a turn on a piece of playground equipment.

This learning through play is the groundwork for all future growth and learning. Play should never be dismissed as unimportant or frivolous. PLAY is the work of early childhood, and should be both encouraged and honored.



READINESS IS.....

A child who listens

- to directions without interrupting
- to stories and poems for 5 to 10 minutes without becoming restless

A child who hears

- words that rhyme
- words that begin with the same or different sounds

A child who sees

- similarities and differences in pictures and designs
- patterns, letters, and words that match

A child who understands

- the inherent relationships in word like up/down, top/bottom, big/little
- the classification of words that represent people, places, and things

A child who speaks

- and can stay on a topic during class discussions
- and can retell a story in the correct sequence
- and can tell a story or relate an experience of her own

A child who adjusts

- to changes in routine and new situations without fear
- to opposition or defeat without crying or sulking
- to the necessity of asking for help when needed

A child who plays

- cooperatively with other children
- and shares, takes turns, and assumes his portion of the group's responsibility
- and can run, jump, skip, and bounce a ball with comparative dexterity

A child who works

- without becoming easily distracted
- and follows directions, completes tasks, and takes pride in her work



Growing Through Free Play

Providing plenty of time for free play gives a child the opportunity to grow at her own pace, to develop his own interests, and to work out relationships with other children. All children need unhurried time to explore, experiment, and express

themselves.

We see children grow as they play in the block center, as they.....

Use small and large muscles

Plan activities

Choose specific shapes and sizes of blocks

Work in cooperation with others

We see children grow as they work with natural materials, as they.....

Learn about God's creation
Help to care for plants and pets
Increase vocabulary
Use all five senses
Experiment and investigate

We see children grow as they play with table toys, as they.....
Develop fine motor control
Develop eye/hand coordination
Solve problems
Help others
Talk with friends about what they are doing

We see children grow as they play in housekeeping, as they.....
Act out family roles
Establish new identities
Relate to others
Help clean up

We see children grow as they try out new materials, as they.....
Experiment with colors, textures, shapes, and sizes
Express feelings
Enjoy the process of creating
Feel satisfaction in achieving

We see children grow as they look at books and pictures, as they.....
Enjoy quiet times
Increase their attention spans
Encounter new facts and concepts
Develop their imaginations
Become interested in stories and language



Helpful Resources for Parents of Young Children

Cobb County Board of Health and Infectious Diseases
770/514-2432

Cobb County Board of Health - East Cobb Government Bldg.
770/499-4421

Cobb County School District Main Office
770/426-3300

Cobb County Preschool Referral for Speech & Diagnostic Services
678/581-6761

Cobb County Police Dept. Non-Emergency
770/499-4184

Cobb County Police Dept. 4th Precinct
770/499-4184

East Cobb Aquatic Center
770/509-4925

Friend of the Family (short & long term babysitting)
770/725-2748

Georgia State Safety Hot Line
1-877-729-7876

Georgia Poison Control
404/616-9000

Children's Hospital Nurses Hot Line
404/250-5437

Merchant's Walk Library
770/977-7333

Mountain View Library
770/509-2725



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