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www.unitedparishelc.org

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CONTACT INFORMATION

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**Depart. Of Early Education and Care:
Central Office: 508-798-5180 (Worcester)**

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of United Parish Early Learning Center (UPELC) is dedicated to providing a supportive environment for children to grow and learn according to his/her developmental ability. We foster all areas: social, emotional, physical and cognitive, in a warm and friendly environment. Teachers help students feel secure and appreciated. Our school is a place where children can act and interact without fear of ridicule, retribution or neglect.

At our school you will see games to play, materials with which to create, ideas to talk about and relate to, opportunities to compare, match, try out, reinforce, discover, invent and enjoy. You will see laughter, hugs and self-expression!

Our program includes art, music, creative movement, fine and gross motor activities, cooking and self-awareness. Our main concerns are the health and safety of your children along with appropriate learning experiences given in a warm, loving environment. Our student to teacher ratio meets and exceeds the state requirements! We encourage your active participation as a partner in your child's early learning experience.

ADMINISTRATION

United Parish Early Learning Center (UPELC) is a **non-profit** organization. It is a state licensed school and conforms to all the rules and regulations set out and regulated by the Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC). The DEEC regulations are available at the school office for any parent interested in reading them. Program administration is the responsibility of the Director of the school, known as the Licensee/Program Co-Administrator. United Parish Church handles the financial aspects of the school.

The Advisory Board, consisting of five members, in consultation with the Director, develops and oversees all policies of UPELC. Members of the Advisory Board are nominated from the church congregation.

The Teaching staff of the UPELC consists of the Director, Lead Teachers, and Teachers.

COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP

The Director is a member of Central Massachusetts Association of Early Childhood Directors (CMAECD) and attends their monthly planning meetings.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

United Parish ELC welcomes all children ages 2.9-6 years of age regardless of race, color, disability, national origin, cultural heritage, religious or political beliefs, sexual orientation or marital status of parents. Children **do not** need to be toilet trained to attend our school.

TUITION

All tuition is **payable January through May** of each school year. Payments are due on the **first** of each month. They should be given directly to the Director or mailed to:

United Parish Early Learning Center

P.O. Box 382

Upton, MA 01568

You will be charged the returned check fee assessed by the bank on all checks returned for insufficient funds. A late charge of \$25 will be applied to any account unpaid as of the 10th of each month. Parents must pay for the full program their child is scheduled to attend, even if their child does not attend due to illness or vacation. **Please make every effort to pay your tuition on time!**

The UPELC requires a non-refundable, non-transferable \$200 registration fee to hold a child's place in school. A child will not be considered registered until this fee has been received. Two weeks' notice is required in writing if a parent is withdrawing a child from the program or else payment for that time period will be required. Failure to give two weeks' notice will result in requirement of payment. Please contact the Director with any questions regarding tuition.

Discounts: If you have more than one child enrolled in our program for the same school year, you are entitled to a 5% discount for each additional child in the family. Registrations fees are \$200 for one child, an additional \$100 for subsequent children, with a family cap of \$400 per year.

HEALTH AND COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

Before children may come to school each day, parents must complete a brief attestation about their child's health. Children must wear a mask every day.

Parents are asked to report any illness to the school staff immediately. If your child will be missing school due to illness, please call or email the office to inform us. If your child is ill before class begins please keep him/her home. Children with severe colds, skin eruptions, fever or other symptoms of illness or becomes while at school, he/she will be sent home. Parents must keep their child home from school when:

- He/she has a fresh cold or prolonged nasal discharge or coughing.
- He/she has red or discharging eyes.
- He/she has painful or discharging ears.
- He/she has a rash or head lice.
- He/she has a temperature of 100 degrees or higher
- He/she has had any vomiting, diarrhea or fever within the last 24 hours.

To return to school, children must have a doctor's note stating that he/she is well or produce a negative Covid-19 test to return to school. (Children may still have typical colds and flu and it's best to get it checked by their pediatrician, to confirm that it is not Covid.

Any child having a communicable disease may only return to school after 7 full days of no new symptoms. **A doctor's note** may be required to return to school. A communicable disease including Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Chicken Pox, Pediculosis (head lice), Scabies, Impetigo, Conjunctivitis, Streptococcus and any other disease deemed communicable by our health care consultant. (In situations where one or more cases of disease are present, any child, including those with **medical or religious exemptions** are subject to exclusion as described in "Reportable Diseases, Surveillance and Isolation and Quarantine requirements" by the Department of Public Health (DPH).

We do not **administer medication** unless it is needed to counteract serious food allergies or reactions to bee stings. Emergency medications such as Epipens or antihistamines must be kept at school and clearly labeled with a prescription for the child. Parental and physician authorization will be required and kept on file as part of their Health Care Plan. Topical remedies such as sunscreen, lip balm, bug spray etc. will be applied only with written consent of the parent and must be labeled and supplied by the parent.

The UPELC has a **Health Care Consultant** as required by the DEEC. **All staff is certified in Pediatric First Aid and CPR.**

HANDWASHING

The state DEEC requires that all students and staff wash their hands with soap and water upon arrival to school. This not only decreases the spread of germs but also may deter a food allergy response. Children are expected to wash their hands before snack or meal times, before and after water play, after sand play or messy projects and after playing outside. The staff will instruct the children in proper handwashing techniques.

EMERGENCY HEALTH CARE

If a child is injured or becomes severely ill while at school, the Director or Lead Teacher will contact the parent immediately. If necessary, 911 will be called. The Director or Lead teacher will remain with the child until parents arrive. If child needs to be transported before parents can get to the school, either the Director or Lead teacher will accompany the child to the hospital.

CONFIDENTIALITY

A file is kept on each child throughout their time at our school and will be saved as required by the state for at least 5 years in a locked cabinet, before being shredded. A parent may request a copy of their child's file at any time without cost. It will be provided within 2 business days. **All files are confidential and kept in a locked cabinet in the Director's office.** Only current staff, parents, specialists with parental permission and our state licenser will have access to your child's file or assessment results and records.

SEPARATION POLICY

Many times during the year, your child may experience difficulty in separating from you to attend school or a special program. Although this can be upsetting to parents, please rest assured that the staff is quite experienced in dealing with this. If your child has difficulty at drop off or pick up times, special events or visitors, or if a change in their home life has occurred, please speak to a staff member. We will work with you and your child to accommodate them. We have a "goodbye window" located in each classroom so they may blow you a kiss or watch you walk to your car. We may ask your child to try a shortened day until they feel comfortable or ask you to arrive a few minutes late or pick them up early. We may ask you to provide us with ideas that you use at home, such as a favorite stuffed animal, blanket, book or photo of you. Most children will adapt to our school and feel comfortable here without you within the first few months of school. As always, you can expect that your child will be treated in a caring, respectful manner.

SAFE CHURCH/SAFE SCHOOL

In an effort to keep our children and staff safe, we will lock the classroom doors to the outside areas after arrival time each school day. We will unlock them again at dismissal time. If you need to pick up your child before the end of the school day, please call ahead and come to the main door and your children will be brought out to you.

TRANSPORTATION

Parents are responsible for their child's transportation to and from school. Parents or authorized drivers must bring the child into the classroom upon arrival. Children will be dismissed individually to parents/authorized drivers at the end of the class session. Authorized driver sheets along with Permission and Consent forms in the child's file will be used to determine appropriate drivers for all children.

Children **will not** be transported away from the school for field trips. Staff members **will not** provide transportation at any time. In case of medical emergency, 911 will be called and children will be transported by emergency vehicles to the nearest hospital. Parents will be notified immediately and a staff member will remain with the child until the parent arrives at the hospital. Each child must have a **transportation plan** signed by a parent in their file.

AUTHORIZED DRIVERS

If someone other than a parent is picking up a child from school, they must be listed as an authorized driver in the child's file. Written permission must be given by the parent for anyone picking up the child. **NO CHILD WILL BE RELEASED TO AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON WITHOUT PRIOR PERMISSION FROM THE PARENT.** Authorize drivers will be asked to present a form of picture ID to the teachers until we become familiar with them.

PARKING RESTRICTIONS

The first four parking spaces along the side of the church, by the church door, **are reserved for clergy, church staff and director only.** We have two handicap parking spaces by the ramp entrance. Please honor these spaces and only use them if you are experiencing difficulty walking due to crutches etc., or if you have a handicap parking permit. The parking lot across the street is available for your use. **Please do not leave children unattended in your vehicle when dropping off or picking up your student.**

CONTINGENCY PLAN FOR EMERGENCIES

In case of fire, natural disaster or an event that requires evacuation of the building, the UPELC staff will lead the children outside using the safest escape route. **Escape plans are posted by each classroom exit.** If the building cannot be re-entered, the children will be walked to the Town Hall for warmth and security. The Upton Police will be notified to assist in transporting the children if the need arises. Parents will be called to pick their child up from there. (A complete contingency plan is available in the Director's office.)

SNOW CANCELLATION / DELAY POLICY

United Parish Early Learning Center generally follows the Mendon-Upton public school system's decision regarding school cancellation. However, school delays and early release days can sometimes become confusing. Here is an explanation of what to do under different inclement weather scenarios:

PUBLIC SCHOOL

If closed

If one hour delay

If two hour delay / no
AM Kindergarten

UPELC

We are closed

We delay opening 1 hour

We will delay 1 hour unless conditions are not safe
for travel. Then we will close for the day.

If storm starts once school
is in session

Parents will be notified as early as possible so
children can be picked up while it is still safe to drive

Please check WBZ TV for the Mendon-Upton School District for the most up to date information. The Mendon-Upton School District website will also list information.

The Director will send out an email if I have enough advance notice.

INTAKE PROCEDURE

A child is enrolled at our school after the following steps have been completed.

1. Parent and child meet with the Director for a tour and/or to observe a classroom while discussing the philosophy and policies of the program.
2. Enrollment forms must be completed and on file at the school prior to the start date. These forms include:
 - Face sheet/general information
 - Emergency information and consent form
 - Developmental history form
 - Massachusetts School Health Form signed and dated by the child's physician; including all allergies, medical issues, lead screening dates and required immunizations.
 - A medical consent form to administer medication to your child while at school if necessary and a current prescription of that medication to be kept at school
 - A Health Care Plan signed by a medical professional (if necessary)
 - Transportation form
 - Tooth brushing form
3. Parents must read the Parent Handbook and Parents Rights information and return the form stating that the material has been read and understood.
4. The registration fee, first month's tuition payment and any outstanding invoices are paid in full.

CHILDREN'S RECORDS

Completed forms are kept in the Director's office. The school must be kept up to date on any changes that take place during the school year such as employment, telephone numbers, addresses, and authorized drivers, etc. All information in a child's file is kept confidential.

CURRICULUM

Our curriculum follows the Massachusetts frameworks for Preschool curriculum. We work on all areas including: math, science/technology, social studies, language arts, music and art, health, fine and gross motor. The UPELC staff uses their experience and creativity to generate a curriculum that is developmentally appropriate for young children, keeping in mind the Massachusetts frameworks. Introductory themes such as "friends", "good buddies", "shapes, colors and numbers" are used. Later themes include "celebrations", "science and nature", "winter animals and hibernation", "spring insects" and more. Some of the curriculum is generated from the children's ideas and interests. The children are given opportunities to meet cognitive challenges successfully while developing their social, fine motor, gross motor, language and auditory skills. The staff continually seeks ways to enhance the curriculum through stories, songs, projects, special guests and other available means of enrichment. The staff changes toys and materials at least monthly to enhance the curriculum themes. This offers a wide variety of activities during the school year.

TOILETING

Children do not need to be toilet trained to attend our school. We encourage your child to be as independent as possible in regard to toileting. If your child has an "accident", teachers will talk your child through self-cleaning and clothes changing. Because our facilities are limited in regard to changing areas for children, we ask that you do **NOT** send your child to school in diapers. They are able to manage pull ups or underwear more easily for independence. All toileting accidents are handled discreetly and no one is made to feel badly or disciplined for toilet accidents.

SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE

The daily sessions of our school begin at 9:00am and ends at either 12:30pm.

Greeting Time: The teachers greet the children as they enter the classroom. Children greet each other and participate in a variety of table activities.

Circle Time: This is the time when all children come together to learn about the theme for the day. The activities at the learning centers are described. Circle time also includes songs, rhymes, finger play and stories. The calendar is discussed in the older groups.

Group Time: This is the time when the children meet with a teacher in a smaller group of 3-4 children. Projects, games and other cognitive activities designed to get the children to follow directions will take place in small group time.

Free Play: This is the time when the children can move freely to different areas of the classroom. Activities include art, dramatic play, library, manipulatives, creative play, math, science, writing center, and block building.

Clean Up Time: A bell is rung and all children are asked to clean up the classroom in preparation for the next activity.

Snack Time: Parents are asked to provide their child's daily snacks. The main consideration at snack time is nutrition, social skills and manners. Snack may occur during free play or be a separate time of the day.

Outside Play: This takes place daily, weather permitting. The children use our outdoor playground and fenced area outside the playground for at least 30 minutes or more each day.

SNACK, LUNCH AND NUTRITION

All children will need to bring a snack and water bottle daily. Please send the snack in a disposable paper bag.

Nutritious snacks and beverages are highly encouraged and may include a variety of crackers, fruits, vegetables, juice or water. If t snack is forgotten, one will be provided by the school.

Foods not allowed: Anything that needs to be heated or cooked.

For 3 year old children and younger: whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, spoonful's of peanut butter, chunks of meat or raw carrots. These are considered choking hazards for children 3 years and younger.

Dietary concerns/needs: Parents must inform the Director of a child's dietary restriction such as vegetarians, diabetics, lactose intolerance, food allergies, will be accommodated. Each classroom will maintain an allergy free table and teachers will diligently check to make sure no foods are shared between students.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

We will celebrate all birthdays during school time unless otherwise notified by a parent. We will sing "Happy Birthday: and provide a paper crown for the child to take home. The child may be given special privileges as well that day in school. Please reserve special treats, candy and favors for home parties. Please also refrain from sending party invitations home through school as it is difficult to be the child uninvited from the class.

GENERAL GOALS FOR ALL STUDENTS

- To foster individuality and provide for individual differences so each child develops a positive self-image.
- To provide a safe environment where all children can develop relationships with adults outside of the home, as well as peer relationships.
- To encourage and develop cognitive skills (i.e. math, social studies, science/technology, language and literacy).
- To promote the physical health of the children.
- To develop fine motor and gross motor skills.
- To prepare children for success in their future learning environment.

CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENT/TRANSITION POLICY

Students are assigned to a classroom and teaching team at the start of each school year and remain with that team for the duration of the school year. Transition to a new classroom or teaching team within a school year is the exception and is handled on an individual case with input from parents, staff and the Director.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

This year a Parent-Teacher conference will be held in the spring. Parents will receive a detailed progress report that describes their child's specific accomplishments. After reviewing the report, parents may choose to meet with the teachers to discuss the child's progress. Informal information on your child's development may be provided through "shadow" reports or emails directly from the teachers. The staff is also available for conferences when requested by a parent throughout the school year. Translator services are available upon request.

REFERRAL POLICY

The Director and staff of UPELC are committed to nurturing the well-being of each child. Throughout the school year staff are continually observing and assessing your child's development so they can best meet the needs of each student. If there are any social, emotional, behavioral, cognitive or developmental skills that are concerning to your child's teacher, the teacher will document their concerns and do any further observations needed. The parents will be informed and a time scheduled to meet and share information. The staff will listen to your concerns and suggestions about your child, collaborating with you, offering professional and often sensitive advice. If decided by the teacher and Director we will refer the family to community resources that will benefit their child. This could include the public school district for special education evaluations, to also satisfy the legal requirement of "Child Find", a federal IDEA Special Education Law that identifies and "protects" students who are suspected of a disability. Teachers, parents, pediatricians or other individuals may make a "referral for an evaluation: to the child's town school district. A written referral request form will be completed and sent to the district to alert them and fulfilling the "Child Find" requirements. Once the district receives the referral, the district must send a consent form to the parent for consent and opportunity to discuss before they can begin the evaluation process.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY

In the preschool environment we like to refer to misbehavior as "mistaken" behavior. During the development of social skills children make "mistakes". The children are encouraged to use words during a time of conflict instead of aggressive actions. Many children in preschool and beyond have some difficulty with using words and expressing themselves verbally. We know it is "developmental" and expect some behavioral conflicts to occur. However, if you have any concerns in this area, are aware of any previous difficulties or have information or a diagnosis of a disability that may help the staff to better understand your child's needs, please speak to the Director privately and provide that valuable information, as it is in the best interest of your child. Any child having difficulty controlling his/her behavior will be guided in a sensitive, positive manner by the staff to ensure the safety of all children. Consistent "mistaken" behavior will result in the redirection of the child to a different activity until the child is ready to "try again". The Department of Early Education and Care has set the following guidelines for discipline in the early childhood setting.

"Discipline and guidance shall be consistent and based on an understanding of the individual needs and development of the child. The licensee shall direct discipline to the goal of maximizing the growth and development of the children and for protecting the group and individual within it."

- Corporal punishment will not be used, including spanking.
- No child shall be subjected to cruel or severe punishment, humiliation or verbal abuse.
- No child shall be punished for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet.
- No child shall be deprived of outdoor play time as a consequence.
- Excessive time outs are not to be used at our school.

TERMINATION POLICY

Although termination of a child's enrollment is a rare occurrence, UPELC reserves the right to do so in extreme situations.

- Non-payment of tuition
- If the school staff does not feel that they are meeting the child's individual needs, and after consulting with specialists and having conferences with the parents, the school reserves the right to terminate the arrangement on a timeline that is in the child's best interest.
- If we have cause for concern of any child who is continuously verbally or physically abusive toward other children and/or staff or is destructive, the child's behavior will be systematically documented. The Director will contact the child's parents for a conference to discuss the behaviors and will set up a plan of action with the parents. If necessary, the Director may consult a behavior specialist and/or set up a behavior intervention plan for an agreed time. Approaches and methods tried will be documented over a period of time. The Director may also make a referral to the child's school district for a special education evaluation, specifically a Functional Behavior Evaluation. If after a cooperative effort has been made between the school and the parents to help the child regulate his behavior, yet little to no improvements take place, the Director will provide a 2 week notice of termination, in writing.
- If any parent is verbally or physically abusive to any staff member or other parent, their child may be subjected to immediate termination.