

OUUMC MOTHER'S MORNING OUT

PARENT HANDBOOK

2011-2012

Mother's Morning Out, a ministry of Oxford-University United Methodist Church, is designed to provide quality child care in a nurturing environment thus giving mothers and other caregivers a regular block of time to meet personal and family needs. Mother's Morning Out provides opportunities for toddlers and preschoolers to interact with a small group of children their own age on a regular basis and to enjoy happy learning experiences at church. Children of all nationalities and religions are accepted and welcome.

OBJECTIVES

The Mother's Morning Out program is designed to provide opportunities for children to:

- 1) Grow in understanding and love for themselves, their families and others in their world.
- 2) Grow in awareness that God loves them and that Jesus is a special friend.
- 3) Grow in the ability to think, solve problems, and develop language skills.
- 4) Enjoy creative expression in music, art and play.
- 5) Develop age-appropriate social skills by playing with the same group of children and adults on an ongoing basis.

WHAT WILL MY CHILD DO AT OUUMC MOTHER'S MORNING OUT?

We believe in the value of play and child-directed activities, rather than teacher-directed, for the very young children in our Mother's Morning Out. Our toddlers and two-year-olds are busy each morning making friends, exploring how toys work, looking at books and being read to, making music and learning new songs and learning that important lesson of separation - Mommy leaves, but she always comes back!

Through group play experiences, young ones begin to learn the concept of sharing – even if it isn't easy. They pour and measure in the sandbox, expand their language abilities and learn to share adult attention. They develop the social skills needed to play games and make friends. Children use messy art materials in a space made for experimentation and try on different personalities with different costumes.

We adhere to Maria Montessori's philosophy. Play is the work of the child. What a lot of work our children do in a busy morning at Mother's Morning Out!

ADMISSIONS POLICY – A child must be 18 months old by September 1 to be admitted to the program. Mother’s Morning Out offers classes for toddlers and two-year-olds. Immunization Form 121 and the \$150.00 registration fee must be submitted at the time of registration. The registration fee is non-refundable for students who are offered placement. Priority enrollment privileges are given to members of Oxford-University United Methodist Church and to returning students.

ARRIVAL – Mother’s Morning Out begins at 9:00 AM with arrival from 8:45 AM until 9:00 AM and pick-up from 11:45 AM until noon. We ask that you be prompt. Give your child a quick, cheerful goodbye outside the room when you arrive and leave quickly. We have lots of experience handling separation difficulties. Please trust us to get the day started well. If you arrive prior to 8:45, please wait in the lobby area near the gym, or in your car until you see Discovery Day School teachers begin unloading cars. All our teachers and assistants arrive early and use the time prior to 8:45 to prepare activities and snacks.

DISMISSAL – Mother’s Morning Out is over at 11:45 AM. Children must be picked up by 12:00 noon. To avoid worrying your child or inconveniencing teachers, please do not arrive early or pick up late. Beginning at 12:01, a late charge of \$1.00 per minute for the first five minutes and \$2.00 per minute thereafter will be assessed. Late fees are due and payable at the time which late pickup occurs.

SCHEDULE – Mother’s Morning Out is on Tuesdays and Thursdays, beginning the Tuesday after Labor Day and closely following the Oxford City Schools and University of Mississippi calendars for holidays as well as closings for inclement weather.

FEES - \$150.00 registration fee is submitted with the registration form. A \$ 155.00 pre-payment of September tuition is due by May 1 for all students accepted into the program. The \$155.00 tuition per month for October through April is due at the Classroom Open House, and may be paid in one of three ways:

- 1) One lump sum – one check for \$1,085.00 dated September 6, 2011
- 2) Two semester checks – One check dated October 1, 2011 for \$465.00 and the other dated January 1, 2012 for \$620.00
- 3) Eight monthly checks – seven checks for \$155.00 with each check post-dated for the first day of each month, October through April

All checks are made payable to “OUUMC Preschool Programs”.

DAILY SIGN - IN - All students must be signed in and out each day. Please leave additional numbers for a specific day that might help us contact you in an emergency (such as your hair salon on the morning you have an appointment). **WE WILL NOT RELEASE A CHILD TO AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON.** Please note on your registration form or the daily sign-in sheet the name of the person picking up your child at noon.

SEPARATION – Often a child is unsure about separating from a parent or caregiver at the beginning of the school year. Our staff expects this and is experienced in distracting and consoling little ones. A few guidelines can help ease the transition into the classroom.

Prepare your child for your departure – Like most of us, children like to know what to expect. Talk about the names of your child’s teachers and classmates. Talk about the class schedule “You’re going to play with your friends inside and have a snack. You’ll have music and paint or color then play outside. I’ll be back to pick you up and you can tell me all about the fun you had.”

When it’s time to leave, don’t prolong it - Generally bringing the child to the door and allowing the teacher to greet the child and bring them into the classroom without a parent works best. Sign the child in quickly, say good-bye and leave without lingering. Teachers will engage your child in a toy or activity. Often if a child cries, the parent worries that the child will be unhappy all morning. If your child senses you are uncertain about leaving, they surely won’t feel secure about being left! If your child cries, feel free to stand in the hallway, out of the children’s sight, and wait to make sure your child settles happily. Most children quit crying and are playing happily within 5 to 15 minutes of separation. Be assured if your child remains inconsolable after a reasonable length of time, we will call you. If you leave with your child unhappy, you may call the director at 234-3371 and ask her to check on your child.

Be prompt for arrivals and departures- Often when children are experiencing separation anxiety and see another child’s mother coming in late or arriving early for pick-up, they wonder why their own mother isn’t there and get upset all over again.

Expect some anxiety – Adjusting to a new situation is difficult. Children may express their anxiety by whining, clinging to you or being irritable. Be calm, don’t add to the anxiety and give them time to adjust. Occasionally, children who initially had no trouble separating go through a period of anxiety during transitions. This is especially prevalent when children have been out sick or after holidays and vacations. Children feel secure with routines so being consistent with attendance is helpful.

STAFF – Our MMO staff includes certified teachers as well as experienced mothers. Staff members are certified in child CPR and first aid.

NEW STAFF – We hope to not have changes in staff during a school year. However, if a change occurs we will make the transition as smooth as possible. Whenever possible, we allow the children to say good-bye and bring in the new teacher to meet the class before the previous teacher leaves. You will also be informed in writing as soon as possible.

NUTRITION – In accordance with state licensing regulations, children are not allowed to bring breakfast or snacks into the building. Snacks such as crackers, muffins, yogurt, cereal or fruit with water, juice or milk will be provided. Please let the director and teacher know of any food allergies by noting such allergies on your child’s registration form. Parents are welcome to send a special snack for the class and are asked to talk with the teacher in advance about what you plan to send and when. (Due to the prevalence of peanut allergies, we avoid peanut and other tree nut products and ask parents sending party snacks to do the same.)

WHAT TO SEND WITH YOUR CHILD - Each child must bring a labeled drinking cup with a lid, diapers, wipes and a full change of clothes to school each day. Please send these items in a backpack or diaper bag with your child’s name displayed prominently.

BIRTHDAYS AND HOLIDAY PARTIES – To avoid hurting feelings unnecessarily, party invitations may only be given out at school if every child in the class is included. We are always happy for you to celebrate your child's birthday with special refreshments. Please talk with your teacher to set an approved date and acceptable refreshment ideas. Please do not send candy, gum or party favors. We also ask that you not use monsters, witches, ghosts, skeletons, skulls or other scary motifs for games or treats.

HEALTH – No child should come to school visibly ill. Please keep your child home if your child is listless or cranky, has no energy or has no appetite. For the health and safety of all our children and their families, we will err on the side of caution and send home any child who is not feeling well or shows signs of sickness. No medications will be administered to children. Please notify the teacher and director if your child contracts any contagious diseases, such as chicken pox, so that we may alert other parents of possible exposure.

Please keep your child home if they have had:

***Fever** – A temperature of 100 or greater in the last 24 hours. A child must be fever-free without the aid of Tylenol or Ibuprofen.

***Runny nose / Congestion** – If your child's nose needs to be wiped frequently, regardless of whether the discharge is clear or thick.

***Coughing** – If a cough occurs more than once every five minutes. Children are not old enough to cover their mouths and spread germs easily.

***Vomiting/Diarrhea** – Either within the last 24 hours.

***Eye Discharge** – If discharge returns after wiping or if there is redness of the sclera, the white of the eye.

***Ear infections** – Viruses and bacterial infections that cause ear infections can be contagious.

***Rash** – If you do not know the cause of the rash, or you know it to be contagious.

***Biting** – For the safety of others, a child who inflicts bruises or breaks the skin must be kept at home until the biting phase has passed.

Although biting is not an illness, it is a physical hazard to other children that can require medical treatment and cause scarring. If your child is at a stage in which the child's bite is bruising or breaking the skin (not a one-time bite causing a temporary pink mark) we will ask you to keep your child out of preschool until the stage is passed. Our purpose is not to punish the biter. Just as keeping a sick child at home is to protect others, not to punish the sick child, keeping a biter at home is to protect the other children in the class. Tuition cannot be prorated or refunded for a child kept at home for biting or illness.

CLOTHING – Please dress your child for play. We enjoy finger-painting, play-do and washable markers. Tennis shoes are the best footwear for both our playground and our gym floor. Cowboy boots, flip flops and crocs are inappropriate at school. Unless it is bitterly cold or windy, we will play outside even on cold days, so please send appropriate layers. Outer wraps and extra clothes should be labeled. You will need to send diapers and wipes each day, unless your child is potty-trained. All students should bring their labeled drinking cup plus a complete change of extra clothing each day in a diaper bag or backpack clearly labeled with the child's name.

TOYS – We will provide toys, games, and art materials for the children. Personal toys should stay at home. Such personal items generally present a “sharing” problem with young children and are likely to get lost or broken as well.

SOLICITATIONS – We do not send home solicitations or invitations to home sales parties. If you have deliveries of items you have sold to other parents, please wait for those parents at pick-up time and deliver them directly rather than asking teachers to attend to this. Our mornings are very busy and our teachers are focused on their most important task – nurturing and teaching your precious children.

CONFERENCES – Parent/teacher communication is a vital component of a quality preschool experience. If you wish to have a conference with the teacher, please send a note or call the preschool office. A mutually convenient time will be arranged. As a teacher’s first responsibility during school hours is to the students in the classroom, conferences will be set outside of school hours.

EVALUATION AND SPECIAL SERVICES – Our intention is to be in close communication with you. If we have concerns about your child’s development we will discuss our observations with you. We are not experts in diagnosing problems, but we are sensitive to emerging concerns. We can help you search for answers and guide you to appropriate specialists. We always want to partner with you for the good of your child.

DISMISSAL FOR INCLEMENT WEATHER – Our program will be dismissed for severe weather if the Oxford City Schools suspend classes or if weather conditions are determined to be unsafe for transporting young children. Announcements will be made on local radio stations if school is cancelled or dismissed early due to weather conditions.

MMO HANDBOOK SIGNATURE FORM

Please complete this form and turn it in at the table in the lobby, along with your post-dated tuition checks, on September 6, 2011 when you bring your child to the Classroom Open House.

I have carefully read the MMO Student Handbook and understand the guidelines, policies and procedures. I will seek additional information from the director or teachers if I have additional questions or concerns.

Parent's Name (printed) _____

Parent's Signature _____

Child's Name _____

Date _____

