

OUUMC PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

DISCOVERY DAY SCHOOL is a ministry of Oxford-University United Methodist Church. Established in 1983, DDS provides a nurturing, safe environment in which three and four year old children feel loved, respected and valued while they are encouraged to develop to their fullest potential socially, emotionally, mentally, physically and spiritually.

FIRST DISCOVERIES (formerly Mother's Morning Out) is a ministry of Oxford-University United Methodist Church 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 is for children from 21 months until they are ready for preschool.

At **OUUMC PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS**, we **believe** that each day should be filled with joy in learning, wonder, curiosity, and engaged investigation. We **believe** that children need time to acquire play skills so that they can learn to investigate, invent and problem-solve with complexity. We **believe** that the whole child – body, soul and mind – should be nurtured and challenged. We **believe** that teachers and families working together in partnership provide the highest quality preschool experience. We welcome children of all faiths and nationalities.

OUR PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS STAFF

A quality staff dedicated to providing each and every child in our program with a positive preschool experience is vital to the success of our program. Knowledgeable, nurturing teachers are essential to positive and stimulating learning atmosphere.

Our Director of OUUMC Preschool Programs, Susan Phillips, has a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education, a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction, and certification in Educational Leadership. Prior to becoming OUUMC Preschool Director, she had twelve years combined experience as a classroom teacher, university instructor and elementary school principal.

Our Discovery Day School teachers are experienced classroom teachers, certified in elementary or early childhood education, and / or related areas such as music education, art education, gifted education and counseling. Several teachers on staff hold additional certifications in science, math or reading.

Discovery Day School assistant teachers, as well as Mother's Morning Out staff, include certified teachers, experienced moms and college students studying education or a child-related field. Staff members are certified in CPR for children and adults, and in first aid. All Discovery Day School teachers and assistants receive 15 hours or more of continuing education annually.

DISCOVERY DAY SCHOOL

OUR MISSION

Discovery Day School, a ministry of Oxford-University United Methodist Church, is designed to provide preschool children with a wide variety of experiences that will encourage social, spiritual, emotional, physical and intellectual development in a positive, nurturing atmosphere. Discovery Day School operates on the belief that if a child's preschool education is an enjoyable and exciting experience, the child will approach future school experiences with positive expectations.

The objectives of the Discovery Day School program include working with each individual child to:

1. Develop a positive self-concept.
2. Develop natural curiosity and creative potential.
3. Increase independence and self-direction.
4. Develop large and small muscle skills and increase physical coordination.
5. Develop positive relationships with peers and teachers.
6. Increase competence in dealing with emotions and social situations.
7. Increase communication skills.
8. Enlarge the child's understanding of the world through exposure to new experiences, people and ideas.
9. Experience the loving care of adults whose lives exemplify commitment to the Christian community.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

At **Discovery Day School**, we believe that effective early childhood education must be based on developmentally appropriate practices. Principles guiding our curriculum planning and classroom management include the following:

1. Children learn as total persons – emotionally, socially, physically and intellectually.
2. Children grow and develop at individual rates.
3. Children learn best when teaching is meaningful, interesting and useful.
4. Children learn through their senses – hearing, seeing, touching, tasting and smelling.
5. Children learn through active involvement – exploring, playing, manipulating and problem-solving.
6. Children learn through opportunities to make choices.
7. Children learn through attitudes as well as content. Classrooms should provide a positive emotional climate in which a community of learners can learn in a noncompetitive atmosphere.
8. Children learn through play to create their own meaning and learning schemes. Play is the work of the child.
9. Children learn language through interaction. Opportunities to ask questions, to talk with their peers and to discuss things of interest to them (their art work, projects, ideas) with interested adults are vital to oral and written language development.

OUR CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

Discovery Day School offers a child-centered curriculum based on teaching age-appropriate skills and concepts through a variety of engaging teaching strategies built on children's interests and natural curiosity about the world around them.

Concepts and skills taught in our three- and four-year-old classes are based on the benchmarks and expectations provided by Mississippi Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten Curriculum guidelines. While learning standards and developmental sequences serve as a guide, they are not used as a checklist of "must-sees" to evaluate a child's worth.

Learning themes are built around science and social studies. Teachers are encouraged to build curriculum based on children's interests, using strategies which strengthen children's identities as thinkers, explorers, experimenters and problem-solvers.

We believe **Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences** – that children come to us "wired" for different ways of learning. Individual children have unique sets of talents and learning styles with every child having preferred ways of learning new skills and concepts. A child may show a preference for activities in one or more of the following areas – linguistic / verbal, logical / mathematical, musical / rhythmic, spatial / visual, bodily / kinesthetic, inter-personal, intra-personal and naturalist. As educators, our goal is to build on a child's individual learning style, as well as to strengthen all ways of learning through encouragement, enrichment and support.

The Value of Play- Our philosophical approach is supported by research that shows play is a critical resource for learning and has a strong, direct relationship to future academic success. Teacher-supported play builds many foundational skills and complex cognitive abilities such as memory, successful school adjustment, self-regulation, oral language abilities and enhanced social skills. Play engages children's senses and encourages active exploration, problem-solving, creativity, imagination, reasoning, negotiation and motivation. Play is an essential learning tool for young children.

Children's Chapel - Each Discovery Day School class attends children's chapel once weekly in the OUUMC sanctuary. The Children's Chapel Ministry Coordinator plans age-appropriate lessons with Bible stories and music/movement activities. On Chapel Day, parents receive a written synopsis of the chapel lesson along with suggestions for discussion and activities for those families who wish to follow-up at home. We believe that through brief, engaging opportunities to learn about God in our sanctuary, we help build in our children a positive foundation for spiritual life.