



Parent Handbook 2021 - 2022

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Dear Parents,

"Blessed indeed" is a good description of how I feel as we finally welcome you to our program. As I have worked on reopening the program my goal has been to make it as safe as possible while maintaining an ambiance that encourages learning through play. I believe I have come up with activities that promote social distancing, to the extent that a child will comply, that are fun while supporting skill-development. The down-side of opening a learning center during a pandemic is that we have found it necessary to establish some procedures that are inconvenient; but perhaps we are becoming accustomed to the inconveniences of life-in-the-times-of-COVID! I look forward to the day that I will find it necessary to rewrite this handbook, eliminating all the COVID19 precautions!

There are a few areas in the handbook where I have added, "At the time of this writing ..." because church leaders are helping me look into policies and services that will benefit us all, but have not been finalized. I feel it is important to get the information in this handbook to you as soon as possible so I have chosen not to wait and I will notify you of any changes.

It really is essential that you read this handbook as well as the supplemental COVID19 Handbook carefully as they will help you understand what your part is in keeping our program safe. I look forward to your full co-operation in keeping our children and staff safe and I promise that it is my goal to continue to administer to a ***"place where God's children blossom."***

May your blessings abound and may you lift your heart in grateful praise!

Sincerely,

Rosana

Rosana P. Orr
Mother's Day Out Director

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WELCOME TO OXFORD'S MOTHER'S DAY OUT

Welcome to Oxford United Methodist Church's Mother's Day Out Program (referred to as MDO.) We are a Christian based learning center, holding dear the words of Jesus when He said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them..." (Matt 19:14 NIV) as we welcome children of all religious and ethnic groups. Worship activities center on God's love and are presented in a fun, age-appropriate manner.

As we believe children were created to play and explore, our program encourages creative thinking and learning through play.

AGES

We accept children between the ages of 18 months, completed by the first day of classes, and those who turn 5 years old on or after September 1st.

Days and Hours of Operation, Holidays, Closures

Our program takes place on Tuesday and Thursday from 8:45 AM to 2:30 PM. As we are reopening so late in the academic year, our dates of operation will be April 6 through August 19, 2021. We will reopen on September 7th which will be the first day of the 2021-22 Academic year. At the time of this writing, there are no holidays or breaks scheduled for the April 6 – August 19th session.

The MDO office is open on days of operation from 9:15 – 2:30, but if the director cannot receive you during those hours, another time can be arranged. She will usually be in the office Wednesday mornings too.

In the event of inclement weather, Oxford's Mother's Day Out will follow the Northside Independent School District's schedule. You can follow most organizations' closings on any local news program, but Oxford UMC has now included the MDO in the use of its "robo call & text" program. With this program a text or phone call will be sent to our staff and parents with an alert. Please be mindful in notifying the director if your phone number changes as we want to keep the data in the message system up to date.

Enrollment Requirements

Before the child's admission to the MDO program, all forms must be completed, including signature of at least one parent and be accompanied by a copy of the child's latest vaccination records. A child will not be admitted without a copy of these records. A copy of the suggested vaccination schedule is provided with the enrollment form packet.

When a child is registered, the required enrollment fees are due. If a child enrolls before the program begins, the fees include the registration fee and material fee; tuition is due the first week of classes. For a child enrolling following the first day of classes, the fees will include the registration fee, material fee and the tuition.

Our program makes an effort to accommodate all children, but our program reserves the right not to accept a child whose needs require individual attention and/or resources that cannot be provided by our available staff.

Registration Policy Information

The Oxford UMC Mother's Day Out fees are **NON-REFUNDABLE**. These include registration fee and material fees.

Tuition and Fees

The Mother's Day Out program of Oxford UMC is a nonprofit organization. Our budget is set annually and we are completely dependent on the tuition generated yearly for the program's operating expenses. Like any business, we have operating expenses like salaries, facility usage, office expenses and we update and improve the materials for the children throughout the year. Unlike most child care facilities, we do not charge first and last month's tuition, but we do rely on our families to comply with timely payment of tuition fees.

Monthly tuition is due the 1st of each month with a grace period that extends until the 10th of the month. After the 10th of the month a \$10 late fee will be charged. There is no credit for absences or vacations.

Tuition is \$250.00 per month. Sibling Tuition is \$225.00 a month

Registration fee: Registration fee is \$75 for all children. Although this fee will be charged each year as children are re-enrolled, it will be waived for children who continue with us in September 2021.

Material fee: The material fee for the academic year is \$300, which is paid in two payments: \$150 upon registration and \$150 the first week of February of 2022. There is no sibling discount on the material fee and it is non-refundable.

Late Pick-up fee: there will be a charge of \$5.00 per 15-minute interval or portion thereof for children not picked up by 2:30. Please notify the office of your estimated arrival time so we can reassure your child.

Payment: Fees may be paid by check, cash *with the exact amount*, and as of this writing we are working on setting up a system for payments made by credit card or ACH. This service will incur a fee that will be added to the payment. Details will be sent to all parents as soon as the service has been set up. Checks should be made out to OUMC-MDO, with the student's name on the Memo line. Your current address must be on the check. There is a \$25 fee for any check returned for insufficient funds.

While we are following the COVID19 guidelines, parents will not enter the educational building or gym (details for drop off and pick-up are in the Supplement COVID Handbook) so cash or check payments may be put into the child's tote in an envelope that will be provided for this purpose. It will be helpful if you inform the drop-off staff that tuition is in the tote.

Receipts: As of this writing, a system to email receipts is being set up. Please be sure that the principal payer's email is correctly and legibly written on the child's enrollment form.

Withdrawal

If you decide to withdraw your child from Mother's Day Out, the **Director** must be notified with the **Withdrawal Form** at least two weeks prior to the time of the actual withdrawal. If the proper notification is not made, the equivalent of a two-week's tuition will be charged whether or not the child is in attendance. If you plan to withdraw your child but need her/him to attend a few days into the beginning of a month, there will be a charge of \$35 per day in lieu of full tuition if there is not another child waiting to enter the program on the first of the month.

Change of Address Form

If during the year there are any changes to your personal information, i.e., change of address, telephone number, authorized emergency contacts, etc. please indicate the changes on a **Change of Information Form** or a **Change of Alternative Pick-up/Emergency Contact Form**. The Director can provide these forms by placing them in your child's tote or emailing them upon request.

Snacks & Lunch

MDO will provide a low-sugar snack for the children; parents are responsible for sending a nutritional lunch with foods that the child enjoys and can easily eat unassisted (although we are there to help if needed, especially opening containers.) As we cannot refrigerate or microwave lunches, we highly recommend the use of reusable cooling packs placed in the lunch box. For food that should be eaten warm, food thermoses sold on Amazon (search "food thermos for children") or sometimes at Walmart are ideal. Please label every container, cup and lunch box with your child's name to avoid confusion or loss.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Hot dogs, carrots and grapes are listed among the most common objects that obstruct a child's airway passage. Please cut hot dogs, carrots, cherry tomatoes and grapes in small pieces. Lunchtime is a very busy time for the teachers, *especially in the Toddler classrooms*; they do not have time to cut food. Just because your child has never choked on one of these foods, does not mean they are safe.

BIRTHDAY SNACKS

Birthdays are a special occasion for children and your child will be celebrated with song and a crown! You are welcome to celebrate your child's birthday with a special snack for the class, but please, no frosted cakes or cookies are allowed. We highly recommend fresh fruit, store bought, unfrosted mini-muffins or something similar as a birthday treat. Although not required, many families enjoy sending a goodie bag home with the children, which is fine.

Please, your child should not arrive in the morning chewing gum or eating candy.

Choice of Clothing

When you plan your child's wardrobe, please consider the variety of activities that your child participates in on a typical day. The children will play in sand, mulch and grass when participating in outdoor activities and we use paint *a lot* in our program! We suggest comfortable, washable clothes that are free of complicated fasteners. Children in diapers must wear clothing that makes diaper changing easy-please, no pants with an entire inseam of snaps!

Change of Clothing

All children must have 2 sets of a complete change of clothing, including underwear and socks if your child wears them, in their tote. Under the COVID guidelines, if any bodily fluids get on a child's clothing, the clothes must be changed so at least 2 sets of clothing are necessary. It is a good idea to check these clothes every few months to be sure they still fit your growing child!

Diapers & Disposable Training Pants

If your child is not yet toilet-trained, please send a **small** package of diapers or disposable training pants (*Pull-Ups*.) Cloth training pants are acceptable once your child is completely toilet trained. If you let us know when you begin toilet training, we will be happy to work with your child. "Accidents" do happen, so please send a generous supply of changes of clothing during this period.

All diapers and training pants must have your child's first name written on the folded part of the diaper. This avoids the problem of mixing up the diapers; which can be very important to some parents. Keep in mind that your child's teacher does not have time to do this for you.

Tote Bags

All children participating in our program will be provided with a tote bag. Please send your child to the program with his/her personal items in the tote. This tote will be your child's to keep, but please be aware that there will be a charge of \$15 to replace the original tote.

Labeling

All personal items must be clearly marked with your child's name, including jackets, sweaters, blankets, water bottles and lunch containers.

Illness

As we are in a particularly difficult time, it should be understandable that no sick child will be allowed into the class. More detailed information is supplied in the Supplemental COVID19 Handbook, but here it is important to address the signs that something is not quite right with your child. If she/he is showing signs of becoming ill, please keep him/her home as the risk of

being contagious is high. A child that suddenly has a fever at 10 AM, most likely showed symptoms of not being well much earlier. The health and safety of our children, staff and their families depend on total cooperation of everyone.

If your child misses a day because of illness, please contact us, preferably per email or leave a phone message with the volunteer answering the phones.

Medication

Only prescription medication will be administered to your child. You must fill out and sign a medication permission form where you will indicate the time the medication is to be administered. All medications will be stored in the Director's office. The exception to these limitations is the over-the-counter items that are listed on the enrollment form; with your permission, the MDO staff will administer these items if necessary.

Naps

All children under 4 years old who remain on the campus after 12:30 will have a nap time. The program will provide a cushioned mat and the parents must provide the child with a sleeping mat (Amazon, Target, Walmart) or a sheet and blanket. Please label these items with your child's name. These mats will be sent home every Thursday to be washed. They will be stored in over-sized bags, separate from other children's items. Our 4- and 5-year-olds will have a short quiet time on cushioned mats. For your child's comfort, you may want to send a blanket or sheet to cover the mat.

If you chose to pick your child up before nap time, please understand that you need to make an effort to take your child before the other children lie down. Having one child not resting creates problems for the teachers and is generally not well tolerated by the child. If your child usually stays to nap but you plan to pick him/her up early, please let the staff know. If your child usually goes home early but needs to stay during nap time, again, tell the staff and be sure that your child has napping supplies on hand. We will provide a cushioned mat, but prefer not to share blankets.

Toy Policy

Toys from home are not allowed in the classrooms with the exception of a comfort toy for nap time for our Toddlers. Toys can very easily become lost or broken and they often provoke problems between the children. We have an abundance of toys and activities available, so encourage your child to leave his/her own at home or in the car.

Daily Activities

While we are following the safety COVID19 guidelines, the children will participate in most of the following activities but in smaller groups. The class will often be divided into two groups and participate in an activity separately, later to switch activities. For example, half the class may be doing an art project while their classmates are in a center. After an appropriate amount of time, they will switch activities.

Weather permitting, more activities will take place outdoors.

Your child's teacher will put a summary of the day's activities in the folder that is in his/her tote at the end of the day. The following are some of the activities that may be included in the day:

- Play Centers in the classroom or outside.
- Physical activity - depending on the weather, the children play on the playground or in the gym.
- Art: our projects are chosen to allow the children to work with a wide variety of materials. The purpose of our art projects is to let your child explore the world of creativity, develop new skills, improve existing ones and **to have fun!** If your child chooses not to participate in a particular craft, he/she will not be forced to do so. Please enjoy and appreciate all of your child's **efforts**. A good rule of thumb is to ask how your child created "it" rather than ask, "What is it?" or "What's it for?"
- Music and movement
- PreK Math: activities that teach the children concepts considered essential for math skills learned later. These activities are often "disguised" as games.
- Pre-handwriting/handwriting skills-our program uses the *Handwriting Without Tears* system to teach handwriting. Many of the activities that the children do in the centers encourage development of the muscles used in writing as well as eye/hand coordination. Starting this very early makes proper handwriting much easier.
- Guided Play - Your child's teacher will participate in activities with the class that are entertaining, while giving the children the opportunity to improve existing skills and to develop new ones.
- Snack Time and Lunch
- Quiet Time – All classes will have a rest period when the children are expected to lie on their mats and encouraged to rest; even if they do not sleep.

Although it isn't always possible for the teachers to include all of these activities in their curriculum every day, they are strongly encouraged to offer the children a wide variety of activities.

Your Child's Arrival & Security Measures

Your family will be issued an ID with photo card for your child and each parent. Your child's ID card will be kept on his/her tote and the parent picking up your child must be able to show an ID card if requested. There is a \$5 fee to replace a lost card.

As no non-staff members are allowed in the building, the children will go to an assigned drop-off area where both parent and child's temperature will be taken. The parent will then answer the following questions:

Have you or anyone in your immediate household:

- 1. Had new or worsening signs or symptoms of possible COVID-19? This includes:**
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Chills
 - Repeated shaking with chills
 - Muscle pain
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - Loss of taste or smell
 - Diarrhea
 - Feeling feverish or a measured temperature of 100.0 degrees or more
 - Known close contact with a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19.
- 2. Had known close contact to someone in the last 14 days with someone who has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, someone who is under investigation for COVID-19, or someone who is ill with a respiratory illness.**
- 3. Had international travel within the last 14 days to countries with ongoing community transmission**

The child will be escorted into the building by a staff member and taken to the classroom. Another staff member will scan your child's ID card to register her/his arrival. The drop-off station will open at 8:45 and will close at 9:15 or once all children in line have been escorted into the building. If you arrive after 9:00, you will have to call the office to be let in as our doors always remain locked.

Supplies

Please send with your child on the first day of classes:

1. A donation of one large box of facial tissue (aka Kleenex)
2. IF your child uses diapers, a donation of one large pack of sensitive, fragrance-free diaper wipes
3. A napping mat (looks like a little sleeping bag) or sheet and blanket (again, MDO will provide a cushioned mat)
4. Two photos of your child, alone, not accompanied by friends or family, size 4X5

Your child's tote should have the following packed daily:

1. Two changes of clothing, complete with socks and underwear in a labeled, Ziplock storage bag
2. A clearly labeled beverage bottle that will not spill if tipped over or sippy cup. We provide reverse osmosis filtered water for the children to drink.
3. Lunch in labeled containers
4. If your child uses diapers, please be sure enough are in stock. Teachers will put a note on brightly colored paper on the tote handle when the supply is low
5. If your child uses diaper ointment, send a tube that has been labeled and be sure you have filled out a form on how and when you want the ointment applied
6. Tuesday morning: don't forget to pack the washed napping supplies

As the MDO Director, a mother and a grandmother (lots of experience sending kids off to school,) I would like to make a suggestion; and hear my heart when I say it is for your child's comfort and your peace of mind. If you put everything in your child's tote, except for lunch, in the evening prior to MDO Day, there is less opportunity for items to be missing. And be sure to take a moment to read the daily activity report and *remove* it from the folder. Messages can get lost in the folder when it contains a month's worth of papers!

Summer Months at MDO

Our program remains open for the months of June and July and this year, part of August. The times and fees are the same, although the curriculum changes somewhat. Every year the teachers choose themes to explore, "Under the Sea", "Rainforest", "Volcanoes" and "Space" are a few of the past favorites. We also have *Splash Day* where the classes take turns playing in the water on our playground. Traditionally we have a small water slide and wading pools with age-appropriate water toys for play.

It is assumed that your child will stay with us for the summer months. If you are not interested in having your child remain in the program for those months, you must turn in a Withdrawal Form. Material fees collected at the time of enrollment are non-refundable even if your child is withdrawn for the summer.

