

Surfside United Methodist Church
Children's Center



Policy Handbook

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2026-2027

7/24/2026

SUMC Children's Center Policy Handbook

Mission Statement:

The Children's Center of Surfside United Methodist Church is a mission to present a wholesome, Christian program for young children. Our focus is teaching biblical values in a loving, Christian environment, yet is non-doctrinal in approach. Our preschool seeks to help each child develop in accordance with his/her own abilities, interests, and needs in a program that offers the best in Early Childhood Education. This program is for the children. However, we believe the entire family is touched and enriched as a result.

SUMC's Children's Center is licensed through the South Carolina Department of Social Services.

The Board of Directors, appointed by SUMC, oversees the center and hires the director.

SERVICES OFFERED* at the center

- Lil Tots for 1 and 2 year olds

- Early 3's for 2 ½-3 year olds

- Preschool for 3 and 4 year olds

- Summer Camp for children 3 years old (potty trained) through 6 years old

*May change from year to year as enrollment dictates.

7/24/2026

LIL TOTS is offered for children 1 and 2 years old. Trust in adults other than parents, early speech development, and a sense of time and space sharing are focuses as a part of the early readiness.

EARLY 3's (must turn 3 on or after September 1) provides a safe place for children to learn how to relate to and feel comfortable with adults other than their parents. Stories, manipulative materials, music, movement, and outside play help them grow in early stages of readiness skills.

PRESCHOOL (Children must be potty trained before classes start. Threes must be 3 and fully potty-trained by Sept. 1, and fours must be 4 by Sept. 1) By using The Creative Curriculum, we are able to offer the best in early childhood education. We provide opportunities for each child to:

1. Broaden his/her knowledge of the world through science experiments, exploration of our environment, exposure to literature, visual materials, and discussions of everyday life.
2. Learn to communicate feelings and ideas using a variety of language experiences, art, music, rhythm, block building, puzzles, imaginative play, games, etc.
3. Develop a positive self-image.
4. Establish a readiness for numbers and letters to prepare a foundation for elementary school.
5. Grow in self-discipline, permitting the child to work, play, and cooperate without losing the ability to think and judge, both as an individual and as part of a group.
6. Develop a sense of curiosity and love of learning that will continue throughout life.

How do we accomplish these? We incorporate The Creative Curriculum into theme-based teaching units. Teachers work together to plan and share resources and talents for enriching lessons and to provide continuity through the years the child is with us.

In each age level of our program, it is our goal to cooperate with parents, involving them and helping them develop realistic understandings of their child's abilities and skills.

7/24/2026

STAFFING

We employ highly qualified persons. Each receives CPR and First Aid Certification every two years as required by the American Heart Association. Each staff member must pass a SLED check as well as a Central Registry check, and receive 15 hours of DSS in-service training annually. Also, each will participate in Safe Sanctuary training at SUMC.

CONDITIONS OF ENROLLMENT

1. The following paperwork is to be completed at the time of registration:
 - a. Signed Registration Form
 - b. Signed Discipline Policy
 - c. Signed Statement of Child's Health Form
 - d. Registration and activity fees paid
2. We must have the following before a child may enter class:
 - a. Up-to-date shot records on the SCDHEC Form or religious exemption
 - b. Up- to- date Emergency Contact Form

SCHOOL HOURS

Lil Tots Monday through Friday 8:30-12:00

Early 3's Monday through Friday 8:30-12:00

Preschool Monday through Friday 8:30-12:00

(Extended Care at no extra cost T/W/Th 12:00-3:00

Parents furnish lunch)

Summer Camp Monday through Friday 8:30-3:00

ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL AND DISMISSAL OF STUDENTS

1. Transportation is the responsibility of parents. If a carpool is used, that information needs to be in writing on file with the teacher before you leave the child. Calling mid-morning to change pickup plans doesn't give written notice needed for our files.
2. You will walk your child down to his/her classroom and sign them in on our tracking sheet.
3. Dismissal will be either at the classroom or at the front entrance. Only persons listed on your child's approved pick up list will be authorized to pick up your child. We cannot allow any additions to your child's approved pick up list by

7/24/2026

phone or email. Parents must add authorized adults to the pick-up list in person. Please notify your child's teacher if you plan on another authorized adult to be picking up your child from school that day. Authorized adults must sign students out on the classroom sign in/out sheet and must provide ID.

4. Please note there is a late fee for all programs of \$5.00 after a five-minute grace period and \$5.00 for every five minutes thereafter. This late fee will be added to the next month's fee, and payment is expected at that time.

CALENDARS

Every month, your child's teacher publishes a calendar including non-school days, special activities, field trips, speakers, etc. Post this at home and use it to prepare your child for his day. After the school day, talk with your child about the day's experiences. Communications begun now will help both of you in later years.

PARTIES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Holidays--Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Easter--are special, and we plan lessons around each. You may be asked to help with food or craft supplies. We will tell you of special church events such as the Fall Festival and Easter Egg Hunt and invite you to participate.

BIRTHDAYS

Although no parties or present exchanges are allowed on school premises, you may furnish special treats for the class on your child's birthday. Please let the teacher know in advance. Check on possible allergies for students in the class so that every classmate may share the treat.

SNACKS

Each parent is asked to provide nutritious snacks three or four times yearly. Examples include crackers, dry cereal, fruit, Goldfish, and pretzels. They must be prepackaged, including the fruit. Snack time often provides us valuable teaching moments (hand washing, trash removal, reviewing skills such as letters and numbers, and practicing songs).

7/24/2026

INCLEMENT WEATHER

We follow the Horry County decision for school closing. Delayed starts do not affect our opening hour. During hazardous conditions, use your discretion about putting your child in a car and driving to school.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION

Plans are posted and will be rehearsed each year in accordance with Social Services requirements. We participate in monthly fire drills. Talk to your child about this possibility.

CONFERENCES

Conferences are planned at your or the teacher's request as needed. These need to be scheduled (not impromptu at the door) so that the teacher may give full attention to you and your issues without neglecting other children in the class.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline at SUMC Children's Center consists of redirection, time out, and, as a last resort, contacting the parents. Students will be redirected three times and then placed in timeout for one minute for every year of age. We DO NOT use corporal punishment. If time out does not allow the student to exhibit appropriate behavior in the classroom, parents will be called. The Discipline Policy signed at enrollment gives more details.

WITHDRAWAL

We ask that you give us a minimum of two weeks' notice before withdrawing your child. No money will be refunded.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Our major concern is the welfare of our children. If after a child has been enrolled and attended class for a time, the teacher and/or the parents feel the experience is detrimental to the child or the rest of the class, the director shall require the withdrawal of the child. This is done only after every effort has been made to make this a constructive experience for the child. Any child who bites another

7/24/2026

individual will be sent home for the remainder of the day. We are not equipped to handle children with emotional or physical handicaps. If there is any question concerning this, a conference will be held with the parents, teacher, and director.

CONFIDENTIALITY

To safeguard privacy, all names, addresses, and other personal identifying information are kept in a locked environment and aren't shared with other organizations.

TRACKING

For safety purposes, children are accounted for as they enter and exit the building using the daily attendance rosters which parents use to sign a child in and out. Children will also be accounted for on these rosters as they move about the facility.

HEALTH ISSUES

If a child is to gain the most from a day with us, good health is essential. Keeping the ill child at home will help prevent spread of illness—at least 24 hours after fever or 24 hours after a meal is eaten and retained after stomach flu or vomiting. If the child has a contagious communicable disease such as pinworms, head lice, ringworm, chicken pox, or measles, keep the child at home and let the school know, so we may alert other parents of the presence of this “condition.”

PARENTAL ACCESS

Parents are permitted free and full access to their child without prior notice during the school day (unless that access is prohibited by court order). A copy of that order must be on file with the school director.

CLOTHING

We encourage comfortable play clothing suitable for both outdoor activities and messy classroom activities (painting, gluing, etc.). Jackets and gloves (when needed) may be placed on the child's hook outside the door. All need to be clearly labeled with your child's name. **SNEAKERS AND SOCKS ARE REQUIRED.**

7/24/2026

For those in the LIL TOTS OR EARLY 3's classes, we need a diaper bag (or gallon Ziploc bag) containing diapers, pull-ups, wet wipes, and a complete change of clothes every day.

While POTTY TRAINING is expected to be complete before a child enters the three- or four-year classes, it is important that you offer your child an opportunity to go before taking him/her to class. We offer bathroom opportunities during the day but class numbers do not give teachers time to check every few minutes.

FIELD TRIPS

Due to the constant changes to the Seat Belt Law, we will be limiting our field trips considerably. On trips, you are asked to transport your own child or make other arrangements. The facility does not transport children.

FIRST AID KITS are available in each room but are stored so they are inaccessible to children.

MEDICATION

We do not administer medication with the exception of EPI pens and emergency inhalers. All EPI pens and emergency inhalers must be labeled with the child's name and used only for the child for whom the EPI pen or emergency inhaler is labeled. Parents must sign a parental consent form allowing school personnel to administer EPI pens or emergency inhalers when necessary. EPI pens and emergency inhalers must be accompanied by a doctor's prescription. All EPI pens and emergency inhalers are kept in a first aid kit in the classroom where they are readily accessible in the event of an emergency. All unused, expired EPI pens and emergency inhalers shall be returned to the parents.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Each child must have an "Emergency Contact" card on file before the first day of school. This card must have at least three emergency numbers: i.e., the Mother, the Father, and one other name and number. Parents are responsible for notifying the school in writing of any changes during the year.

In the event of a non-serious injury, the preschool personnel will administer first-aid as per the American Red Cross training procedures and contact the parents if

7/24/2026

any further treatment is necessary. If no contacts are reached in a reasonable amount of time, EMS will be called if deemed necessary.

In the event of a serious injury, the preschool will immediately contact EMS and a name from the "Emergency Contact Card" and follow American Red Cross First-Aid procedure until EMS arrives. If the child is to be transported by EMS to the nearest hospital a school staff member will accompany the child with the child's emergency information and remain with the child until the parent arrives.

You have signed a Medical Release form upon registration stating that you give your permission for your child (or legal ward) to be treated or attended to by authorized medical personnel in the event of an emergency. You, therefore, hold free from liability Surfside United Methodist Children's Center and all attending medical personnel acting according to accustomed procedure and rendering general and special medical-related treatment on behalf of and for the goodwill of your child (or legal ward).

BLOOD BORNE PATHOGEN WASTE DISPOSAL

In the event of accident or injury involving hazardous waste, all materials shall be bagged and taken away by EMS personnel. Anything left behind shall be disposed of at the offices of Primary Medical Assoc. located at 1413 Hwy. 17 Bus. N, Surfside Beach, S. C. 29575 (843-238-5654)

TUITION

We cannot make arrangements for partial tuition or extend financial assistance.

Tuition is based on a yearly fee divided into 9 months. The monthly fee does not change due to holidays, vacations, or closures by DHEC/DSS.

Due on the 1st school day of the month. On the 6th day, there will be a late fee of \$5.00. On the 15th, the spot is considered open for a new student. If your child returns before the spot is filled, tuition plus a late fee of \$10.00 will be due.

Make checks payable to SMCC. You may also pay online or by credit/debit card in the office.

Cash should be placed in an envelope with your child's name on it.

7/24/2026

LIABILITY

Surfside United Methodist Church carries limited liability coverage for staff and enrolled children. If the child or staff is covered under any other medical insurance, the parent/staff must file with their insurance first, and SUMC will pick up the remainder. If there is no other insurance, SUMC will file for primary coverage under its insurance program. This is handled through the Director and appropriate church officer.

7/24/2026