

Council Oak Preschool Operational Policies and Parent Handbook

Council Oak Preschool
A Ministry of First United Methodist Church Round
Rock
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OUR PHILOSOPHY

Council Oak Preschool offers activities and experiences planned for the growth and development of the whole child. This includes social, emotional, physical and cognitive stages of development.

Each child is unique and at a different stage of development. Council Oak Preschool will work to assess and meet the needs of every child on an individual basis, providing the most appropriate approach for each student.

Our purpose is to develop an enthusiastic attitude toward learning. It is our desire that we help each child become aware of God's love, and in so doing, help them know what a special person he or she is through that love.

We strive to provide opportunities for each child to develop positive self concept; be accepting of others; be curious; be expressive; feel loved; feel secure; be full participants in God's world.

Our program is carefully planned for the needs of young children. Activities include stories, music, art, crafts, dramatic play, physical fitness, games and other various experiences that meet the needs of children and stimulate their learning. We offer a balance between free and structured play, quiet and active times, indoor and outdoor activities, along with group and individual experiences.

“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it”

Proverbs 22:6 NIV

Council Oak Preschool is licensed by the Texas Department of Health and Human Services and follows the minimum standards as set forth by the state of Texas at all times. Parents may view a copy of the current minimum standards and licensing report in the preschool office or on the DFPS website. Parents may contact the local licensing office at 512-834-3426, DFPS website at www.dfps.state.tx.us/, or the DFPS Child Abuse Hotline at 800-252-5400.

All staff are certified in CPR/First Aid and Child Abuse Prevention along with earning 24 hours of continued education each year focused on Early Childhood.

OUR GOALS

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL:

To help the child:

- Grow in his/her ability to enjoy work and play with other children
- Coordinate different points of view by cooperating and resolving conflict
- Cope with fears, anxieties, and frustrations constructively
- Develop an attitude of kindness and helpfulness towards others
- Feel secure in relationships with adults and other children

COGNITIVE

To help the child:

- Develop the ability to concentrate and think independently
- Express ideas through language
- Use initiative in pursuing interests

PHYSICAL

To help the child:

- Participate in variety of fine and gross motor activities
- Become aware of his/her body in the environment

SPIRITUAL

To help the child:

- Foster a belief in God as our Creator
- Experience God's love through loving, caring relationships with adults and other children
- Develop positive character traits

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY AS TO STUDENTS

Council Oak Preschool admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, and other school-administered programs.

CURRICULUM

Council Oak Preschool bases its curriculum on the philosophy that children learn through play. Our curriculum emphasizes a “hands on” approach to learning. Classroom routines encourage active involvement, meaningful experimentation, and reinforcement through repetition. Schedules are designed to balance structure and free choice, as well as active and quiet times. Sensory, motor, perceptual and language skills are introduced through materials and activities which are both child-centered and teacher-directed. Work is planned which emphasizes the process rather than the product, fostering a sense of accomplishment and pride. Equipment, materials, and activities are selected based on the appropriate ages and stages of the children.

Classrooms include learning centers, which vary somewhat for each age level. Examples of these centers include dramatic play, art, books, science, math, blocks and manipulatives. The teachers base their weekly plans on different themes or units. The units chosen are relevant, understandable, suitable for the children’s age level, and capable of leading to many activities and discussions.

Bible stories are included in our curriculum and are chosen to enhance the units or themes that the teacher may be working on. A short prayer is said at lunch with all the children. Positive character traits are also a focus in our curriculum. Council Oak encourages loving, caring relationships with others in a Christian environment.

Once a month, Council Oak students and staff gather for a school wide chapel service where our school unites together for a short praise service with a message from one of the ministers of First United Methodist Church.

MUSIC

In addition to singing in the classroom, children in all classes attend music twice a week with our music teacher. Emphasis is on enjoyment of music and movement. Children are exposed to instruments, rhythm, finger plays, singing and music from other cultures.

PHYSICAL FITNESS

Physical development is an important part of growing for all children. Our Physical Fitness class will be offered to our oldest twos, threes, fours and Ready Rockets. This program will be held on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week. Our goal is to develop our gross motor skills and our love for physical fitness to maintain healthy lifestyles.

ART

Art has a daily place in all of our classrooms. Children enjoy doing crafts and artistic activities related to our planned themes. In addition to these projects, children in our threes, fours and Ready Rockets will attend art class twice a week. The emphasis is on developing a love of art, learning the fundamentals of art and free expression.

POSITIVE GUIDANCE

Council Oak Preschool believes that guiding young children toward appropriate and acceptable social behavior is one of our most important tasks. Effective classroom management ensures that children are constructively involved in activities that they enjoy and will help them learn. We strive to provide an environment that is thoughtfully planned, giving special attention to daily schedules, physical space, and providing stimulating activities. In this environment, inappropriate behavior is less likely to occur.

Each teacher is committed to helping your child feel safe and secure and providing sensible limits and genuine encouragement.

These methods are used to help students displaying behavior such as actions that disrupt the class or interfere with the learning process or actions that could cause possible physical or emotional harm.

The staff shall not use abusive, neglectful, corporal, humiliating, or frightening punishment under any circumstances. No child shall be physically restrained unless it is necessary to protect the safety and health of the child or others.

Removal of a child is done infrequently and is always to a location where visual supervision by staff can be maintained.

POSITIVE GUIDANCE METHODS USED ARE:

- Positive suggestions
- Positive reinforcement
- Redirection
- Modeling

COP BOARD

The Council Oak Preschool board is made of up of volunteer parents who serve as representatives of the families that attend our school. These individuals work with the Council Oak Preschool directors and FUMC leadership to approve policy changes, program offerings, tuition pricing and annual budgets. If you have an interest in serving Council Oak in this capacity, please contact the preschool office.

CLASSROOM PLACEMENT

Children are placed in the appropriate class based on their age as of September 1st. All two-year-old students are placed with peers that are close in age. All other classes are placed with a variety of birthdays as they do in the public schools. **All three-year-old students must be “potty” trained** before attending this program as we have no provisions to change them in Pod B.

Child/Staff Ratio

18 months to 23 months	8/9 children to 2 teachers
2 year olds	10/11 children to 1 teacher/1 assistant
3 year olds	10/12 children to 1 teacher/1 assistant
4 year olds	12/13 children to 1 teacher/1 assistant
5 year olds	12/13 children to 2 teachers

FORMS AND RECORDS

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services requires in its Minimum Standards that current children’s records be maintained in the preschool office. Your child’s enrollment form, health form, emergency medical release, media release and the Discipline and Guidance Policy must be on file in the office before school starts or handed in on the first day of school. It is preferred that all children’s records be turned in prior to orientation. After orientation, a form will be sent home acknowledging that you have read this handbook and accept the policies and procedures contained within. This form must also be maintained with your child’s records.

CHILD ARRIVAL AND RELEASE POLICY

Arrival: The bell rings at 9:00 a.m., which signifies the beginning of the school day. Children are to be walked into their classroom by an adult and signed in on the attendance sheet. Children are to be left with a Council Oak Staff Member. We encourage you to bring your child promptly at 9:00 in order to experience the full day’s activities. If children arrive late, it becomes distracting and they miss out on the planned activities for the day. Doors will be locked at 9:15 – please come to the office and

Ms. Joy or Ms. Julie will take you to the class. We do request that you do not enter the classrooms until the bell rings at 9:00. This time is used by the teachers to prepare their rooms for the day.

Dismissal: A bell will ring at 2:00 p.m. to inform you that it is time to enter the building. Please stay outside on the walkway until the bell rings. Children are to be picked up in their classrooms by an adult. A picture ID must be shown to the teacher during the first week of school or when someone other than the parent picks up the child. Please sign your child out with the time and your initials before leaving. If you must pick your child up early, please make arrangements with the teacher so that the other children will not be disturbed when you arrive.

Permission by the parent must be given for the release of a child to anyone other than the parent. Authorized persons must be listed on the Student Enrollment form. Teachers will be given a copy of the authorized list of people who may pick up a child. If they are not listed, prior arrangements must be made and proper I. D. (driver's license) presented in order to obtain the release of the child. When leaving, please keep your child in sight at all times when walking to your car.

Late Pick-Up charge: A late fee will be assessed when picking your child up after 2:15 p.m. Children will be brought to the office after 2:15 in order to wait for their parents. After this time, the charge is \$5.00 for every five minutes thereafter. The clock in the preschool office will be used to determine the lateness.

ENROLLMENT, TUITION AND FEES

As a school year based program, we enroll students for one school year at a time. Currently registered students and their siblings are given first opportunity to enroll in late January – early February. Any remaining openings in our program will be made available to the community in mid-February on a first come, first served basis until classes are full.

Registration Fee: \$75 per student/ per year

This is an annual fee due at the time of registration and is non-refundable. If at any time you withdraw from the program and then wish to return at a later time during the year, there will be another registration fee due. After a child is enrolled in the program and has attended, a registration fee cannot be transferred to another child.

Supply Fee: \$85 per student/per year

School supplies have been purchased and distributed to your child's classroom. Each child will be charged **\$85.00** for these supplies. This payment is due with your first tuition payment on July 1st.

Tuition Fee:	\$2,050.00 annually	Wednesday/Friday
	\$2,050.00 annually	Tuesday/Thursday
	\$2,700.00 annually	Monday/Wednesday/Friday
	\$3,400.00 annually	Tues/ Wed/ Thurs/ Friday Pre-K
	\$3,475.00 annually	Tues/ Wed/ Thurs/ Friday Ready Rockets

Tuition may be financed at the following rates \$2,150.00, \$2,800.00, \$3500.00 or \$3,375.00. These payment plans are divided over 10 months beginning in July and concluding April. Payments are due on the 1st of each month.

Tuition is figured on a yearly basis and therefore the amount is not flexible with long or short months. Refunds or reductions are not available for the time a child is absent or if the school is closed due to holidays, inclement weather, emergency situations or acts of God.

Full tuition is due on the 1st day of the month. A late fee goes into effect after the 10th of the month. **In order to avoid a \$20.00 late fee when the 10th falls on a weekend, extended weekend or during holiday break, tuition must be received in the preschool office the last working day of the week prior to the 10th.**

Automatic bank drafts or credit card payments may be set up through our website at www.counciloakpreschool.org. Once on the preschool site, you will see an option to Pay Tuition On-Line. **Please note if choosing to pay thru the Council Oak website, a \$5.00 per transaction fee will be assessed. Checks should be made payable to Council Oak Preschool or COP.** Please drop them in the tuition mailbox outside the preschool office. **If tuition is mailed, please send to P O. Box 1448, Round Rock, Texas 78660.**

Refunds for tuition are given for certain reasons such as relocation or because of a job change. A withdrawal form must be filled out and given to the Director. **Two weeks notice is required in order to receive any kind of refund.**

To keep your child's space available, you will be charged for every class day of the month regardless of any absences.

Returned Check Charge – there is a **\$25.00 fee** charged for all returned checks. **After two returned checks tuition must be paid in cash or by money order.**

Council Oak Preschool reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time with or without cause.

PROGRAM DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION

Program Hours are 8:30a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Kindergarten Readiness only
Program Hours are 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. all other classes

Council Oak Preschool offers classes on:

Tuesday – Thursday

18 months through 4's

Wednesday- Friday

18 months through 23 months

Monday-Wednesday-Friday

2's, 3's, 4's

Pre-K and Kindergarten Readiness

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday

Monday Enrichment

4's supplement

Council Oak Preschool is in operation from August 27 through May 21. We will follow the Round Rock Independent School District Calendar for vacation days. Council Oak Preschool will not hold class on Round Rock School District teacher in-service days and will end our school year two days earlier than the school district. Below is a general calendar – please refer to the website for special events.

August

Monday 8/27 – First day of school

Tuesday 8/28 – First day of school

September

Monday 9/3 – School closed for Labor Day

October

Wednesday 10/3 – Chapel

Thursday 10/4 – Chapel

**Monday 10/8 and Tuesday 10/9 – School closed for Columbus Day and RRISD
Teacher In-service**

Tuesday 10/30 – Fall festival parties

Wednesday 10/31 – Fall festival parties

November

Monday 11/5– COP Election Day

Tuesday 11/6– COP Election Day

Wednesday 11/7 – Chapel

Thursday 11/8 – Chapel

Thursday 11/15 – Thanksgiving Feasts

Friday 11/16 – Thanksgiving Feasts

Monday 11/19 thru Friday 11/23 – School closed for Thanksgiving holiday

December

Wednesday 12/5 -- Chapel

Thursday 12/6 – Chapel

Thursday 12/13 – Christmas program at 9:15

Friday 12/14 – Christmas program at 9:15

Tuesday 12/18 – Christmas parties and Santa visit

Wednesday 12/19 – Christmas parties and Santa visit

Thursday 12/20 thru Monday 1/7 – School closed for winter break

January

Wednesday 1/9 – Chapel

Thursday 1/10 – Chapel

Monday 1/21 – School closed for MLK Day

February

Wednesday 2/6 -- Chapel

Thursday 2/7 – Chapel

Wednesday 2/13 – Valentine’s Day parties

Thursday 2/14 – Valentine’s Day parties

**Monday 2/18 and Tuesday 2/19 – School closed for President’s Day and RRISD
Teacher In-service**

March

Wednesday 3/6 – Chapel

Thursday 3/7– Chapel

Thursday 3/14 – Cowboy Coffee

Friday 3/15 – Cowboy Coffee

Monday 3/18 thru Friday 3/22 – School closed for Spring Break

April

Wednesday 4/3 – Chapel

Thursday 4/4 – Chapel

Friday 4/19 – School closed for Good Friday

May

Wednesday 5/1 – Chapel

Thursday 5/2 – Chapel

Thursday 5/9 – Mother’s Day Tea

Friday 5/10 – Mother’s Day Tea

Friday 5/17 – W/F Toddlers last day

Monday 5/20 – Graduation and Last Day

Tuesday 5/21 – Graduation and Last Day

Wednesday 5/23 – Staff workday

VACCINATION POLICY AND IMMUNIZATION RECORDS

Council Oak Preschool will not accept any students whose parents/guardians will not permit vaccination. Council Oak Preschool will continue to accept new students and retain established students who have yet to be vaccinated due to compromised immune systems or who have documented adverse reactions to vaccines. It is our responsibility to ensure our facility is safe for all, and while we respect the right of families to make their own choices for their children, we also respect the trust our families put in us to ensure the safety of all, and our policies must honor that trust.

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services requires us to have a current record of your child's immunizations on file at Council Oak Preschool by the first day of school. A signature of their personal physician, health care clinic, or stamp is required on the form. A parent's signature is also required. You will be notified if your child reaches the age of a required immunization during the school year. We require staff to have up-to-date immunizations unless an employee is exempt.

VISION AND HEARING SCREENING

The Texas Department of Health requires screening of all children 4 and 5 years of age for hearing and vision problems. Many pediatricians offer these screenings as part of a child's yearly well check. A copy of the completed screening must be kept in each child's file. It will be your responsibility to bring the results of your screening to the preschool office.

DISMISSAL POLICY

Any child who receives 3 written warnings for aggressive behavior can be asked to withdraw from the preschool program. Each case will be evaluated on an individual basis.

PRIVACY

Within Council Oak Preschool, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees who have a "need to know" in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child.

Outside of Council Oak, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when a parent has given express written consent, except where otherwise provided by law.

Council Oak Preschool strives to protect everyone's right to privacy.

FOOD, LUNCHEAS AND SNACKS

Council Oak Preschool is committed to good nutrition as an integral part of the early childhood experience. Children benefit physically as well as mentally when they are taught good nutrition. **ALL CHILDREN NEED TO BRING A NUTRITIOUS BALANCED LUNCH FROM HOME EACH DAY.** Each parent is choosing to provide their child's meals and snacks, and Council Oak Preschool is not responsible for its nutritional value or for meeting your child's daily food needs. Please pack lunches that do not require refrigeration or the microwave. We do not have refrigerators or microwaves in the classrooms. Please use containers that can be easily opened by your child and cut food into small pieces. Label all containers, thermoses, lunch boxes, etc. If snacks and meals are provided by a parent and shared by the entire class, you must meet the needs of all children who require a special diet. Children with food allergies are at risk when they eat foods which have not been prepared or served by their own parent. The following foods cause choking in children, especially under the age of three:

- Hot Dogs, Candy, Peas, Grapes, Raw Carrots, Nuts and Corn

The cooking and tasting of different foods is an important aspect of our curriculum. If your child has food allergies, please indicate them on your enrollment form.

Any mother wishing to breastfeed her child has the right to do so while at our school by either providing breast milk for their child while in our care or nursing at school. Mothers wishing to breastfeed at school will be provided a comfortable place to nurse their child.

HEALTH POLICY

It is the responsibility of Council Oak to provide the healthiest environment for all Council Oak students and staff. Since infections spread quickly among children, we **cannot accept a child who health is questionable** on any particular day.

Your cooperation is needed to maintain a healthy environment for our school. Please keep your child home if he or she:

- Gives evidence of a cold (green drainage, runny nose, coughing, sneezing, watery eyes, etc.)
- Has a temperature of 100.4 or more (must be free of fever for 24 hours before returning to school).
- Has had an upset stomach (vomiting or diarrhea) within the last 24 hours
- Reddened eyes with a discharge or crusted eyelids.
- Rashes of any form (small pinpoint or large blisters).
- Head Lice (live bugs) Children may return to school after treatment has been given and all nits are removed from the hair shaft.

If your child becomes ill during school hours, you will be notified immediately and your child will be brought to the office. If you cannot be reached, we will notify the person/persons you have designated on your enrollment form as the person to contact.

If your child is too ill to play outside, please keep him/her at home. Children do not understand why they cannot play outside when everyone else is out.

If your child has any illness diagnosed by the doctor as contagious, notify the school immediately so that other parents can be alerted to the fact that their children may have been exposed. This includes chicken pox, measles, mumps, impetigo, fifth disease, etc.

MEDICATION POLICY

Medications will be administered to a child only as follows:

- All medication must be in its original container. Sunscreen and insect repellent are considered medication, and must be provided to the school by the parent and be administered according to the school's medication policy.
- All prescribed medication must have a label with the child's name, RX date, dispensing directions and the name of the physician.
- In order to dispense a medication, the parent must fill out a medicine form to be kept on file in the office.
- All medicine will be dispensed by the Director or the designated person and will be kept in a locked box in the Directors office.

All medication must be brought directly to the office upon arriving at school. Please do not place medication in your child's lunch box or backpack.

EMERGENCY RELEASE

In the event a medical emergency affects a child, every attempt will be made to contact his/her parent or guardian. Should an emergency occur and a parent cannot be reached, an emergency release form for each child, signed by his/her parent, is kept on file. This release states that a doctor may administer any necessary treatment should an emergency occur.

In the event of an emergency requiring Council Oak Preschool to implement our Emergency Action Plan, all parents and guardians identified on the child's admission form will be notified via email and text message of the type of emergency, sheltering location, and any additional details specific to the emergency as soon as all children are safely sheltered. Additional notification will be sent when the emergency situation is remedied and sheltering precautions are lifted. For lock-downs, children will not be released until the area is deemed safe by local law enforcement.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Birthday celebrations are welcomed. Children celebrating a birthday may bring a snack (enough for his/her class) to school. Please check with the teacher to verify that no child is allergic to certain foods. Please notify the teacher in advance so that time can be made available for this special event. Teachers can provide you with insight as to what types of snacks would work for your class. Please remember our friends are little and require very small portions of any treat.

HOLIDAYS, PARTIES, & SPECIAL EVENTS

Parties will be scheduled throughout the school year. Please look for sign-up sheets in your child's classroom when refreshments or volunteers are needed. For your convenience please refer to the list of special events that will occur this year.

DRESS CODE FOR THE CHILDREN

Children are urged to wear play clothes in order to comfortably participate in the many activities planned in the classroom and outside. Please keep in mind that many of our activities are messy and clothes may be stained. Please remember to send a change of clothes with your child each day.

Every child will be going outdoors daily, weather permitting, so please dress your child accordingly. Children are **not allowed** to wear jewelry, open toe shoes, cowboy boots or cleats to school. **Tennis shoes with socks are recommended and encouraged.** This is a safety measure to prevent your child from having their feet stepped on or toes stubbed during school time.

BAD WEATHER POLICY

For bad weather, we follow the Round Rock School District's decision. We also remain apprised of the changing weather conditions through our National Weather Service radio.

Please tune in to our Facebook page or one of the local radio or television stations for current school information should bad weather occur.

If RRISD is closed for the day, COP will be closed. If RRISD is operating on a two-hour delay, we will be opening at 10:30 am. We will continue with our normal dismissal at 2:00 pm.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Parents will need to purchase a nap mat for their child to use at rest time. Teachers will communicate what the children in their class typically rest on during quiet time. Please

bring this to class the first day of school labeled with your child's name using a permanent marker. Rest mats and towels will be sent home regularly for cleaning.

NAP/REST TIME

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services requires Council Oak Preschool to provide a sleep/rest period after lunch for all children attending our school. During this time, lights are lowered and quiet time music is played encouraging all to rest. However, children are not required to sleep, but must be able to rest quietly on their nap mat. Special rest items such as a favorite blanket or stuffed animal are permitted at this time.

DO NOT BRING THE FOLLOWING ITEMS TO SCHOOL:

- Money
- Gum/candy
- Glass containers or bottles
- Pretend weapons (guns, knives, swords etc.)

COUNCIL OAK PRESCHOOL PLAYGROUND GUIDELINES AND WALKWAY GUIDELINES

Please follow these playground guidelines when playing on the playground before and after school. This will keep the rules consistent for the children when they are in our care.

- **Children should walk to and from the facility in close proximity of their parent**
- **Our campus is a high traffic area. Please be alert and use caution when exiting vehicles and traveling through our parking lot.**
- Children are not allowed to climb on the fencing around the outside perimeter of the facility or playground area.
- Children are not allowed to climb on the perimeter of the fountain at any time.
- Tree climbing is not allowed.
- Outside playground equipment must not be moved – pails, shovels, trucks, etc. must be placed in their proper space after using.
- Rocks are not to be thrown.
- Wood chips are not to be thrown.

- Gates into the playground area are to be closed.
- Sand Pit is off-limits during and after school hours.
- **Equipment is designed to be used a certain way – please maintain this with your child.**

SCHOLASTIC BOOK CLUB

Every year, Council Oak participates in the Scholastic Book Club Program. It is a wonderful way for you to order age appropriate reading materials at good prices and the school benefits by earning points from the amount of books ordered.

We will send home a book order about every six weeks. If you wish to order any items, orders can be placed and paid for online using code P682Z. Orders are received in about 8-10 work days and books will be delivered to our child's classroom. Thank you for your support in helping Council Oak to receive free educational items that we can order with our points.

THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING COUNCIL OAK PRESCHOOL

If situations occur that require amending any portion of these written policies, families of currently enrolled students will be notified in writing.

We are honored that you have chosen us as your family's preschool! We welcome you to visit any time during our hours of operation to observe your child or participate in any of the school's activities.

Our Director and/or Assistant Director are available any day during our normal operational hours to discuss any questions or concerns that parents might have about their child or our school's policies and procedures. Please stop by the office, email or call us – we are happy to help!

