

# Children's Day In

## Nursery School and Traditional Preschool Parent Handbook



**Meridian Street  
United Methodist Church**

**5500 North Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46208  
317.253.0472**

**Christy Whaley, Director  
cwhaley@meridianstreet.org**

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## **Children's Day In Important Phone Numbers**

CDI Director, Christy Whaley	317-253-0472
CDI Email cwhaley@meridianstreet.org	
Medical, law enforcement and fire emergencies	911
Indiana Poison Control	1-800-382-9097
Meridian St. UMC main phone number	317-253-3237
Meridian St. UMC fax number	317-253-5513
Meridian St. UMC website	<a href="http://www.meridianstreet.org">www.meridianstreet.org</a>

## **CDI General Information**

### **Registration Timeline**

CDI will offer open enrollment throughout the year if spots are available. Otherwise we will register for summer and fall sessions as follows.

January	Registration for MSUMC members and current CDI families for summer and fall
February	Open registration for non-church members and new families not currently enrolled in CDI
March	Enrollment confirmation forms mailed or notification of wait pool placement.

### **Enrollment**

The following forms must be completed and turned in by June 1 for summer session or August 1 for fall session or the first day of attendance if starting during the summer or fall session. Registration is first come, first served and once classes fill, waitlists will be formed.

### **Registration and Emergency forms**

Information on this form must be kept up-to-date at all times. This includes persons to contact in case of an emergency and designated individuals who are allowed to pick up your child.

### **Child Profile**

This form is very helpful for the teachers and caregivers to learn more about your child before the start of school.

### **Physician's statement and Immunization form**

This form must be completely filled out and signed by child's physician within one calendar year of the current fall session in September. All immunizations must be up-to-date for the child's age.

### **Custody agreement and visitation schedule**

Children of families in which parents are divorced or separated must have these forms on file with the CDI office.

## **Children's Day In**

The Children's Day In Nursery School & Preschool is a weekday ministry program of Meridian Street United Methodist Church and is a fully inclusive early childhood program with an emphasis on Christian values for children ages 9 months to 3 years old.

### **A Developmentally Appropriate Environment**

Because children learn most effectively in a play-oriented environment, each classroom provides a place that is both safe and developmentally appropriate for the age of the children. Teachers plan for daily experiences by using their knowledge of child development to meet the needs of a variety of temperaments and learning styles. Activities and materials are designed for specific age groups. Topics for units in older classes are those which hold meaning for the child in his/her daily living and which incorporate behavioral and educational goals for each child. As children mature, the classes add more structured dimensions to assure school readiness. Our preschool program includes the following enrichment classes and opportunities at no extra cost to you; special visitors, weekly First Steps in Music, Christian Life Skill and Book Club.

### **School Calendar**

The school year session begins mid- August and ends the Friday before Memorial Day. The CDI Nursery School meets each weekday from 9 am to 2:30 pm with pick up from 2:15 to 2:30 pm. Please refer to the CDI Calendar at the beginning of this Handbook for specific dates.

### **Beginning the School Year**

An open house will be scheduled in mid- August so that children and their families will have an opportunity to visit their classrooms and meet their new teachers.

### **Hours of Operation**

CDI hours of operation are 9 am to 2:30 pm Monday through Friday during the school year and 9 am to 1 pm Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday during the summer. Our classroom doors will not open before 9 am and we ask that your child be picked up no later than 2:30 pm. We cannot allow you to stay in the classrooms once we have closed for the day. You are welcome to use our outdoor playgrounds and athletic field before or after our hours of operation.

In the Nursery School we do not require that you be on time but we strongly suggest that you arrive no later than 9:30 am so your child has an opportunity to transition into the room during free play before we start our more structured activities.

In the Preschool we do ask that you arrive at 9 am so your child does not miss out on the daily Circle Time. During Circle Time, the teachers and children gather in a circle and talk about what they will do that day. Curriculum is introduced and expectations are discussed. We have found that this is a very important part of the day and helps every child start off on the right foot.

## **Parent-Teacher-Child Relationship**

Early childhood education is a three way relationship among the parents, child and the teacher. If there is something that is occurring at home that affects your child, please be sure that your child's teacher is informed. Likewise, if you have a question concerning something at school, we encourage you to contact your child's teacher by leaving a message in the office. A child feels more secure in an open, friendly home-school relationship, and we will work with you in every way to make your child's school experience as enriching as it can be.

## **Separation from Parents**

It is not always easy to say goodbye at drop-off time, either for parents or for children. The beginning of school may bring a few tears as children adjust to their new friends and surroundings, but this usually ceases after a few weeks. Some children have a more difficult time, and you can be assured that the teachers and staff will do everything possible to make this time of transition a time of growth for your child.

We ask that parents spend no more than five minutes in the class before saying goodbye and leaving the room. Returning for "one more goodbye" can confuse and upset a child, so your loving hug with a promise of "I love you, and I'll see you soon!" will help your child to grow in his or her capacity to adapt to new situations in a healthy manner.

## **Parent-Teacher-School Communication**

We send out a weekly electronic newsletter to each family. Important information concerning the school schedule, activities, announcements and curriculum are included; please be sure to read it carefully each week.

Depending on the age of the class, monthly newsletters and calendars may be sent home as well. Special events, weekly themes, enrichment classes and other information are included. Many classes also have "What We Did Today" boards to give you ideas for discussing the day's activities with your child. Monthly curriculum calendars and newsletters are also posted on the CDI Family Information Bulletin Board.

Please check your child's mailbox, cubby, basket or backpack each day for school-wide communications, notes from the teacher, etc.

Should you need to speak with your child's teacher individually, please advise the teacher or leave a note in the office. Teachers will contact you by phone or schedule a time to talk at school. Please do not ask for your child's teacher to take her attention away from the children at drop-off or pick-up time by engaging in conversations that distract from safety and security responsibilities.

Preschool parent-teacher conferences are scheduled mid-year with an additional written assessment at the end of the year. Nursery School parents will receive a written assessment at the end of the school year. More frequent conferences can be scheduled through the office.

## **Security and Safety**

Your child's safety and the security of our entire community are of the utmost importance to us. Therefore, please read and abide by the following guidelines concerning these areas:

### **Parking**

Please park in the marked spaces and not along the sidewalk. We also would request that you do not leave children unattended in your car. Never leave children in a running car.

### **Daily Sign-in and Sign-out**

Parents are required to sign their child in and out each day on the daily sign-in/sign-out sheets located outside the classroom. Please list a legible phone number at which you can be reached. Please make it part of your daily routine to speak with the adult in charge as you pick up your child. She needs to know when your child is leaving, whether it be in the classroom, from an enrichment class, or from the playground.

### **Authorization to pick up a Child**

In addition to a parent, only those persons listed on the registration and emergency form will be allowed to pick up a child. If anyone else needs to pick up a child, the parent must advise the office by phone or in writing. CDI teachers and staff will ask for identification of those with who we are not familiar.

### **Health**

It is very important that we be able to reach parents promptly in case of emergency. Please be sure that all phone numbers, including those of home, office, cellular and other adults authorized to pick up your child, are correct and up-to-date in the office.

### **Illness**

Please do not send your child to school if he/she appears to be ill or overly tired. If a child is not well enough to play outside, he/she should be kept at home. Children with elevated temperatures or who have diarrhea or vomiting will be sent home. Children must be diarrhea, vomiting and fever free (without medication) for 24 hours before returning to school. Parents will be notified if a child becomes ill at school and needs to be picked up within the hour of being called.

Please tell your child's teacher if you have given your child a medication that could cause drowsiness or a change in toilet habits.

If a communicable disease is diagnosed in your child's classroom, parents will be notified. Please keep this information on hand in case your child develops symptoms. If your child develops a communicable disease at home, please notify the school so that we can inform other parents in the class.

## **Clothing for Indoor and Outdoor Play**

Washable play clothes are our school's "uniform." Costumes, dress clothes and other clothes that can impair safe movement or serve as a distraction should not be worn. Shoes should be rubber-soled with laces or Velcro closures. Boots (except for snow boots to be used outside), sandals, slip-on, open-toed and dress shoes are not appropriate for school. Please be sure your child has a change of clothing in their bag in case of food spills, toileting accidents, or messy art projects. All clothes should be marked with the child's name in permanent ink. Children play outside all winter, so please be sure that coats, boots, gloves, hats and long pants are worn as cold weather arrives.

## **Weather-Related School Closings**

CDI programs will observe the same severe weather closings as Washington Township and IPS. If there is a weather-related school delay for one or both school system, CDI will follow the same delay. If either district closes due to weather, CDI will also close. The CDI Facebook page and an electronic email will inform you of any cancellations the morning of the cancellation. Please check there if you have doubts about whether CDI will be in session. No refunds will be given for program cancellations.

## **Birthday Parties**

Birthdays are special days to celebrate! In order to be consistent and mindful of each families means and needs, the following birthday party policies define acceptable celebrations: Parents may bring a simple non edible treat to celebrate a child's birthday. Balloons, candles, favors or decorations are not to be brought. Invitations to outside parties may not be distributed, even if every child is invited. In lieu of party favors, you are welcome to donate a book to your child's classroom. We will provide a special book plate with your child's name and birth date to commemorate the special donation!

## **CDI Parent Council**

The CDI Parent Council consists of parents and the CDI Director who meet monthly in an advisory capacity to assist in assuring the highest quality developmentally appropriate early childhood program. Parents represent all segments and ages of children in the program. Dates for the CDI Parent Council meetings are posted in advance and interested parents are encouraged to attend.

## **Staff**

All staff is hired from recommendations or personal knowledge. We do a criminal background check on every person on the CDI staff.

## **Indiana Juvenile Code**

Our programs observe this code. Any individual who has reason to believe that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect must report this suspected abuse to the proper authorities as per this code and the church's child protection policy.

## **Discipline**

Thankfully, discipline is typically not an issue at CDI. Obviously, we want our school environment to be safe for every teacher and child alike. We also want to reinforce the same positive behaviors that you expect at home. In addition, we want to help curb any negative behavior and be consistent with language and techniques used by each individual family. Most commonly at school we redirect children from one activity that may be causing the negative behavior into another activity. Occasionally children will need a moment or two to collect themselves or just observe appropriate actions before rejoining the activity. Please be sure to tell your child's teacher any language that you may or may not use at home to help effectively communicate with your child. If problems arise that the teachers and family cannot resolve, the director will intercede with a plan of action. Each instance will be dealt with on an individual basis.

## **Insurance**

Meridian Street United Methodist Church carries accident insurance which provides accidental death and dismemberment coverage and medical expense coverage for all children while attending the weekday program sessions, subject to its limitations.

## **Grievance Procedure**

In the event that you have an issue or concern regarding your child and/or our program, please bring it to the attention of the Program Director at your earliest convenience. We will work with you to resolve whatever issues and concerns that you may have in the strictest confidence.

## **Special Items to Remember**

1. Children should not bring gum, candy, money, cough drops, balloons, toy weapons or valuables to school.
2. Children should eat breakfast before coming to school. Snacks are generally served in the morning in the Nursery School and in the afternoon in the Preschool.
3. The school closes at 2:30 pm. Parents, teachers and staff should be able to leave the building at that time. Please allow time to pay tuition and talk with staff and friends prior to 2:30 or outside on the playground after the school has closed.
4. Please notify the office of any changes in address, phone, email, immunization status or family concerns that affect a child.
5. Never leave a child unattended in the building or on the playground. If you arrive when the class is in another part of the building, walk your child to that class and hand him/her over to the teacher in charge.
6. Please call when your child is ill or will not be in school for the day.



## **For the older children:**

### **What to Bring**

Preschool children are requested to bring a “sit upon” (hand towel) with their name clearly visible for use at circle times. These will stay at school for the year. We also ask that you bring the following items each clearly marked with the child’s name: a nutritious cold-pack lunch, a drink cup with lid, a change of clothes and appropriate outdoor clothing.

### **Comfort Toys**

It is the policy of the preschool to discourage children from bringing comfort toys to school. We have sharing days when children are asked to share special items from home if they like.

### **Arrival**

The doors of preschool classes open at 9:00 am each morning. If you arrive before 9:00 am, you are welcome to visit the outdoor playground or the indoor muscle room. Please bring your child to his/her classroom at 9:00 am and not before, as teachers need time to set up the rooms before children enter. Please sign in and be sure that the teacher knows that your child has arrived.

Initially the time of saying goodbye in the morning may be difficult, but children usually adapt to “big school” within three or four weeks and are excited about being at school with their friends. Parents can assist in this transition by staying no longer than five minutes, gently but firmly saying “I love you” and then leaving the room. Remaining outside the room where your child can see you can make his/her integration into the activities in the room more difficult.

If you need to speak with a teacher at length, please let the teacher know so she can phone you and arrange a more convenient time to speak with you. Our teachers want to remain focused on the arrival of the children at drop-off time.

### **Snacks**

All snacks are provided by CDI. We provide water to drink with the snack as well. This should tide everyone over until lunch! Please notify your teacher if there are any food allergies of which she should be aware.

### **Toilet Training**

We do not require that your child be potty trained to attend our preschool. Our teachers will work with you in this very important developmental process but we need your help as well. Please communicate to your child’s teacher what you are doing at home in regards to toilet training. We do reserve the right to request that your child be sent in diapers vs. underwear or pull-ups if there are a number of accidents especially those involving bowel movements. Please be understanding of the fact that our caregivers are caring for a number of children and may not be able to recognize those signals as well as you do. We will do everything we can to reinforce your training methods.

## **For the younger children:**

### **Comfort Toys**

Comfort items to help your child adjust to the day may be brought into the class with them if needed. It is helpful for all children to bring a small blanket, pillow or comfort toy to help with rest time. These need to remain in their bag and will be brought out by the teachers. Please make sure all items are marked with your child's name. All other toys should be left at home.

### **Arrival**

Nursery School classes begin at 9 am. Although we do not require you to be on time for Nursery School we strongly suggest that you bring your child by 9:30 am to help your child transition into the classroom. We find that it is better for each child to have some free play time prior to our more scheduled activities. Children in the Nursery School classes are asked to bring the following items each clearly marked with the child's name: a nutritious cold-pack lunch, a drink cup with lid (please do not freeze juice boxes as they do not thaw in time), a change of clothes, diapers, appropriate outdoor clothing and a blanket or comfort item for naptime. Initially the time of saying goodbye in the morning may be difficult, but children usually adapt to "big school" within three or four weeks and are excited about being at school with their friends. Parents can assist in this transition by staying no longer than five minutes, gently but firmly saying "I love you" and then leaving the room. Remaining outside the room where your child can see you can make his/her integration into the activities in the room more difficult.

### **Morning Activities**

Daily routines include age-appropriate curriculum, circle time, stories, games, music, art, puzzles and outdoor play. Teachers encourage the children to participate in activities which develop their language, social and emotional growth as they interact with others.

### **Snacks**

A snack will be provided mid-morning each day with water. Typical snacks include cheerios, Cheezits, animal crackers and pretzels. Please notify your teacher if there are food allergies of which she should be aware.

### **Naptime**

Following lunch, children have a quiet transition to naptime. Soft music, a blanket from home and the gentle voice from our teachers make this a time to unwind from the morning's activity. Parents are requested to pick up at 12:45 pm before naptime begins if you do not plan for your child to stay until the 2:15-2:30 pm dismissal time.

### **Toilet Training**

Our teachers will work with you in this very important developmental process but we need your help as well. Please communicate to your child's teacher what you are doing at home in regards to toilet training. We do reserve the right to request that your child be sent in diapers vs. underwear or pull-ups if there are a number of accidents especially those involving bowel movements. Please be understanding of the fact that our caregivers are caring for a number of children and may not be able to recognize those signals as well as you do. We will do everything we can to reinforce your training methods.

## **Tuition Policies**

1. All registration fees and tuition paid in advance are non-refundable and non-transferable unless moving out of Marion County and the contiguous counties.
2. August tuition will be billed on June 1 and due on June 15th. After this date, all unsecured positions will be released to the next person on our waiting list. All other monthly tuition payments are due by the 1st of the month. A \$5.00 late fee is added per child after the 1st of the month for the first late payment and the late fee increases with each late payment.
3. If you are unable to pay your tuition, please contact the CDI office to work out a payment plan. If you are unable to work out or honor a payment plan we will have to ask you to leave the program.
4. There will be a \$25 charge on all returned checks, payable in cash or a certified check.
5. Tuition checks should be made payable to MSUMC-CDI and brought or mailed to the CDI office at MSUMC.
6. No refunds will be made if the school is closed due to unavoidable circumstances such as bad weather or building maintenance problems.
7. Thirty days written notice is required for a child's withdrawal from the program. Parents are responsible for the entire amount of tuition through the thirty day period.

## **Dismissal and Late Pick-up Fees**

Nursery School classes end at 2:30 pm. Parents sign their children out at the room and pick up their belongings. Children who have not been picked up by 2:30 pm will be taken to the office. Parents will be called at that time and late fees begin, a \$1.00/ per minute charge per child for children that remain after the designated pick up time. After the third late pick-up, late fees will be doubled. In case of a true emergency when tardiness cannot be avoided, the office must be notified as soon as possible as to when pick-up can be expected.

## Receipt for CDI Parent Handbook

I have received my copy of the MSUMC Children's Day In Parent Handbook. I agree to read it and keep it for future reference. I agree to abide by all the procedures and policies as stated in the handbook.

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Full Name (print)

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Signature

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Child's Name

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Date