

wonder awhile nursery school

58 Main Street, Winthrop, ME 04364 (207) 377-6111



(A Mission of the Winthrop United Methodist Church)

Family Handbook

July 2012
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A Mission of Winthrop United Methodist Church

Our Vision

Wonder Awhile Nursery School vision is a world where community, church, families, staff and caregivers work together to create nurturing environments where all children are accepted as unique and valuable individuals.

Our Mission

Wonder Awhile Nursery School's mission is to provide quality learning opportunities for children. We will meet children's needs by offering a program which encourages children's individual growth and development, support families and include children in the greater Winthrop community.

Our Philosophy

Wonder Awhile Nursery School believes children are unique individuals who learn through creative play. We believe children grow when opportunities are provided to develop social, emotional, language, cognitive, and motor skills. We believe this growth develops in an environment where nurturing adults intentionally encourage peer interactions, assist with problem solving, guide conflict resolution, and support using developmentally appropriate materials. We believe families, staff, caring adults, and the community can work together to support children as they grow. Wonder Awhile Nursery School is a happy place full of wonder and joy for a lifelong love of learning.

WONDERS NEVER CEASE AS LONG AS YOU NEVER CEASE TO
WONDER.

ALLERGIES

Wonder Awhile Nursery School is a **SCENT FREE ZONE**. Many individuals are susceptible to allergic reactions which may be unknown. In an effort to minimize allergic reactions Wonder Awhile will adhere to the Winthrop United Methodist Church's restrictions on scents, perfumes, and cologne.

Wonder Awhile Nursery School may be a **NUT FREE ZONE as needed depending on student enrollment needs. Depending on current students with severe allergies there may be no nuts allowed on premises.**

Wonder Awhile Nursery School may be a **PET DANDER FREE ZONE as needed depending on student enrollment needs. Depending on current students with severe allergies there may be no pets allowed on premises.**

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Children are expected to arrive in a timely manner. It is normal for children to have difficulty separating from family members. We understand this can be a difficult time for you as well. However, we ask that you say goodbye quickly, always acknowledging your child with a hug/kiss/goodbye, using a familiar routine with your child. Children generally become engaged in play or activities very quickly. If you have any concerns once you have dropped off your child, please don't hesitate to call (377-6111) and ask how your child is playing.

Children will be **released only to persons who are authorized and listed on documentation you provide. There must be a reliable person listed in the event of an accident or illness and we cannot contact you.** When your child will be picked up by someone other than yourself, please inform staff verbally or in writing when dropping off your child. Please notify individuals you wish to pick up your child they will be expected to show photo identification. This is to ensure the safety of your child.

ATTENDANCE

If your child is sick and needs to stay home please call Wonder Awhile Nursery School (377-6111) prior to the beginning of his/her session to inform staff your child will be out of school. If your child is out three (3) or more consecutive sessions due to a serious illness a note from your child's doctor may be required. Thank you in advance for assisting us in maintaining a healthy environment.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING POLICY

State of Maine law and the policy of Wonder Awhile Nursery School requires that **all Wonder Awhile Nursery School staff and volunteers are mandated reporters and are required to report all suspected instances of child abuse or neglect.** You may or may not be informed if this occurs, depending on the circumstances.

CHILD ASSESSMENT

Wonder Awhile conducts assessment on children attending two times a year, or more frequently as needed depending on children attending. The first checklist takes place in October and are shared with families during Parent-Teacher Conferences. Information is sent home at that time. Any questions can be directed to the Director. The second checklist is sent home in April. Please feel free to speak with a teacher at other times if you have any concerns or questions regarding your child's development.

CLASSROOM DESCRIPTION

Wonder Awhile Nursery School provides a nurturing classroom experience for children three (3) to six (6) years old. Children learn to play and interact with other children in a social setting while building independence and developing self-help skills. Children work on developmental goals set for each child on an individual basis. Goals include social skills (sharing and understanding emotions), cognitive skills (recognizing shapes, colors, letters, conflict resolution, and problem solving), and motor skills (running, climbing, cutting, writing). Sensory play, imagination, movement, creativity, books, stories, finger plays and songs are embedded into daily activities. We also have sound reduction panels in each classroom to reduce sound vibrations which helps create a calm learning environment.

CLEANLINESS/HYGIENE

We do our best to maintain strict cleanliness and hygiene standards. Children's hands are washed before and after meals/snacks and after toileting. Children are expected to brush their teeth after a meal/snack. All employees are required to wash their hands frequently. Children use separate cups, plates, bowls and utensils that have been thoroughly washed. We disinfect and clean areas throughout the day.

CLOSINGS

You will be given a calendar that shows the school calendar for Wonder Awhile Nursery School. In the event of public school closures due to weather, we follow their Winthrop's schedule (**AOS # 97**). When there is a two hour delay due to inclement weather, there will be **NO MORNING SESSION**. When there is an early release, there is **NO AFTERNOON SESSION**.

CLOTHING

We like to have fun and get messy. Children need to be dressed for the appropriate time of year. A change of clothes should be in your child's backpack at all times. In the winter children need to have a jacket, snow pants, boots, hats and mittens. An extra sweatshirt may be needed during the spring and fall as weather and temperature change frequently.

COMMUNICATION

Good communication is very important in the care and education of your child. We want to be sure we can share any concerns or questions that arise openly with parents/caregivers. We welcome questions, feedback or discussions of any kind that are intended to have a positive outcome for your child(ren). Some issues will need to be discussed in a private setting at a conveniently scheduled time that will not affect the care and education of all children. Children are provided Communication Folders to aid in communication. Please feel free to put notes in your child's folder. Phone calls, messages through Facebook and individual conversations are also welcome.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is essential. Please refrain from sharing information regarding other children or families in or out of Wonder Awhile Nursery School. It is not acceptable to discuss other children with friends, family or other professionals. Please feel comfortable to speak with a teacher if you have any concerns regarding your child or programming. The director will speak with you if we have any concerns.

CONTRACT AND PAYMENT

Families participating in Wonder Awhile Nursery School will receive a Tuition Contract which needs to be signed and returned to the Wonder Awhile Nursery School. The contract will include days and times to expect child(ren) in our program, standard rates and payment policies, and families signatures. The current tuition is:

Four (4) sessions a week is \$2070.00 or \$230.00 per month for nine (9) months.

Three (3) days a week is \$1620.00 or \$180.00 per month for nine (9) months.

Two (2) sessions a week is \$1170.00 or \$130.00 per month for nine (9) months.

Student receiving a scholarship is \$630.00 or \$70.00 per month for nine (9) months for two (2) sessions per week.

CPR/FIRST AID

All staff working directly with children is certified in CPR and first aid.

DAILY SCHEDULE

The daily schedule is posted in each classroom. Please ask a teacher if you have any questions about your child's day

EMERGENCY EVACUATION

In the event we have to evacuate the building all children and employees will go to the Kennebec Savings Bank, located at 84 Main Street. Families/caregivers will be contacted and safe transportation will be arranged for all children to return home.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

The Office and First Aid Kit have emergency information for each child attending. The emergency information will accompany staff when the class leaves the building for outside play, field trips, fire drills, and building evacuations. This information needs to be current and accurate. If any of the numbers that you have provided us as contacts change, please give us new numbers as soon as possible. **Children without updated information may not be able to return until we have current information.** This is a safety issue for you and your child.

ENROLLMENT

There are several types of documentation that Wonder Awhile Nursery School requires before your child can begin care or services. This is to ensure your child is being cared for in the best way possible and to comply with our record keeping requirements. All forms are reviewed a few times a year and you may be asked to update some information. If you know of any changes to the information you have provided please let us know of the changes as soon as possible. The forms we require include:

Child's Medical Information/Copy of Immunizations

Permission for Picture/Video Taking

Permission for Walking Trips

Permission to apply sunscreen, diaper cream, lip balm and bug spray

Permission to participate in Holiday Celebrations

Tuition Contract

If you have any questions regarding the completion of these forms, please feel free to ask.

Occasionally there is a need to create a Wait List. Students will be listed on a first come first serve basis and enrolled as quickly as possible

If you have any questions regarding the completion of these forms, please feel free to contact Jane Brennan.

ENVIRONMENTAL AIR QUALITY

Wonder Awhile Nursery School prohibits the use of any tobacco product on all premises in order to provide and maintain a safe and healthy environment. The law defines smoking as the “act of lighting, smoking or carrying a lighted or smoldering cigar, cigarette or pipe of any kind.” In addition, the use of smokeless tobacco, such as chewing tobacco and snuff is prohibited.

Chemical compositions in many agents (including fragrances found in personal care items) and residual smoke pose varying health risks to some people. Therefore, products such as perfumes, cologne and heavily scented products such as air fresheners and potpourri should be used conservatively. In some cases, it may be necessary to prohibit such products altogether when the health of an individual may be compromised.

FIRE DRILLS

We are required by law to do one fire drill per month. We vary the times and days these occur for all children to be knowledgeable about the process.

FIRST AID KITS

Wonder Awhile has several first aid kits stored out of reach of all children. A First Aid kit is located in an emergency backpack near exit door for quick and easy access. The kits are supplied with bandages, gloves, gauze, tape, cleaning solutions and ointment for minor cuts. The kits are stocked on a regular basis to ensure all needed materials are available.

GUIDANCE/DISCIPLINE

Wonder Awhile Nursery School maintains a positive guidance policy, which focuses on prevention, redirection, consistency and firmness. The children are explained the rules and expectations frequently to remain familiar with them. We guide children by praising positive behaviors, phrasing requests in a positive, manner, and using knowledge of individual children to assist them in making appropriate choices of behavior. Please keep in mind that there WILL be disagreements between children. Young children have a hard time expressing their feelings and we will help support them using their words and expressing their feelings. Sometimes they hit, throw toys, bite, etc. Staff will try to prevent these situations, redirect the children, discuss inappropriate behavior and sometimes withdraw privileges based on what would be a natural, logical consequence. Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES will there be any spanking, physical abuse, verbal abuse, name calling or corporal punishment. Neither food nor sleep will ever be withheld from children as a means of punishment.

It is our responsibility to keep your child safe as well as keeping other children safe. Any situation that is unsafe or harmful to the child, other children or staff will be documented. If a behavior continues on a regular basis a meeting will be scheduled with families to determine a plan of action. Our goal is for every child to be supported in the environment where he/she will be successful.

HEALTHY CHILD POLICY

Your child’s health and safety, as well as the health and safety of other children are a matter of major importance to all of us. Therefore, staff is instructed to closely observe children and will contact you if they have any concerns. Information will be offered to guide you in deciding what is best for your child. However, children with symptoms from the following list are unable to attend or remain in child care. Please make alternate arrangements, in advance, in case your child is sick.

In order to provide a healthy environment, a child may be sent home because of illness. You will be notified immediately when your child has a sign or symptom that:

Prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities or

Results in a greater care need than Wonder Awhile Nursery School staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.

As examples, children with the following conditions should be kept home, and will be sent home if the guidelines below are observed:

Chicken Pox	Must stay home until 6 days after onset of rash or until all sores have dried and crusted.
Conjunctivitis	(also known as "Pink Eye") Children with purulent conjunctivitis will be excluded from programs until they have been examined by their healthcare provider and cleared for readmission to the Wonder Awhile Nursery School.
Cough	Respiratory distress with elevated temperature (of 101 degrees or higher), with symptoms such as high pitched whoop, shortness of breath or coughing up colored mucus.
Diaper Area	A rash that is blistered, infected, or oozing fluid.
Diarrhea	Children with uncontrolled diarrhea that is frequent and/or not contained in a diaper, who have elevated temperature of 101 degrees or higher, abdominal discomfort, or vomiting and signs of dehydration will be sent home.
Fever	Oral temperature 101 degrees F or greater, auxiliary (armpit) temperature of 100 degrees F or greater; accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness. Oral temperature will not be taken on children younger than 3 years of age. Only digital ear thermometers will be used.
Hepatitis A virus	Must stay home until one (1) week after the onset of illness or as directed by the health department when passive immunoprophylaxis (currently, immune serum globulin) has been administered to appropriate children and staff.
Impetigo	Must stay home until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated.
Measles	Must stay home until six (6) days after onset of rash.
Mouth Sores	Mouth sores accompanied by drooling and/or fever (unless a health care provider determines the condition is noninfectious).
Mumps	Excluded until nine (9) days after onset of gland swelling.
Nasal Discharge	Green or yellow drainage from the child's nose until seen by a physician or current documentation of allergies, sinusitis, etc.
Pertussis	Must stay home until five (5) days of appropriate antibiotic treatment have been completed.
Possible severe illness	Unusual lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing or wheezing.
Rash	Unexplained raised, reddened, or itchy areas. Rash with fever or change in behavior.
Rubella	Must stay home until six (6) days after onset of rash.
Scabies, head lice, Or other infestations	Families must initiate treatment. Children with head lice will not be

excluded from attending Wonder Awhile Nursery School. Staff will assist families in proper treatment of reducing lice exposure.

Strep throat or other

Streptococcal infection Must stay home until 24 hours after the initial antibiotic treatment and has no fever.

Tuberculosis Must stay home until a health care provider or health official states that the child can return.

Vomiting Illness Two or more episodes of vomiting in the previous 24 hours or once during the program day.

A diagnosis of infectious disease which prevents a child from attending the Wonder Awhile Nursery School can only be made by a licensed health care provider. A note from the health care provider is necessary in order to return. Please notify staff if your child is diagnosed with an infectious disease so that we may observe other children for signs/symptoms and/or notify other parents, if necessary.

Staff is not expected to determine which illnesses may be serious. You and your healthcare provider are responsible for these decisions. You will be informed promptly when your child is found to have a fever while attending programming at the Wonder Awhile Nursery School.

If your child becomes ill during the day, he or she will be moved to a quiet space and you will be asked to pick-up your child. If we are unable to reach you if your child is sick, we will contact one of your emergency contacts provided on the in-take form. In the event of an emergency and we are unable to contact an individual on the emergency contact form, we will seek medical attention deemed necessary.

It is extremely important that we are able to contact somebody on your contact list at all times of the day when your child is in our care. Updating of contact information will be required every six months.

Wonder Awhile Nursery School has provided you with information on communicable diseases such as chicken pox and lice as an Appendix at the back of this Handbook. In the case of extremely contagious diseases, a physician's note of approval is required before a child can return to Wonder Awhile Nursery School.

We may request that you have your child seen by your doctor. Please tell the doctor that your child is in a preschool setting. This will help the doctor more clearly diagnose your child's illness, as well as determine if your child is infectious and whether he or she may attend Wonder Awhile Nursery School. If your child is out for 3 or more consecutive sessions we may request a note from your child's doctor saying they can return.

Hand washing is the most important and most effective means of preventing infections. Our staff and children wash hands frequently. Classroom equipment and toys are also sanitized frequently.

Thank you for taking the time and consideration in reading and following these child participation guidelines and policies. By partnering together we can keep your child's illnesses to a minimum!

HOURS OF OPERATION

8:30 am – 11:00 am & 12:00 pm – 2:30 pm during the school calendar year

IMMUNIZATION RECORDS

Maine State Child Care licensing regulations require an up-to-date immunization record for all enrolled children, unless exempted for a sincere religious or philosophical belief. An **exemption statement** must be written and signed yearly by the parent/legal guardian and by the child's doctor. If a Mediation Exemption exists it will be kept in your child's record. Your child **will not** be allowed to attend the Wonder Awhile Nursery School if a current immunization record and/or exemption statement is not on file.

INDOOR/OUTDOOR PLAY

Wonder Awhile Nursery School provides a variety of age and developmentally appropriate toys for indoor and outdoor play. Toys are rotated so that children can experience new opportunities. Children will be taught how to play with toys and be responsible for picking up toys. A daily schedule is followed. Children participate in open learning time, circle time, table top activities, art and crafts, pre-reading, story time, writing, movement, sensory and self-help activities. We play outdoors every day when weather permits. The activities listed previously will take place inside and outside. Please make sure that your child is dressed appropriately for outdoor play at all times of the year. Our outdoor play time ranges from 10-45minutes each morning and afternoon depending on the weather. We do not go outside when the temperature is below 20 degrees (including wind chill) or over 90 degrees.

INCIDENTS AND ACCIDENTS

All incidents and accidents are documented and families receive written documentation. A copy of the documentation is placed in the child's file.

LICENSING

Wonder Awhile Nursery School meets the Nursery School guidelines as proposed by the State of Maine. A licensing worker visits annually to make sure we are in compliance. Workers also may drop-in for an inspection at any time throughout the school year. Our License is posted in the office.

MEALS

All meals are age appropriate and served family style. Children learn to serve themselves from child-sized dishes and are encouraged to try new foods. Food preparation is part of classroom planning and curriculum. Grace is said prior to eating snack.

Families provide creative, healthy food to children and believe it is important for children to independently choose how much food they eat. In our program, children learn to experiment with new foods while eating with their friends, teachers, parents, as well as through food preparation and other learning activities. We never force a child to finish what is on his/her plate, however, we do encourage each child to try one or two bites of everything. All eating patterns will be communicated to families.

If your child is on a special diet you may be asked to provide any special snacks your child needs. This is to ensure they are getting only foods she/he can have. Any child who has a food allergy has his or her name posted with allergies/restrictions in the office as well as in the classroom. This alerts all staff who prepares snacks and lunches.

Families may contact a teacher to bring in special food for a child's birthday. On these occasions sweets are allowed. All other times we appreciate fruits, veggies, crackers, cheese or other healthier food items.

MEDICATIONS

The Wonder Awhile Nursery School will **only administer medications for children with doctor's notification**. All medication must be in original bottle, have a current filling date, expiration date and instructions defining quantities and frequency. Parent must also sign Permission to Administer Medication form. It is preferred that parents administer the first few doses prior to a child attending Wonder Awhile Nursery School in case of allergic reactions or other side effects. Staff has received training for the use of nebulizers and Epi pens in the event they are needed.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

There will be times and ways you can get involved in your child's education. You are welcomed and encouraged to participate in any or all of these opportunities. Some examples of ways to be involved include:

- Lending objects for activities or curriculum themes
- Reading or telling stories
- Doing activities at home that match what your child(ren) is doing at school
- Helping your child prepare for show and tell
- Visiting and participating in meal time
- Attending special events
- Sharing a special talent or topic of interest
- Board of Directors
- Fundraising Activities

The Wonder Awhile Nursery School has an open door policy. If you would like to spend time in the classroom talk with your child's teacher.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Children are expected to have a full change of clothes (socks, underwear, shirt, pants) in their backpack in the event of a spill or an accident. Please check occasionally to ensure clothing is appropriate for the weather and are the correct size, as children grow continuously. Providing an extra sweatshirt or sweater is also suggested. All personal items **MUST** be marked with your child's name to aid staff in managing your child's belongings.

We ask that children bringing toys from home are willing to share with their classmates. If items are brought to school, please be aware that they may need to be stored in your child's cubby if your child is showing an unwillingness to share. Wonder Awhile Nursery School is not responsible for the lost or broken items.

PETS

Wonder Awhile Nursery School may have classroom pets. Pets assist in teaching responsibilities while allowing children experiences to touch, learn and share their experiences. This will be dependent on current children enrolled and their pet dander concerns.

PHOTOGRAPHY SOCIAL MEDIA

Wonder Awhile Nursery School takes photo of children. Families are required to fill out paperwork to inform staff if these pictures can be shared on our Facebook page. A family's initial information can be changed at any time throughout the school year. Staff may contact family members through phone calls or texts as deemed necessary.

REFERRAL PROCESS

Wonder Awhile Nursery School participates in the State of Maine Child Find Program. We assist the program in finding children who may need further child assessment or at risk for becoming developmentally behind same aged peers. We will always speak with family members with any concerns initially. If family members agree to further assessment, staff will guide families through the assessment process (Child Development Services) and attend all meetings determined by other professionals. Wonder Awhile allows speech therapists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists and any other professions who help children in our care into our classrooms.

SAFE SANCTARY

Wonder Awhile Nursery School adheres to the Winthrop United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuary Policy. This policy ensures two staff members will be present when children are in attendance. Anyone wishing to review the policy can ask a teacher or a church member for a copy

SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

Wonder Awhile Nursery School provides a school year calendar to each child at the beginning of the year. It is placed in the back of each child's Communication Folder. Additional copies are sent home for families to have for a quick reference in homes. Additional copies can be provided for other family members as needed. Please speak with a teacher for additional copies.

SUBSTITUTES

Occasionally Wonder Awhile staff needs to miss scheduled work sessions. We try to make appointments around school vacations or later in the afternoon. However, at times that is not possible. Family members may need to be asked to volunteer to help with coverage. If an extended period of time needs to be covered, there are several retired teachers within the church congregation who may be called upon to assist with coverage. Thanks in advance to all who assist with this coverage.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

All emergency telephone numbers, including the Health Consultant, local hospitals, poison control and the Maine Department of Health and Human Services are posted in classrooms and at the Church Office. "911" will be dialed in the event of fire, police or medical emergencies.

TUITION PAYMENTS

Tuition is expected at the first week of each month. If payment is not received in a timely manner child(ren) will not be permitted to attend until payment is received. Checks will be made payable to Wonder Awhile Nursery School. Please put your child's name in the Memo Spot. The current tuition payments are as follows:

Four (4) sessions a week is \$2070.00 or \$230.00 per month for nine (9) months.

Three (3) days a week is \$1620.00 or \$180.00 per month for nine (9) months.

Two (2) sessions a week is \$1170.00 or \$130.00 per month for nine (9) months.

Student receiving a scholarship is \$630.00 or \$70.00 per month for nine (9) months for two (2) sessions per week.

Appendix