

Dear preschool families,

Thank you so much for entrusting your child to our care. We truly value you and your family and are looking forward to a wonderful year of learning and fun.

Paradise Hills United Methodist Church has just completed their long awaited landscape project. This landscaping project cost the church a lot of money and countless hours of work. The Church members all voted on the landscape design and the design chosen was unanimous. However, we realize that the newly installed landscaping is not conducive for our preschoolers to be running around and playing. In respect for the church and the safety of your children we would greatly appreciate it if you would not let your children run around and play in the front of the preschool. Therefore, in an effort to continue to offer you an opportunity to congregate afterschool we have decided to open up our playground on a trial basis from 1:35 pm – 1:55pm. We truly hope that this is an acceptable compromise for you and your family.

Below is a list of guidelines as well as an afterschool playground agreement that must be signed if you decide you would like to congregate in our playground afterschool. Please let us know if you have any questions, comments, or suggestions. You are also welcome to write a letter to the Preschool Board with comments, questions, or concerns. Our door is always open. We value your input. Thank you for your understanding.

### **Philosophy**

Outdoor play is vital for healthy development in children and adults. Expansive outdoor play allows children to be creative and have fun. They are learning about their growing bodies and developing strong large and small motor skills. As adults, we must balance these important developmental tasks against the risks for accidents that exist for all children. For this reason, we have developed a set of rules for all children on the playground at PHUMC Preschool.

### **Teaching and Explaining Rules**

We understand that you may have different rules for your child(ren). We, too, have enforced different rules for our own children in different places and contexts. The rules we have selected are based on our experiences in supervising groups of children at the PHUMC Preschool facility.

Children are capable of learning that there are different expectations for different places. They also benefit from consistency within a specific context. You can explain that these are the rules at PHUMC Preschool but at home or in the park you they may have different rules.

### **When There Isn't a Rule**

We have tried to keep our list of rules to a minimum and of course our creative children will develop new ways of playing that are not safe. If you are in doubt about an activity or game, ask yourself:

Is the child learning?

Is the activity safe?

Is the activity friendly?

If the answers to these questions are negative, then you will need to intervene by redirecting or by stopping the activity. Children will not always be happy with our decisions. Their safety is our primary responsibility.

### **Keeping Children Safe**

**Your most important task is to monitor all play areas constantly.** You must be close enough to children in the play yard to redirect or stop dangerous activities immediately. If your hands can't reach the children, your words will not either. When you are on the play yard, move to where the children are. Be aware of the other adults on the play yard and choose a location that increases coverage. Always keep your eyes on the children, even if you are talking to another adult. Save lengthy or detailed conversations for a time when you are not supervising children.

**Wear shoes outside.** We love being barefoot and we know children do too. Unfortunately, our very public play yard is not safe for barefoot play. Please help by having your children wear shoes that are comfortable for running, climbing, and jumping.

**Climbing:** Tables, chairs, and playhouses are not designed for climbing. We can help children learn to climb safely by letting them climb on the play structure unassisted while we spot. Lifting a child higher than s/he can climb alone deprives her/him of a learning opportunity and potentially puts the child at greater risk of falling.

**Slide down feet first on the slides.** Children can slide on their bottoms or on their bellies as long as their feet hit the ground first. Slides are for sliding down not climbing up.. When adults or older siblings slide with younger children, the higher mass of the adult/older child puts the child at greater risk for injury; for this reason, only children ages 2-5 are allowed on the slides and equipment at PHUMC Preschool.

**Sand stays in the sandbox. Adults and should share responsibility for sweeping up the sidewalks.**

**Sticks are for building, drawing, decorating, and collecting.** Sticks make wonderful toys. We want to support children who are using sticks to draw in the sand, decorate sand castles, or build structures. Children can also admire the beauty and shapes of the sticks that fall in our yard. However, sticks, can also be used as weapons. Stick play must be supervised carefully so it can be redirected if sticks are used in a dangerous fashion. Fighting each other with sticks is never acceptable.

Rocks, sticks, sand, bark, etc.. should not ever be thrown. Children who are throwing these things should be stopped and redirected immediately.

- MAXIMUM CAPACITY 49 CHILDREN
- ENTER THE BUILDING ONLY FOR BATHROOM/WATER ONLY
- THE AFTER SCHOOL DESIGNATED BATHROOMS ARE THE PRE-K STAFF BATHROOMS LOCATED IN THE PRE-K HALLWAY. CHILDREN MUST BE ESCORTED TO THE BATHROOM/WATER FOUNTAIN BY THEIR PARENTS OR GUARDIANS ONLY
- CHILDREN MUST BE SUPERVISED AT ALL TIMES
- AFTERSCHOOL PLAYGROUND HOURS ARE M-F 1:35 PM – 1:55 PM
- DURING OUR PRESCHOOL DAY WE DO NOT ALLOW THE YOUNGER CHILDREN ON THE PLAYGROUND AT THE SAME TIME WITH THE OLDER CHILDREN. THERE IS A RISK INVOLVED WHEN OLDER CHILDREN ARE PLAYING IN THE SAME AREA AS YOUNGER CHILDREN
- WE ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR SUPERVISING CHILDREN AFTER 1:30PM OR LIABLE FOR INJURIES THAT OCCUR AFTER 1:30PM. DURING AFTERSCHOOL HOURS THE PARENT OR GUARDIAN IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR CHILD'S SAFETY

PLAYGROUND AGREEMENT MUST BE SIGNED PRIOR TO AFTERSCHOOL PLAYGROUND USE

Thank you all so much for your continued support.

## **PHUMC PRESCHOOL PLAYGROUND AGREEMENT**

I have read and I agree to abide by the rules set forth by PHUMC Preschool stated in afterschool playground agreement.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_