



2022-2023 Family Handbook

Circle of Life Cooperative Preschool
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The Circle of Life Cooperative Preschool (CLC) is a program under the umbrella of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Frederick (UUCF), a non-profit organization in Frederick, Maryland. The Congregation approved the CLC start up plan in December 2004 and the first class of children was enrolled September 2005.

The CLC philosophy weaves the affirmations of Unitarian Universalism into a developmentally appropriate and cooperative environment that promotes healthy, happy children. A developmentally appropriate environment is based on an understanding of child development. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has set standards to establish such an environment and CLC fully supports and strives to achieve these standards. Our philosophy recognizes the individuality of every child and as such, we seek to create a safe, caring, and stimulating environment to meet the unique needs of each child.

The cooperative nature of the CLC reflects our acknowledgment that in addition to trained staff, parents bring richness to the program and are an integral part of its success. The school and everyone involved benefit from a cooperative environment. Children feel a sense of belonging to a larger community when they are cared for by parents other than their own. Parents are rewarded by

becoming intimately involved in their children's education, and teachers gain personal insight into those they teach when working side by side with parents.

Our goals are:

- To provide quality, ongoing, developmental and educational programming for 3-4 year olds in a weekday program
- To provide a network of support for parents of the children involved within the CLC and UUCF community and to involve CLC parents in the running of the preschool

In coordination with the UUCF, the CLC affirms the Unitarian Universalist Seven Principles:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part of.

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Class Schedule

All preschool classes enroll up to ten students and include both three and four year old students. The classes are:

Grasshoppers Monday - Wednesday 9am - 12pm

Bumblebees Thursday, Friday 9am - 12pm

Bumblehoppers Monday - Friday 9am - 12pm

While this schedule differs from most preschools, it is designed intentionally. Consecutive school days offer the repetition and continuity to help children feel secure and in control of their school experience, to better grasp a weekly unit, and to remember and carry over what they've learned.

Students can elect to attend an optional lunch bunch session once weekly per class on Tuesdays or Thursdays from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. Additional social time and free play occurs during these times, which CLC also utilizes as a fundraiser.

The First Day of School and Beyond: The Logistics

What should my child bring to school on the first day?

- At least two complete and LABELED changes of clothing
- Non-skid socks or light slippers, LABELED
- A backpack to transport items from school (optional)

Also, please bring any forms that have not been turned in yet. No child can be allowed to attend school in Maryland without a completed Health Inventory and Emergency Card on file. If an EpiPen or inhaler has been prescribed for a child, the child's family must provide the school with two EpiPens to keep in class in addition to the medication authorization form completed by your doctor.

What should my child wear?

While there is no official dress code, we ask that children (and adults) not come to class with offensive clothing, including rude pictures or words. Children are asked to wear soft slippers or socks in the classroom. Children should also wear weather appropriate clothing, as we will be outside in most weather.

Can I stay with my child in the classroom?

Yes! Parents are always welcome to stay for class! If you choose to stay in the classroom, please do not socialize with other parents or the teacher. Keep in mind that if you stay in the classroom, you may be asked to help.

Will snacks be provided?

A suggested snack menu will be created for each month. The menu will be posted on the Google Calendar and in the classroom. The parent volunteer in each class is responsible for purchasing/preparing the snack that day. Parents agree to provide healthy, seasonal and organic snacks. CLC provides organic milk and water.

How does lunch bunch work?

Lunch bunch is an optional, prepay or pay-per-use program for preschool students. It is offered once a week for each class. During the lunch bunch hour (12 p.m. – 1 p.m.), children eat the lunch they've brought from home. (These meals must meet all allergy requirements). They also clean up and have unstructured play, stories and songs with the teacher and a parent volunteer. Children will be escorted to and from lunch bunch by an adult at the appropriate

time.

Grasshopper lunch bunch sessions are on Tuesdays, and Bumblebee lunch bunch sessions are on Thursdays. The sessions will be coordinated by the Administrative Director.

What is the inclement weather/teacher absenteeism policy?

If Frederick County Schools are closed, so is Circle of Life.

If Frederick County opens two hours late, CLC will open one hour late, at 10 a.m. In the event of this situation, both the primary parent and the backup will need to arrive at CLC by 9:30 to assist the teacher in readying the classroom for the day.

We will try to send out timely updates in the event of scheduled classes being delayed or cancelled for any reason. We do this via our email list through our Google group. We make every effort to have changes in schedule posted by 7 a.m.; however, it is recommended that all families receive independent updates from the public school system for timely notification in all situations.

To receive up-to-the-minute information on school closings, announcements, and inclement weather news: go to <http://www.fcps.org/> and register for updates with Find out First.

Frederick County Public Schools has additional snow days built into the calendar. If school is closed due to inclement weather, we follow FCPS scheduling policies and will hold school on snow makeup days throughout the year. If school closures due to inclement weather exceed the number of built-in snow days, a decision will be made regarding additional makeup days. If school is closed for a non-weather related issue while FCPS schools are open, we will make up that time (i.e., no power, frozen pipes, etc).

In the event that there is a substitute teacher, both the primary and backup classroom aides will be asked to be present in class to assist. If no substitutes are available, class will be cancelled for the day.

How sick is too sick to attend school?

If your child throws up at school or has an episode of diarrhea, we will notify you as soon as possible. **If your child has had a stomach virus, he/she may attend school 24 hours after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhea. If your child has a fever over 100, he/she may not attend school until he/she is fever-free for 24 hours.**

If nasal discharge is accompanied by a fever, your child is probably too sick to attend school. If your child is sick enough to need antibiotics, he/she may return to school after 24 hours on the medication.

In general, if your child is feeling terrible, he/she will be better off at home. He/she will most likely recover faster when given time to rest. The rest of the class will miss our sick friend--though we encourage sharing, we try not to share germs.

Please send an email via the Google group if your child will miss a day of school. If you are scheduled to be the assistant and you or your child is sick, call the back-up parent to cover for you.

When is my tuition payment due?

Tuition is due on the first of the month and is paid one month in advance. September tuition and supply fee are due on July 1.

The payment schedule is as follows:

Month Due date	Month Due date
Sept. tuition due June 1	Feb. tuition due Jan. 1
Oct. tuition due Sept. 1	March tuition due Feb. 1
Nov. tuition due Oct. 1	April tuition due Mar. 1
Dec. tuition due Nov. 1	May tuition due April 1
Jan. tuition due Dec. 1	

Tuition fees are as follows:

Program	Tuition Per Month	Tuition Per Year
2-day program	\$190.00	\$1710.00
3-day program	\$252.00	\$2268.00
5-day program	\$375.00	\$3375.00

Other fees:

- Enrollment fee (for new students): \$50.00
- Discounted enrollment fee (for returning families,UUCF & Kol Ami): \$25.00

- Supply fee: Bumblehopper: \$125, Grasshopper: \$90, Bumblebee: \$75

Please make your check payable to UUCF and either mail to the church to the attention of CLC or place in the black lockbox outside the office. On the memo line of your check, please include the following:

- Your child's full name
- Your child's class
- The month you are paying for
- For example – "Bob Smith, 3-day, September"

In the Classroom: What my Child is Learning

What skills will my child learn this year?

Our children's preschool years are a critical time in the development of social skills and emotional skills. It is during this time that children will learn how to be and make friends, how to solve problems, how to express emotions in a healthy way, and how to join in play. Studies support the link between well-grounded socio-emotional learning and future academic success and financial security.

CLC's curriculum is play-based and introduces pre- and early-reading and math skills using a holistic approach to learning and development that is designed to meet the social, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual needs of the child. Principles of respect, equity, justice, and compassion are interwoven through structured lessons and free play.

What is the daily schedule in the classroom?

The approximate daily morning preschool agenda is as follows:

8:50-9:05 Free Play

9:05-9:35 Opening Circle

9:35-10:15 Free Play/Learning Activity

10:15-10:35 Circle Time

10:35-11:10 Daily snack is served

11:10-11:50 Outdoor Play

11:50-12:00 End of Day Circle and Dismissal

How is discipline handled at CLC?

Discipline is a process of learning self-control, respect for others and responsibility. To help children learn this process, the following guidelines are in

place at preschool:

- Children assist with making clear and concise rules and limits. At the beginning of the school year students participate in defining what their appropriate behavior should be.
- Adults remind children of expectations, rules, and limits.
- Adults anticipate and redirect inappropriate behaviors.
- Children are spoken to in a friendly (never angry) but firm voice when necessary. Adults emphasize that it is the behavior, and not the child, that needs correction.
- Adults help children use words to express anger, resolve conflicts, and express needs and desires.
- Adults assist children in their conflict resolution process to make amends. Some examples may include rebuilding the destroyed block tower together or finding a way to take turns with the disputed toy.
- If inappropriate behaviors persist, adults may physically remove a child from an activity, and then help the child to find an appropriate activity in which to engage.
- If a child physically hurts another child, the injured child will be comforted by an adult and the involved child. Instead of giving a forced apology, the child who hurt the friend must help the other child feel better or watch the adult to learn how to comfort a friend. Examples might be bringing a tissue to wipe away tears, helping to hold an ice pack, bringing a comfort object, or giving a caring hug. Both will then be assisted with a conflict resolution process, and the concerned parents will be informed at the end of the session.
- A conference will be held with parents if serious inappropriate behaviors continue.
- Just as all children are different, each child responds best to a different method of communicating a reminder of appropriate behavior. Some children are physical and require a high level of physical contact in order to reach their best potential; some children are extremely cerebral and only require verbal reminders or a look for effective communication. It is up to the teacher to determine the best method of positive communication

for each child as an individual.

- Ultimately, a child's cognitive and social development is best encouraged through collaboration, discussion, and discovering the how and why of their actions. Classroom discipline is an opportunity for learning appropriate behavior, learning to work out a problem, learning natural and appropriate consequences, and caring for others.

Parent Responsibilities: CLC's Cooperative Model

What is the parent council?

Every family that enrolls a child in CLC is automatically a member of the CLC parent council. Parent council meets each month on an agreed day and time at the church. Some meetings may be held online/via phone. It is MANDATORY that at least one parent from each family attend every meeting. These meetings are important, as ideas are generated, new policies and procedures are discussed, and items are voted on. Meeting agendas and meeting minutes are shared with the Google group. Parent council members are asked to contact the parent council chair with any agenda items at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. We make every attempt to keep meetings under an hour, and following the agenda and notifying the chair helps to keep the meetings timely.

As meeting attendance is compulsory, families missing more than two meetings per school year will be expected to increase their contributions in other ways. Parents will work with the Parent Council Chair and Administrative Director if necessary to find additional ways to support the school.

What is the structure of the Parent Council?

As above, all CLC parents are Parent Council committee members. Additionally, some Parent Council members sign up to be members of the Board of the Parent Council. The Board meets on an "as needed" basis to discuss/resolve issues that may arise. These Board positions are as follows:

CLC Board Chair: (*elected*) Schedules, prepares agendas for and leads Parent Council and Board meetings, emails parents regarding important matters, ensures an equitable distribution of responsibility among Parent Council members, and ensures that Parent Council members are fulfilling their duties.

Administrative Director: (*appointed*) Keeps track of all CLC files, ensures that all parent/child/facility forms are up to date, files necessary documentation with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), is present for MSDE inspection, acts as a liaison to UUCF, ensures that the teacher is maintaining her

certification, responds to CLC emails, and gives tours to prospective families (this position requires work prior to the start of the school year), manages the Google group files and members (in conjunction with the Webmaster), works with UUCF secretary to ensure that all CLC events are on the UUCF calendar, and coordinates with the OCC regarding compliance.

Secretary: *(elected)* Takes minutes at Parent Council and Board meetings and posts minutes on the Google Drive.

Treasurer: *(elected)* Tracks expenses/purchases/income, processes reimbursement requests, works with UUCF treasurer to ensure responsible management of funds, reports state of finances to Parent Council, prepares the draft budget in April for the upcoming school year, and submits it to UUCF for approval.

Marketing Chair: *(elected)* Develops, updates and manages all marketing materials (i.e., brochures, flyers, CLC's website, etc.), distributes/delegates distribution of marketing materials to places other than scheduled marketing events, provides necessary materials for marketing events upon request, and works with Administrative Director to coordinate marketing efforts. 11

Fundraising Chair: *(elected)* Manages CLC fundraising efforts by identifying fundraising opportunities and aligning volunteers, oversees fundraising profits to ensure goals are met, maintains ROI records that can be used for future reference, and works with UUCF to coordinate fundraising events.

Webmaster: *(appointed)* Manages CLC's website, coordinates Google group in conjunction with the Administrative Director, and assists families with navigation of the Google site and utilizing the email list.

Additional positions that are not on the parent council board are: ·

Social Media: *(elected)* Manages CLC's social media presence ·

Volunteer Coordinator: *(elected)* Manages the parent classroom volunteer calendar

· **Snack Coordinator:** *(elected)* Creates the school snack calendar and posts it to the Google Calendar at least one week before the start of a new month. (Can be divided between multiple families)

· **Childcare Coordinator:** *(elected)* Works with UUCF babysitters to arrange childcare for Parent Council meetings

Besides attending meetings, what responsibilities do I have as a Parent Council member?

In addition to attending meetings, parents are also required to participate in

marketing and/or fundraising events/efforts. **In keeping with the cooperative model, all CLC families will share these responsibilities equally.** For example, parents who are serving on board positions will not be expected to participate in as many marketing/fundraising events as those who are not. A list of marketing and fundraising events will be distributed at one of the initial Parent Council meetings and will be posted outside of the classroom in order for families to sign up for events. Some examples of marketing/fundraising events may include open houses, preschool fairs, bake sales, plant sales, tot swaps, etc.

What are my classroom volunteer responsibilities?

One parent from each family must sign up for approximately 1 - 2 primary and back-up days to volunteer in the classroom each month. **The number of days is affected by enrollment and depending on the size of the class parents may need to sign up for additional/less days.** Days required will be determined by the Volunteer Coordinator at the start of the school year. Parents are responsible for signing up for their days on the Google Calendar. If you have not signed up one week prior to the start of the month, the calendar moderator will assign you primary and back-up days as needed. It then becomes your responsibility to coordinate coverage if there is a scheduling conflict.

We are required by law to have a volunteer in the classroom each day. If on your primary day, you or your child are sick or are unable to come to class it is your responsibility to notify the back-up as soon as possible, ideally by 7:30 a.m. Please also send a message via Google group to let the other parents know that you will not be in the classroom that day, but that your back-up will be assisting. Please be sure to have a copy of the contact list available to you so that communication will be easier.

When it is your turn to assist in the classroom, you should arrive by 8:30 a.m. to assist the teacher with set-up and to be informed of that day's plan/activities. You are also responsible for bringing the snack for that day. You will find the snack menu on the Google Calendar and posted outside the classroom. Please make every attempt to buy organic snacks when possible. Backup snacks are available in the event that the primary volunteer is unable to be in the classroom-backup volunteers do not need to bring snack.

During class, you will work with the children to reinforce the teacher's lesson plan. Some examples of tasks that you may be doing while assisting in class are: assisting children with art projects, playing with the children during free play, supervising children on the playground, cleaning up after art activities, etc. After class, you will be responsible for washing the dishes from snack and assisting in cleaning up the classroom. Plan to stay approximately 30 minutes after class for cleanup. You will receive more detailed instructions from the teacher regarding

your role during orientation.

What is the summary of my responsibilities as a parent of a child in CLC?

- Attending mandatory monthly Parent Council meetings
- Participating in fundraising and marketing events throughout the year as needed.
- Assisting in the classroom approximately once per month; more or less frequently as needed.
- Providing an organic snack that meets all allergy requirements on the days that you are assisting in the classroom.
 - * Please note that if you have two children attending CLC, you will need to double your participation and therefore assist two (or more) times per month in the classroom.

These requirements are the minimum mandatory needs to be a member of CLC. As a cooperative there are times that each individual may work more or less, but our overall philosophy is that many hands make light work and we all *want* to be a part of running the preschool that will provide our child's first educational experience. If you need clarification on the co-op requirements, please contact the CLC Administrative Director.

How does the Google group work?

In an effort to reduce paper waste and in keeping with our efforts to be environmentally responsible, CLC will communicate as much as possible electronically, using the CLC Google Group.

There are three components to the Google Group:

Email list

This list is used for messages, reminders, and all CLC-related discussions.

Calendar

The CLC Google Calendar contains parent volunteer days, meetings, and other scheduled events. The snack calendar will also be posted here.

Drive

The CLC Google Drive is an online repository of all pertinent files, including schedules, meeting agendas, meeting minutes, administrative information, pictures, etc.

When you become a member of CLC you must obtain a google email account (also known as gmail). You will be responsible for checking this email account

regularly to ensure you do not miss any crucial information. If you are unsure as to how to obtain a gmail account or how to utilize the google systems, please see the webmaster for assistance. You must provide this email address to the CLC Administrative Director who will ensure that you are added to the circle-of-life-cooperative-preschool@googlegroups.com. You will then receive two notification emails, indicating that you have been added to the Circle of Life Calendar and the Circle of Life Drive. If you do not receive these invitations, please be sure to notify the webmaster as soon as possible.

Note:

Mail addressed to circle-of-life-cooperative-preschool@googlegroups.com is automatically sent to everyone in CLC. Replies to any email received from this email address are also sent to all members of CLC and some UUCF staff. Please be conscious of what you say and how you say it, and remember that email as a medium for communication can be imperfect. See the code of conduct for clarification.

If you do not receive notification that you have been added to the Circle of Life group or have trouble accessing it, please notify our Administrative Director or Webmaster ASAP. All issues should be rectified prior to the start of August.

If you do not have access to a computer, please inform the CLC Administrative Director so that you can be given access to a computer at the school.

If you have any questions about how to use Google groups, please ask the CLC Administrative Director or the Webmaster.

Miscellaneous CLC Policies and Procedures

Governance Structure

The Parent Council, comprised of all parents/family members of children who attend the CLC Preschool, manages the CLC. The family of each child who attends CLC has one vote on the Parent Council and each year the Council elects a Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Fundraising Chair, and Marketing Chair. This board appoints an Administrative Director and Webmaster based on candidates nominated by the council or its own discretion based on experience and tenure.

As an organization that falls under the jurisdiction of the UUCF and enjoys certain privileges as such, the CLC Parent Council shall defer certain decision making responsibilities to the UUCF Board of Trustees (BOT):

- The UUCF Board of Trustees shall ensure that the CLC maintains the UU philosophy and stays within the teaching principles of the UUCF. · The UUCF BOT will act as a governing body to CLC.
- The BOT makes all personnel decisions and adopts the CLC annual budget. In both personnel and budget matters, the BOT will give full consideration to the recommendations of the Parent Council.
- The BOT will be the forum where issues are discussed that impacts both the CLC and the UUCF, including building use issues and paid staff, and shall be the final arbiter of such issues.

The UUCF Director of Religious Education is the staff person who coordinates the various aspects of UUCF Religious Education, of which the CLC will be a vital part.

The CLC Parent Council Liaison may bring CLC issues before the UUCF BOT. The BOT may appoint one of its members to serve as liaison from the Board to the Parent Council. If the desires of the CLC Parent Council conflict with those of the UUCF, then a conflict resolution process is pursued that follows the UU principles of listening and respect. The minister or other staff person may lead conflict resolution or an outside party designated by the Joseph Priestly district if needed. Ultimately, if conflicts cannot be resolved through this kind of mediation, the UUCF Board of Trustees shall be the final arbiter. Participants in the CLC understand that the UUCF Board of Trustees has an invested interest in the children, the religious education program, and the CLC itself.

Confidentiality Policy

On occasion the work and structure of CLC may bring individuals into contact with confidential information. To ensure that every family that is enrolled in and working with CLC can do so with confidence we will respect confidentiality in the following ways:

- Parents will have ready access to the files and records of their own children but will not have access to information about any other child.
- Staff will not discuss individual children (other than for purposes of curriculum planning and group management) with anyone other than the parents/caregivers of that child.
- Information given by parents or caregivers to the Administrative Director or teacher will not be passed on to other adults.
- Issues to do with the employment of staff, whether paid or unpaid, will remain confidential to the people directly involved with making personnel decisions.

- Any information relating to a child's personal safety will be kept in a confidential file and will not be shared with the school except with the teacher and director of the program

Should any individual feel there has been a breach of confidentiality, please contact the Administrative Director, the Head Teacher, or the Director of Religious Education for UUCF. All concerns will be investigated and addressed.

Code of Conduct

Circle of Life is a youth-serving, community-based organization dedicated to providing early childhood education. Participation in the program is subject to the observance of the organization's rules and procedures, including appropriate behavior towards all CLC staff, students, and families. The behaviors outlined below are strictly prohibited:

- Abusive language towards a staff member, volunteer or another participant.
- Being under the influence of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs when reporting for volunteer duties.
- Bringing onto CLC's property dangerous or unauthorized materials such as explosives, firearms, weapons or other similar items.
- Discourtesy or rudeness to a fellow participant, staff member or volunteer.
- Public shaming of any individual.
- Verbal, physical or visual harassment of another participant, staff member or volunteer.
- Actual or threatened violence toward any individual or group.
- Conduct endangering the life, safety, health or well-being of others.
- Failure to follow any CLC policy or procedure.
- Bullying of any participant or guest of CLC and/or UUCF

At Circle of Life, we welcome and celebrate all people, from all walks of life. In conjunction with the UU seven traditions and principles, we strongly believe in acceptance, respect, and peaceful conflict resolution. As a cooperative program, this is of even more importance as many different families must work together to achieve our common goals. CLC expects its members to conduct themselves in a respectful manner. When interacting with other members of our organization please do so in a manner that is respectful and open minded. Any and all behavior of a biased nature (sex, gender, sexual orientation, race, creed,

nationality, religious affiliation, et al.) will not be tolerated. CLC has a no tolerance policy regarding this, and a first offense will result in your child's withdrawal from the school.

Please be cognizant and respectful of all other families in our program. Conflicts and disagreements may arise, and should be handled calmly and appropriately. Should this occur, please contact those involved and attempt to resolve the issue directly. (This does not apply to the above mentioned bias clause.) CLC's Administrative Director maintains an updated contact list available to all CLC families via the Google Drive that can be utilized for this purpose. If the parties involved are unable to reach an acceptable resolution, the Administrative Director and Parent Council Chair can be utilized to mediate, with the end result being a solution that is best for the school.

Our online forum is not an appropriate venue to discuss conflicts with individuals. As part of this code of conduct, please take into account that messages sent to the circle-of-life-cooperative-preschool@googlegroups.com are delivered to every member of CLC, including the lead teacher, UUCF's Director of Religious Education, UUCF's Administrative Assistant, and UUCF's Reverend/Minister, so communicate accordingly. If you are unsure as to whether something is appropriate or not, err on the side of caution and contact an individual privately, off-list.

Should one individual continually violate the code of respect due other parents, and is unresponsive to reminders from the PCC/AD, that individual will be asked to withdraw their child from CLC. Our primary purpose is to create a loving, nurturing, and respectful environment for our children's first educational experience. Please be a role model for our children in this regard.

Enrollment Procedures

Applications for enrollment for the next school year are accepted beginning the first business day in January from UUCF and Kol Ami Members/Friends and CLC Members or CLC siblings.

Applications are accepted from community members beginning on the first business day in February.

For the purposes of accepting enrollment forms, a UUCF Friend is someone who:

- Attends and participates in worship once a month or more.
- Attends and participates in additional activities once a month or more,

such as Religious Education, program committees, fellowship groups, service projects, or other special projects.

- Donates time, talent, or tithe to support the work of the congregation.

Any family that meets two of the three criteria may enroll beginning in January for the following school year.

The first applications received will be admitted to the available spaces in the preschool. Enrollment fees must be paid in advance and are non-refundable. Applications received after the available spaces are filled are placed on the waitlist in the order in which they were received. Students who are on the waitlist will be notified of their place on the waitlist by July 15th. As soon as a space in the class becomes available, families will be notified via email and telephone and given 72 business hours to accept or decline the spot before the Administrative Director contacts the next family on the waitlist to offer them the spot.

- Enrollment fee for returning families or UUCF & Kol Ami members, \$25.00
- Enrollment fee for new families, \$50.00
- Supply fee: Bumblehopper: \$125, Grasshopper: \$90, Bumblebee: \$75

Children should be three years old by September 1 of the school year to be accepted into the preschool program. However, exceptions are occasionally made. Children accepted younger than three must be assessed by the teacher and agree to a one month trial period in class, followed by a conference with the teacher to determine the student's readiness and if the program is a good match for the student. CLC and its teacher are not responsible if the child, after appropriate time, is not acclimating to the class. Some students are simply not ready for the preschool learning environment, but would be welcomed back as a returning family should they wish to enroll again at a later date. Should a child be accepted into the program as a late 2s/early 3s spot, this does not supersede the FCPS guidelines for entering Kindergarten, and the child will need to be 5 by September first to enter any Kindergarten class in the FCPS system.

Children must be "working on" toilet learning by opening day. Students may not attend in pull-ups or diapers. We expect some accidents at preschool as they are part of learning. If a child is not indicating interest in toilet learning by 6 weeks into the preschool year, we will discuss with the family whether the child is ready for the challenges of preschool.

The Maryland Office of Child Care requires that students have all medical forms

and vaccination records signed by a medical professional. CLC does not accept religious exemptions for vaccinations but does accept altered/delayed vaccination schedules and medical exemptions. If a child is not fully vaccinated, a medical professional must still fill out this form.

Tuition Policy

Tuition is due by the first of the month and is paid one month in advance. If payment has not been received by the 10th of the month a 10% late fee will be assessed in addition to that month's tuition. If an account becomes 30 days past due, a notice will be sent. After 45 days, a meeting with the Treasurer and Administrative Director will be scheduled to discuss the reason for late payment. If an account is 60 days past due, the child will be withdrawn from CLC. In this situation, CLC is not able to hold the student's place and priority will go to the next student on the waiting list. However, should the account become current and an opening remains, the student will be allowed to return. Circle of Life is willing to work with families who may have occasional financial difficulties, within reason. However, the family must contact the Administrative Director so that an appropriate and timely solution can be negotiated, with the main goal being a return to current tuition status as soon as possible.

Returned checks are assessed a \$35 bank fee. CLC reserves the right to require cash payments if two checks from a family are returned.

Withdrawing a Student

We understand that our program is not for everyone and sometimes unforeseen circumstances arise in individual family situations. However, as a cooperative program, we rely heavily on the involvement of our enrolled families. Because it may be difficult to fill open spots during the year, we ask that all families give 30 days' notice of withdrawal from the program. In the event a family gives less than 30 days' notice, we require that they pay the tuition for the month after their withdrawal date. For example, if a family opts to withdraw their student on the 15th of the month, tuition is still due for the following month.

CLC does not prorate for partial month's tuition, nor does CLC refund any monies paid towards tuition, fees, or additional costs associated with your child's enrollment in the program.

Please note: Tuition for September is due June 1st. Should you elect to withdraw your child prior to the start of the school year any time after June 1st, the family will be responsible for September's tuition per the 30 day policy.

Personnel Procedures

The teacher is responsible for all classroom procedures and designing the CLC curriculum. The teacher works primarily with the children, assisted by parent volunteers, and is paid for 21 hours a week.

When a vacancy occurs, the Parent Council, working with the Board of Trustees liaison to CLC, will advertise and interview for the staff position of Lead Teacher in conjunction and consultation with the Director of Religious Education. The Parent Council will recommend a candidate to the Board of Trustees, which will make the final hiring decision. New employees are typically hired for a probationary period, with the permanent status decision also made by the Board of Trustees.

UUCF's Personnel Policies govern the relationship between employer and employee. The Board of Trustees in accordance with the CLC annual budget determines pay scales and benefits.

The CLC paid staff are directly supervised by the UUCF Director of Religious Education and are part of the UUCF staff team under the Minister/Chief of Staff. Furthermore, the paid staff is in regular communication with the Parent Council. The Parent Council provides input to the DRE who is responsible for performance reviews, to be done in the spring of each year.

Budget and Financial Management Procedures

Each spring, the CLC treasurer, in consultation with the UUCF treasurer, prepares a budget proposal for consideration by the Parent Council, which in turn will recommend CLC's annual budget to the UUCF Board of Trustees, usually at the April meeting. After the BOT adopts the CLC budget, CLC is responsible for managing income and expenditures within budget guidelines. UUCF expects CLC to be self-supporting, with tuition as its primary source of revenue. To supplement tuition income, CLC conducts an active fund-raising program. UUCF is a tax-exempt organization, which allows CLC certain advantages. Purchases for the program are exempt from state sales tax, provided that the person making the purchase can present a tax exemption certificate at the time of sale (this form is available in the church office.) CLC may also solicit and accept tax-deductible donations.

The CLC treasurer maintains fundraising records and tracks expenses. The CLC treasurer is responsible for collecting receipts for expenditures made by any person on behalf of CLC. The school administrator is responsible for working with parents so that all families stay current on their tuition payments. Purchases for CLC need to be approved by the board prior to their purchase. Unapproved

expenses will not be reimbursed. You must submit your receipts within 30 days of the purchase date for reimbursement. Purchases submitted more than 30 days after the date of purchase will not be reimbursed.

Each week during the school year, the CLC treasurer delivers any new income to the UUCF treasurer, along with notes as to the source of the income according to the categories in the budget (e.g., tuition, enrollment, fees, snack fees, fund raising, donations, etc.) The CLC treasurer also submits expense vouchers for timely payment, with attached receipts and notes as to what budgeted expense category is to be charged.

The UUCF treasurer will deposit any CLC income weekly into UUCF's operating account where CLC money will be segregated into a separate fund called "Circle of Life Cash." CLC expenses will be paid by check from that fund by the UUCF treasurer, as will payroll and payroll taxes.

CLC staff is paid on a bi-weekly schedule, with the exception of the Administrative Director who receives a yearly stipend paid directly from the CLC account. The UUCF treasurer is responsible for depositing Federal and state payroll taxes and preparing and submitting quarterly and annual payroll tax filings as required by law.

Records of the "Circle of Life Cash Fund" are kept in the UUCF office, using the same financial software as used for the UUCF financial accounts. The UUCF treasurer produces a monthly CLC financial statement for the CLC treasurer's discussions with the Parent Council. This report is available at the beginning of each month.

Safety Procedures in Case of Life-Threatening Allergies

The Circle of Life Cooperative Preschool is committed to providing as safe and supportive an environment as possible for children with allergies within the context of our school mission. In the classroom, we try to avoid exposing children to unnecessary chemicals and other allergens, and we routinely have everyone wash their hands and take off their shoes before entering. Our mission as a school, however, is to develop an understanding and appreciation for nature, so children may come into contact with outside allergens such as pollen, bees, poison ivy, etc., though we will do our best to avoid them.

If a student in CLC has a life-threatening allergy, it's the responsibility of the child's parents to notify us of this so we can try to keep the classroom free of the

allergen. In addition, the school must be provided with two EpiPens and a medication authorization form signed by the child's physician to be kept in the classroom at all times.

In the case of a life-threatening food allergy, we will make every effort to keep that food out of the classroom. In addition, we require that all other parents avoid bringing in traces of the food on clothing, hands, toys, etc., and add, as needed, the following procedures to our daily routine:

1. Before entering the classroom first thing in the morning, all students, parents, and guests use the "clean sink" in room 120 to wash their hands and faces, and rinse their mouths with water, to avoid introducing viruses, bacteria, and allergens. All sink surfaces including the faucet handles will then be cleaned off with the wipes provided.
2. Snacks must be not only free of the allergen, but also processed in a facility free of that ingredient.
3. An extra layer of protection is afforded if children avoid eating food containing the allergen right before coming to school. If this is not possible, make sure the child changes his/her clothes after eating to avoid bringing in allergen traces on clothing.

We notify UUCF of any allergy-related concerns so they can support our efforts to keep an allergy-safe classroom. As part of a shared facility, however, we cannot guarantee that a child will not be exposed to an allergen in the building; parents must weigh the risks accordingly.

Emergency Procedures and Evacuation Plan

The school has backup food and bottled water to last for several days. The building has a backup generator that provides only light in the event of a power failure. The well pump runs on electricity, so a power failure means loss of water. For this reason, we have drinking water on hand at all times.

In the event of a power failure:

The building will have no working toilets or hot water for washing. Parents or guardians are notified for pick up. Notification will be via cell phone and Google group.

In the event of smoke or fire:

Pull fire alarm. This automatically notifies emergency personnel. Take red go bag, follow checklist on bag. Remove children from building via fire escape route through playground to storage shed. Notify parents or guardians and await pick

up.

In the event of severe storm/tornado:

Staff closes windows. Take red go-bag, checklist items, and 4 shelter-in-place boxes. Take shelter in bathroom, close both doors and shelter against firewall.

In the event of earthquake:

Students are to shelter in bathroom doorway or exit the building immediately and get into the open. After the shaking stops, take red go-bag, leave the building and do not re-enter until authorities indicate it is safe. Parents or guardians are notified for pick up.

In the event of a bomb threat:

Remain calm. Check outdoors for suspicious individuals. Children and adults evacuate the building. Call 911 to report threat. Activate evacuation plan A to take shelter in Evacuation Site A. All parents and guardians are notified via text. "Evac Site A."

All available drivers transport students to:

**Unity Church
1 W 9th St.
Frederick, MD 21701**

In the event of an armed intruder:

Remain calm. Close classroom door. It automatically locks. An adult presses classroom panic button, students and teachers shelter in bathroom. Call 911.

Alternate plan is to immediately exit through playground door, move to front of building and shelter in one of the front offices.

In the event of serious injury:

Lead teacher or other personnel trained in first aid provide immediate care. Other adult in classroom presses panic button/calls 911 and helps other students to remain calm. If possible and advisable, move child to front office to await emergency personnel. If not possible to move student, another adult will direct responders to victim and trained staff will continue to provide care and assistance.

In the event of a serious allergic reaction:

Immediately use EpiPen. Call 911-request ADVANCED LIFE SUPPORT. Take student, additional EpiPen, and emergency card to front office to await responders. Lead teacher will go with student to emergency room to provide care and support. Parents or guardians are then notified to meet at ER. Other classroom adult is to stay with other students and call back up parent to assist in the remainder of school day. If another adult is available in building, they will assist until co-op member arrives.

In the event of major weather event (ice/snow/flooding) that closes roads:

Students and adults in building remain calm and shelter in place until parents or guardians may arrive.

In the event of major event which affects all Frederick County (chemical spill, disease, forest fire, dirty bomb):

Remain calm. Adults and students evacuate building. Take red go-bag and shelter-in-place boxes. Parents or guardians are notified via text: "Evac Site B"

All available drivers transport students to evacuation site B:

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Hagerstown
13245 Cearfoss Pike,
Hagerstown, MD 21740**

The class will take shelter until such time as parents or guardians can safely collect students.

Welcome to Circle of Life! We are proud to be a part of your child's early education, and wish you love and light throughout the coming year!