



## Union Cong Nursery School 2024-2025 School Year Plan/Process

### Description

At Union Cong Nursery School, children interact in a rich, nurturing environment designed to stimulate their curiosity about the world and to encourage learning through exploration and play. Within each class, the daily schedule and the classroom environment gives the children opportunities to express their interests and build confidence in their natural abilities and intelligence.

Using the principles of the [Reggio Approach](#), groups will utilize the indoors and outdoors. Using the community to support classroom investigations, groups may walk in the neighborhood and to town. The strength of our curriculum is evident in the ways that children at Union Cong can listen to each other's ideas and express their own, to look for details in the natural world, and to express themselves in many creative ways.

Each class is limited in size, with children placed in groups to comply with state guidelines with consistent teachers and classmates.

CLASSES	DAYS	SCHEDULE	COST
<b>Young 3 January Start</b> Children who will be 2 by July 10, 2024	<b>2</b>	<b>ThF</b> 8:30am-noon January 2025 Start	\$2696
<b>Young 3</b> Children who will be 2 by March 10, 2024	<b>3</b>	<b>MTW</b> 8:30am-noon	\$6,432
<b>Young 3 October Start</b> Children who will be 2 by April 20, 2024	<b>3</b>	<b>MTW</b> 8:30am-noon	\$5,696
<b>3/4s</b> Children who will be 3 by October 1, 2024	<b>4</b>	<b>MTWTh</b> 8:45am-12:45pm	\$9,800
<b>3/4s:</b> Children who will be 3 by October 1, 2024	<b>5</b>	<b>M-F</b> 8:45am-12:45pm	\$11,900
<b>4/5s:</b> Children who will be 4 by October 1, 2024	<b>5</b>	<b>M-F</b> 8:45am-12:45pm	\$11,900
<b>Discovery Club</b> 4/5 Classes only	<b>2</b>	<b>T &amp; Th</b> 12:45pm-2:15pm	\$1,960
<b>Explorers Club</b> 3/4 Classes only	<b>2</b>	<b>T &amp; Th</b> 12:45pm-2:15pm	\$1,960
<b>Afternoon Playdate</b> Enrolled in 3/4 or 4/5 Classes	<b>3</b>	<b>MWF</b> 12:45pm-2:15pm	\$3,032

## Process

Applications must be submitted online for both new and returning students with a non-refundable \$50.00 application fee. Applications will be processed using a priority/lottery system.

### IMPORTANT REGISTRATION DATES

January 4, 2024	Applications available
January 26, 2024	Financial Assistance Paperwork Due
January 26, 2024 @ NOON	Applications Due
February 9, 2024	Class placement notifications emailed
February 26, 2024	25% tuition payment due with Enrollment Contract

While we envision being able to accommodate all students who would like to attend, there is a chance that we will have more interest than space allows. Students who are currently enrolled have priority and non priority placement is determined by lottery.

**Priority** is given to the following and in the following order:

1. Union Congregational Church Members (joined by Dec. 1, 2023) and returning students
2. Siblings of currently enrolled students
3. Siblings of former students/children of alumni
4. **Non-priority** status is given to all new students who apply by noon on January 26, 2024.

Applications submitted after the deadline are processed in the order received and when/if space is available.

Ultimately, class placement, late applications, and movement from waitlists entails looking at each class separately and flexibly, without any single principle or formula determining the outcome. The director has final discretion in all class placements.

### Tuition Schedule 2024-2025

Group	Annual Tuition	25% deposit with contract	25% Tuition Due May. Sept. Nov.	20% non-refundable
2 day Young 3 Jan 2025	\$2,696	\$674	\$674	\$540
3 day Young 3	\$6,432	\$1,608	\$1,608	\$1,287
3 day Young 3 Oct	\$5,696	\$1,424	\$1,424	\$1,140
4 day 3/4	\$9,800	\$2,450	\$2,450	\$1,960
5 day 3/4 & 4/5	\$11,900	\$2,975	\$2,975	\$2,380
2 day Discovery Club 4/5s	\$1,960	\$490	\$490	\$392
2 day Explorers Club 3/4s	\$1,960	\$490	\$490	\$392
3 day Afternoon Playdate 3/4 or 4/5 Classes	\$3,032	\$758	\$758	\$607

## Tuition Policies

- To insure your child's placement, 25% of the annual tuition and a signed Enrollment Contract must be returned to the Nursery School Office on or before Feb. 26, 2024.
- Enrollment is a full-year contract. If your child is withdrawn after placement has been secured with payment of 25% or more, 20% of the total annual tuition will not be refunded. The remainder of your initial payment will be refunded after July 1, 2024.
- If you choose to pull your child out for any reason after August 1, you are responsible for the full tuition.
- All withdrawals must be requested in writing.
- Any refund requested must use the Tuition Refund Request Form within 30 days of the withdrawal decision.
- The \$50 application fee is NON-REFUNDABLE.
- Tuition is paid in 4 installments: 25% of the annual tuition as a deposit, 25% due May 15, Sept 15 and Nov. 15. For special payment situations if needed, please contact the Director.
- Tuition must be paid in full by November 15, 2024.
- A late fee of \$50 will be assessed if tuition payments are over one week late.
- Tuition Assistance is available for families that qualify. Please apply by January 26, 2024.
- A class may be cancelled if it is under enrolled at anytime. In the case of a school-initiated cancellation, a full refund will be issued.

## Social Media & Technology Policy

- **Documentation:** Inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education, we value documentation as a means to collect information, observations and learning. It may take the form of photography, video, audio recording or transcription. Teachers use documentation to identify strengths, ideas, and next steps to support learning. Documentation is also utilized to reflect on the work and ideas of children, for teacher research, planning and to share information with families and the wider school community about what is happening in our classrooms. Therefore; various forms of documentation will be displayed in classrooms, on cubbies and identity boards, placed in portfolios, classroom books, newsletters, and shared in parent/teacher conferences, for professional development and in self promotion of our program. Every precaution is taken for the safety of your child while these items are used. We may identify children by first name within the school but do not use names in any other shared media.
- **Social Media:** Union Cong makes limited and appropriate use of social media via Facebook and Instagram, through the office only. Parents and teachers must refrain from "posting" any aspect of our school community without prior approval from the Director.
- **Technology Policy:** Union Cong provides an activity-focused early learning environment. We believe children learn best through active participation, hands-on experiences, interactive conversation, and exploration. Media is used for educational purposes only and will relate to the current classrooms curriculum study. Children will not be engaged with a passive viewing experience for more than 30 minutes at a time.

## Calendar

Union Cong runs the 1st full week after Labor Day through the 1st week of June with holiday, student vacations and teacher professional days throughout. A detailed calendar will be available during the summer.

## Snack/Lunch

Children gather once each day for a healthy snack and drink provided from home. Families with students who attend a 4 hour class will also provide lunch from home on those days.

## Extended Day Options

### 4/5 Classes:

**Discovery Club** is an optional program for enrolled 4/5 students meets on **Tuesdays** and **Thursdays** until 2:15PM, begins the third week of school and ends the week before school is over. The focus in Discovery Club is on the natural world; the group investigates the children's garden and church grounds, which are full of wonderful things for children to experiment with, discover, and explore. Projects evolve from their observations about the weather, insects, and plants. Their curiosity is stimulated as they seek answers to their questions.

### 3/4 Classes:

**Explorers Club** is an optional program for enrolled 3/4 students meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays until 2:15PM, begins the third week of school and ends the week before school is over. Children will begin with a short rest time where we will enjoy a quiet story or classical music. The afternoon will continue with play and creative activities and lots of fun exploring what interests the children most.

### 3/4 and 4/5 Classes Afternoon Playdate:

Our mixed age program meets Monday, Wednesday, & Friday until 2:15PM, starts the third week of school and ends the week before school is over. Children will begin with a short quiet time followed by an outdoor time, and then activity. Once a week we will venture out to the public library to check out books or have an enrichment specialist visit.

## Identified Special Needs

Children with IDENTIFIED SPECIAL NEEDS In accordance with the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct (Section II P-1.7), "we shall strive to build individual relationships with each child; make individualized adaptations in teaching strategies, learning environments, and curricula; and consult with the family so that each child benefits from the program. If after such efforts have been exhausted, the current placement does not meet a child's needs, or the child is seriously jeopardizing the ability of other children to benefit from the program, we shall collaborate with the child's family and appropriate specialists to determine the additional services needed and/or the placement option(s) most likely to ensure the child's success." Please speak with the Director to obtain further information.

## Potty Training Expectation

It is important that **all children wear clothing that they can easily manage themselves**. Simple elastic waistbands on pants are ideal; belts, buttons, snaps and long skirts or dresses are problematic.

**Children enrolled in 3/4s or 4/5s are in programs designed for children who are completely toilet-trained and do not wear diapers or pull-ups.** Children who enter school in September must be able to indicate to the teachers when they need to use the bathroom and take care of their own toileting needs, including wiping, flushing and re-adjusting clothing. **“Pull-up” diapers are not permitted as underclothing.**

Children enrolled in our **Young 3** classes are encouraged to be in the process of toilet training. Children who are in diapers will be changed as needed. Parents are asked to communicate with teachers about their routines at home related to toilet training so that teachers may continue to support routines at school. Teachers will inform families about supplies for changing diapers that must be stored at school.

## Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is an integral part of our program and highly valued.

- Groups will utilize outdoors every day. We will be **outside rain or shine**.
- Appropriate Gear is expected (snowsuits, rain suits, boots etc)
- Groups will take walking trips to town and nearby areas.
- Dress appropriately. Rain/snow suits and boots (easy on/off for bathroom emergencies).
- Outdoor play areas and the large outdoor Church campus may be used
- Based on Curriculum decisions, teachers may choose to be outside for longer time periods

## General Expectations for Children

- Students are expected to stay "in view" of their teacher and with their group.
- Children should be dressed for weather and messy play
- Wear shoes for running and climbing; No sandals, flip flops or shoes with perforated holes in them.

## Washing Hands

Teachers will monitor all hand-washing. At a minimum, Children and Faculty will wash hands or use sanitizer following these times:

- Upon entering the building.
- After outdoor play.
- Before and after eating.
- Before and after adjusting someone's mask.
- After using the bathroom, coughing or wiping their nose.
- Before going home.

## **Modifications related to Pandemics**

Using the guidance from the NJ Department of Health, CDC and/or the WHO we will be nimble and modify our program accordingly and could move to a full outdoor program if necessary.

## **Extreme Weather Policy**

Our expectation is to be outside on a regular basis, however, in the event of extreme conditions children will be indoors.

- Students will be indoors during thunder, lightning, or excessive cold/heat.
- We will use the "[Child Care Weather Watch](#)" chart to make decisions.
- On very cold days, teachers may break up outdoor time to include warming breaks inside.

## **Refund Policy related to Future Pandemic**

If a government agency or the Union Cong Church mandates a prolonged school wide shutdown of NJ preschools due to a pandemic and as a result Union Cong Nursery School is not able to operate a program, the Union Congregational church Leadership Team will evaluate a partial tuition reimbursement based on the circumstances at that time.

## **Virtual Plan**

If there is a school initiated Covid-19/Pandemic full-day closure for a class for more than 2 days after school has started, teachers will offer the following during school hours:

### **3/4s and 4/5s program**

- Weekly written idea guide to support parents
- Optional parent group meeting with teacher every other week
- Weekly virtual interaction through video conferencing (i.e., Google classroom meets or Zoom).
  - 2 Large groups (10-15 min).
  - 1-2 Small groups (10-15 min).

### **Young 3s program**

There is no virtual option. Teachers will reach out to parents with a weekly guide and conduct a parent group meeting every week.

## **Health and Sickness Policies**

Union Cong follows at a minimum the NJ Department of Health guidelines and the NJ Childcare illness guidelines. There are times when children may need to quarantine and/or wear masks at school. Details are found in our Parent Handbook. We trust parents and staff to make responsible health choices so that everyone can participate in our program safely.