

St. John's Early Childhood Center

Together We Grow



Family Handbook

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SCHOOL INFORMATION

MISSION

At St. John's Early Childhood Center, our mission is to nurture each child's natural curiosity through love, play, and exploration in a Christian setting. We create a welcoming environment that celebrates diversity and builds relationships to help children and families feel included and respected.

VISION

In a constantly changing world, St. John's aims to equip our young learners with empathy, perseverance, and a lifelong love of learning. Children will be able to enter the next phase of their life feeling confident and knowing how to be a respectful part of the community around them.

PHILOSOPHY/CURRICULUM

At St. John's Early Childhood Center (SJECC), we believe that children learn best by doing. Therefore, in a safe, loving environment, we provide the young child with a wide variety of hands-on learning experience and a range of developmentally appropriate activities. These include experimentation with a variety of art media, opportunities for developing language, reading, and writing skills, gross motor play in indoor and outdoor settings, interacting with small and large groups, early math and numeracy skills, science and technology, developing an understanding of routines and rules, expressing ideas and feelings, and developing social skills.

Most important of all, SJECC wants children to be excited about learning and going to school. This is done through play! We want them to feel positive about themselves and their abilities, and to develop respect and empathy for other people and ideas. We want them to know that they are capable, caring individuals who can be successful in relationships, new situations and with new ideas.

LICENSING

The Preschool, Kids Day Out, and Lunch Bunch (collectively call The Preschool) maintain the high standards set by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Annual inspections by the Dept. of Health cover fire, sanitation and health regulations. All records and standards are available to parents by contacting the director.

THE SJECC SCHOOL BOARD

The SJECC Board is comprised of members of St. John's United Church of Christ. Please contact the Director if you need to reach a board member.

THE STAFF

All preschool lead teachers have an education degree or are certified in early childhood. Staff members attend workshops every year to increase their knowledge in the field and receive training in Child CPR and first aid. All staff are required to complete a physical, TB screening, and Child Abuse/Criminal Record check for employment.

CLASSES OFFERED

There is a Kid's Day Out program (KDO) for children beginning at 16 months by 7/31. Sunbeams (SB) must be 3 by 7/31 and Rainbows (RB) must be 4 by 7/31. SB and RB are considered preschool classes. Children in the preschool classes have the option to stay for Lunch Bunch.

LUNCH BUNCH PROGRAM

Lunch Bunch is an optional extended day program offered Monday through Friday from 11:35-2:45. Children enjoy indoor or outdoor play, lunch, open room centers and art, stories and a short rest time video. Dismissal is from 2:35-2:45. Children must be reliably potty trained to stay for Lunch Bunch.

TUITION AND ATTENDANCE

ATTENDANCE

Please notify the Director if your child will be absent. Notification is also required if a child is going home with someone not on the approved pick-up list or if the child is leaving early.

BRIGHTWHEEL

The Preschool utilizes Brightwheel to collect payments. It is an online system tuition system. Brightwheel is used to set up a direct deposit from your bank account or a credit card. Fees apply.

REDUCTION OF FEES

Active St. John's United Church of Christ members receive a monthly discount for their children attending The Preschool, pending approval by the SJECC Board of Directors. If any family needs financial support, please contact the Director to ask about scholarship availabilities.

REGISTRATION AND MATERIALS FEES

A non-refundable, annual registration fee and materials fee is due for each child who enrolls at the time of enrollment.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS (Holidays, Snow Days, etc.)

The Preschool is closed three days for Thanksgiving, two weeks for Christmas and New Year's, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, President's Day, Good Friday, and one week for Spring Break.

School closing due to inclement weather will follow Parkway School District. If Parkway closes or has a late start schedule for inclement weather, we will be closed. If Parkway dismisses early due to weather, we will not have Lunch Bunch. Check local news or Parkway closure notifications. No refunds are given for school closure.

TUITION

The Preschool programs are based upon an annual tuition rate. Payments are divided into nine equal monthly installments. The first payment is due in May with payments two through nine due September through April on the first of the month. The May tuition (paid in advance) is not refundable after June 1. All payments are invoiced through Brightwheel. We do not accept checks or cash.

Tuition payments are due by the 10th of the month. Failure to pay by the 10th will result in \$10.00 late fee. Enrollment is dependent on timely payment. Accounts that remain unpaid may result in termination of enrollment. All payments will be invoiced through Brightwheel. There are no refunds, credits, or make-up days for absences, snow days, or other canceled days. Lunch Bunch tuition is not refundable/transferable when a child is absent for vacations, holidays, snow days, sick days, etc.

TUITION FOR THE LUNCH BUNCH PROGRAM

Payments are divided into 9 equal amounts and added to your monthly tuition invoice. For children using the Lunch Bunch on an occasional basis, an invoice will be sent through Brightwheel at the cost of \$25 per session.

GENERAL POLICIES AND INFORMATION

ACCIDENT POLICY

In case of an accident or injury to a child, the following procedures are followed: Minor accidents (such as bumps, falls, scraped knees, etc.) will be treated by staff and an Accident/Injury Report will be completed by director. Anything that leaves a serious mark or involves another child will be recorded and kept on file.

Major accidents such as breaks or head injury will be immediately reported to parents so appropriate action may be taken. If needed staff will contact 911 before notifying parents. Children will be transported to the hospital indicated on enrollment form, or the closest or most appropriate hospital as determined by first responders.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are an important time in a child's life. Teachers will assign your child a special snack day on the class day closest to their birthday. Cookies, muffins, or the child's favorite snack work well for birthdays (no large cupcakes, sheet cakes, ice cream, etc.). Birthday candles, balloons and other party decorations are not allowed for safety reasons.

CARPOOL ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL FOR PRESCHOOL

At arrival stay in your car with your child and display your child's name card. A teacher will get your child out of the car. Children must exit from the right side (passenger side) of your car. If you are late, you will need to bring the child up to the classroom. Press the buzzer at the Church office entrance to be allowed in the building.

For dismissal, display child's name card. Stay in your car and allow the teachers to help your child in on the right side (passenger side). Pull forward out of line to help your child buckle. This helps avoid a backup on Olive Road and allows school to dismiss in a timely manner. To pick up your child early, park and press the buzzer at the Church office. Once admitted, you will need to come to the classroom to get your child.

A child will not be released to anyone other than legal guardians and authorized carpool drivers without your written or verbal consent. A transportation form must be completed at the beginning of the school year.

CARPOOL TIMES AT SJECC

Drop-off: 8:55-9:05

Morning dismissal: 11:35-11:45

Lunch Bunch dismissal: 2:35-2:45

Parents picking their child up late after 11:45 and 2:45 will be charged a \$10 late fee. If you arrive after 3:00 additional fees will apply. If you arrive after 12:15, you will be charged a Lunch Bunch fee.

CHILD RESTRAINT LAW

In Missouri the law states that children less than 4 years old or less than 40 pounds must be in an appropriate child safety seat. Children ages 4 through 7 must be in child safety seat or booster seat (with lap and shoulder belts) until they are 80 pounds or 4'9" tall. Police could be notified if there is a problem with safety restraints.

CLOTHING

Please send your child in comfortable play clothing. Tennis shoes work best on our gym floor and the playground. Please do not send your child in crocs, belts, and clothing that they cannot manage themselves. Do not send gloves or other winter items.

Put an extra set of clothes in your child's backpack (shirt, pants, underwear, socks). Make sure all items are labeled with your child's name.

COMMUNICATION

Parents can leave a message for the teachers or Director by calling or emailing the school. Messages may also be sent to school in your child's backpack. Some teachers use their personal phone to send pictures to families. Do not use their personal number to contact teachers outside of school hours. All information can be relayed through the Director.

Teachers are available for conferences anytime during the year if needed. Please call the Director and schedule a time to talk with the teacher. Arrival or dismissal is not an appropriate time for discussing concerns.

SJECC attempts to communicate between staff and parents through daily contact, notes, newsletters, and conferences. The Director will send out a monthly newsletter at the beginning of each month. We encourage parents to keep us advised of special circumstances, such as illness, a new baby or a vacation trip requiring that the child be left with a sitter. We would like to be prepared to give special support and understanding during these times.

CONFERENCES

Two planned teacher conferences are scheduled each year. The first is held in November and is designed to be an adjustment conference and to set mutual goals. The second is held in March or April to discuss your child's progress and development during the year. There will be no Preschool or Lunch Bunch on these days in order for teachers to meet with the parents.

HEALTH POLICIES

All children must meet Missouri's immunization requirements. A Medical Examination Form is required to be completed and signed by a physician.

Do not send your child to school with fever, a bad cold, sore throat, runny eyes or if your child has vomited or had diarrhea during the night. ***Children must be from fevers, vomiting, and/or diarrhea for 24 hours prior to attending school.*** This includes being off fever-reducing medicine for 24 hours. Do not give your child any sort of laxative in the morning before school. If you must do so, please provide a note from the doctor.

Parents will be contacted if their child becomes ill at school. Children will be supervised in the director's office and may be picked up there.

If your child has a communicable disease (Hand, Foot, and Mouth, Lice, etc.), please contact the school immediately so that other parents can be notified.

MEDICATION

No medication may be kept in the child's backpack or with the child. If the child requires an inhaler or epi-pen for allergies/asthma, these must be kept in Director's Office. Medication must have specific written instructions from the physician for use.

SHOW AND TELL

Children look forward to their show and tell day. Check with your child's teacher about how they will be handling show and tell. Make sure the item is age-appropriate. The school is not responsible for lost or broken items.

SNACKS

A mid-morning snack is served to the children each day. The teacher will send home a monthly snack calendar informing you of your child's turn. State Health Regulations require that only store-bought snacks be served. Washed and prepared fresh fruits and vegetables are also acceptable.

SPECIAL NEEDS

An individualized care plan from a professionally qualified source is required for any child who will need specialized care because of physical, health-related, developmental, behavioral, or emotional issues. If the specialized needs of a child cannot be met through our current staff, families would be asked to pay for the added support. The school reserves the right to discontinue enrollment if a child's behavioral or emotional needs cannot be appropriately supported within our program. This decision will be made with careful consideration and in communication with the family.

TOILET TRAINING

Children are not required to be toilet trained to attend most of The Preschool. Students in the Rainbow Class must be potty trained (or close to it). Diapers/pull-ups are not changed in the morning in preschool classes unless necessary. Please notify your child's teacher if your child is new at toilet training so they can give them extra help. All children must be reliably toilet trained to participate in the Lunch Bunch Programs.

SPECIAL EVENTS AT ST. JOHN'S ECC

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

On Program Day children attend school for one hour only with their parent/guardian(s). Preschool classes perform Christmas songs in the Church together. Families and friends are encouraged to come. Then everyone goes to the classrooms for refreshments and gifts.

EVENING OF THE ARTS

Held in April each year, this event is the highlight of the school year. Families and friends are invited to see a year of artwork displayed throughout the school.

HALLOWEEN PARADE

On Halloween (or your child's school day closest to Halloween) children are invited to wear their Halloween costumes to school. The teachers will parade the classes around the gym and children will sing some of their favorite Halloween songs. Families and friends are encouraged to come. Children will then go to their classroom to complete the regular day.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Held twice a year, conferences give parents an opportunity to talk with both teachers about your child's progress. The fall conference is an adjustment conference to discuss how your child is adjusting to school and to set mutual goals for the school year. The spring conference is an evaluation conference to discuss how your child has progressed with his/her development. For parent teacher conferences, preschool classes and lunch bunch are not in session to allow our staff to talk with parents.

SUMMER PROGRAMS

During the summer, SJECC offers a summer program for young children. Summer Camp is offered during the summer months on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 9:00-1:00 for those entering Preschool or Kindergarten, and Wednesdays only for those entering the Friends Room. Dates are determined based on family interest and staffing availability. Enrollment will begin in spring.

VALENTINE PARTIES

Preschool Class Valentine parties are held on your child's class day closest to Valentine's Day. Children bring valentines for each of their classmates. The party is for children only.

VISITING DAY

Parents attend with their child to visit the classroom, meet the teachers and other children.

GUIDING YOUNG CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR PHILOSOPHY/TECHNIQUES

The use of positive reinforcement encourages positive behavior and promotes self-esteem. Guidance methods are used that focus on preventing misbehavior and teaching children that actions have consequences.

Under no circumstances will any physical punishment be used on any child at The Preschool. Parents and teachers will work together to determine what might be helpful in motivating a child to behave in an acceptable manner.

LEARNING FROM CONSEQUENCES

Children learn from experiencing the consequences of their actions and being allowed to correct the problem themselves. Examples:

- ❖ Child who spills water is provided a paper towel to help clean it up
- ❖ A child who continues to crash bike will find another activity until they can try again and be successful

SETTING LIMITS

Setting limits gives children personal boundaries and helps them feel more secure in their environment. Examples:

- ❖ "The slide is for going down – go up the steps to use the slide."
- ❖ "We walk in the classroom."

REDIRECTION

Shift the behavior in a direction or to an activity that is more acceptable. Examples:

- ❖ Child who bangs on a toy inappropriately can be directed to the playdough center to pound and press playdough.
- ❖ Child who rips book pages can be directed to the art center to cut or tear paper.

EXPRESSION OF FEELINGS

Acknowledge the child's feelings and then deal with the inappropriate behavior. Examples:

- ❖ "You sound angry. It's okay to tell him you are upset he took the toy away. It's not okay to hit him."
- ❖ "You're sad because your mom is gone. I'm going to take good care of you until she comes back."
- ❖ Adult expresses own feelings about situation: "I don't like it when you throw blocks." "It upsets me when I see you hitting."

MODEL APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

Children need to see examples of appropriate behavior. Examples:

- ❖ Model language - help children to verbalize their wants/needs "Let's go over and tell them you want to play blocks too."
- ❖ Model gentleness – speak in a gentle tone of voice
- ❖ Model playing – "Would you like to build a tower with me? This is how I am building it."

REMOVING THE CHILD

A child may be removed from a situation when unable to control him/herself. It is a time for the child to calm down and decide when ready to rejoin the group with appropriate behavior. A child may be brought to the Director's office until they are ready to rejoin their class.