



2023-2024

Preschool

Parent Handbook

In accordance with Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call toll free (866) 632-9992 (Voice). Individuals who are hearing impaired or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Mission

The mission of the Fort Smith preschool program is to provide positive experiences in a safe environment. The program is designed to facilitate experiences which will assist three-and four-year-old children with the development of intellectual, spoken, written, physical, social, and emotional skills for kindergarten readiness.

Philosophy

We believe all children can learn. The philosophy of the Fort Smith Public Schools preschool program is to provide an environment where preschool children come to school to explore and learn. Teachers create an environment in which children interact with others and learn through developmentally appropriate activities. The curriculum stimulates the natural curiosity of children and supports their desire to learn.

The preschool program encourages children to actively participate in the learning process, to experiment with a variety of appropriate activities and materials, and to secure their interest in the context of their lives in the community and in the world. The curriculum reflects the philosophy that children learn through active manipulation and movement and by having concrete experiences which help to develop concepts.

Rights and Responsibilities of the Parents

The preschool department is guided by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE), DCCECE Minimum Licensing Requirements (MLR), the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), DCCECE Federal Preschool Grants guidelines (FPK) and governed by the Fort Smith Public Schools School (FSPS) Board of Education.

The Fort Smith preschool program has an open-door policy for parents who visit and participate in the activities of the classroom. Guardians are welcome to visit the classroom at any time; however, all visitors must sign in at the office before entering the classroom. The open-door policy.

Personal information of children is confidential and the right to privacy of children is protected. Legal guardians have the right to inspect and view the educational documents of their children and to inspect the program's documents.

A minimum of two parent-teacher conferences are conducted each year. Participation by parents is important and encouraged. Parents are also encouraged to participate in the program's annual evaluation. Parents are informed of any evaluations to be conducted by the program.

Parents are encouraged to volunteer and participate in preschool daily activities. Parents are essential to the success of the preschool program. The following are areas in which parent help and assistance is needed:

*Volunteer with breakfast and lunch, such as eating breakfast and lunch with your child.

*Participation in the recreation and play with the children.

*Working with small groups, assisting in art activities and/or, reading books in the classroom.

*Assisting with field trips or assisting preschool staff in preparing materials.

*Participating in Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) activities.

Objectives of the Program

Provide children the opportunity to acquire knowledge necessary for them to enter kindergarten prepared to learn

Provide children the opportunity to develop socially and play cooperatively in guided interactions

Help children develop strategies to solve problems effectively and develop the habit of solving conflicts

Provide a print-rich environment to promote and develop vocabulary, language, and writing

Promote the desire to learn by providing opportunities to play so children can explore, investigate, describe, and create

Help children develop the strength of small and large muscles

Provide families with information and activities that can be used in their homes

Admissions

The Fort Smith preschool program serves three-and four-year-old children whose families qualify for services.

Upon enrollment, your child may be subject to interviews by licensing staff, child maltreatment investigators and/or law enforcement officials for the purpose of determining licensing compliance or for investigative purposes. Child interviews do not require parental notice or consent. (Arkansas MLR 201:4)

Licensing compliance forms (DCC-521) are maintained at the facility for 3 years. The compliance forms are available for review upon request.

Hours of Operation

Hours of operation are from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Families that routinely arrive with their children prior to 8:00 a.m. or after 8:00 a.m. for drop off or after 3:00 p.m. for pick up are in violation of preschool policy. Repeated violations will result in a conference with the Supervisor of ECE.

Days of Operation

The Fort Smith preschool program is open Monday through Friday, following Fort Smith Public School District calendar. When Fort Smith Public Schools are closed, preschool classrooms will be closed as well. Information about the closing of the school will be announced on local television and radio and school social media pages.

Attendance

Daily attendance and timely arrival are important for children to learn. Excessive tardiness or absences may be grounds for removal from the program. If your child is sick or cannot be present for any reason, please call the school office to provide information about why your child is not able to attend. If a child is absent for five (5) consecutive days without notification of special circumstances, the child will be removed from the program.

An adult 18 years or older and authorized by the legal guardians, must sign in their children each morning. Please do not leave your child in the preschool room if no teacher is present.

Children must also be signed out each afternoon. Only adults, 18 years or older, authorized by the legal guardians are permitted to sign out your child. The preschool program prohibits teachers from releasing your child to anyone who is not on the list of authorized persons. We have the right to ask for personal identification. Siblings who attend school where the preschool program is located cannot sign out children.

Communication

It is very important that you maintain communication with your child's preschool teacher. The information you provide about your child helps the preschool staff in daily interactions with your child. If you need to speak with the teacher privately, please make an appointment after class or at a time that is convenient for you and the teacher. Please check your child's cubby daily for important notes and other articles which must go home.

Food

Children will be provided a healthy breakfast, lunch, and snack. If your child has allergies or special dietary restrictions, please advise the preschool staff so alternatives to complete the nutritional requirements for your child can be arranged. Food items may not be brought to school from outside sources. Please refrain from bringing any food items to the school.

Accidents/Injuries

Immediate attention must be given to a child who is injured and reported to the parents immediately. Parents will be provided a written statement about the nature of injuries

and the incident(s) that caused injury.

Behavior Guidance Policy

Conscious Discipline is a comprehensive social-emotional learning and classroom management program based on current research. Conscious Discipline empowers adults to consciously respond to daily conflict, transforming it into an opportunity to teach critical life skills to children. Fort Smith Public School preschool teachers are trained in Conscious Discipline and will utilize classroom management skills to facilitate a safe environment.

When a child presents with challenging behavior, teaching staff shall follow their Conscious Discipline strategies and the standards of NAEYC Accreditation:

- Observe the children, then identify events, activities, interactions and other factors that predict and may contribute to challenging behavior.
- Rather than focus only on eliminating the behavior, teaching staff will focus on teaching the child social, communication, and emotional regulation skills using environmental modifications, activity modifications, adult or peer support and other teaching strategies to facilitate appropriate behavior.
- Staff shall respond to challenging behavior, including physical aggression, in a manner that:
 - provides safety of the child(ren)
 - provides for the safety of others in the classroom
 - is calm
 - is respectful to the child
 - and provides the child with information on acceptable behavior.

(From Accreditation Standards, National Association for the Education of Young Children)

- The use of corporal punishment is prohibited by DCCECE.

Clothing and Personal Items

Children must be dressed appropriately for the weather, climate, season, and activities. Please send your child in comfortable clothes for play. They participate in daily activities and play such as; painting, gluing, and coloring.

Children are not allowed to wear hats inside the school. If your child has a condition which requires him or her to wear a hat, a physician's note explaining the condition is necessary.

Clothing or jewelry that promotes smoking, alcohol, or drugs is prohibited.

Children participate in outside play daily. It is important your child's clothing be appropriate for the weather with shoes in which he or she may run easily. Flip-flops are

not allowed. Backless shoes are not allowed.

Please bring extra clothes to leave in the classroom in case your child has an accident, including socks and underwear. Remember to change the clothes as the weather changes.

Children are not allowed to bring toys and other items to school unless the preschool staff has requested items as part of a classroom activity.

Safety Recall Notifications

A computer is available to view recall notifications. Assistance can be provided by a classroom teacher or paraprofessional or visit U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission:

www.cpsc.gov

Rest Time

Children are provided with rest and quiet time for at least one hour each day. Children are not required to sleep, but they must remain quiet during this time. A personal mat is provided for each child. Parents may provide a crib sheet and/or small blanket. If parents choose to provide these personal items, they will be sent home each Friday for washing.

Field Trips and Special Activities

To improve the educational experiences of students, there will be field trips during the year. The Transportation Department of the Fort Smith Public Schools will provide transportation by bus. Parents will be informed in writing of the date of the field trip in advance and given a note to sign providing permission for their child to participate in the field trip. Children must have a signed note to participate in the field trip. If you do not want your child to participate, other arrangements will need to be made for your child for the day. Parents are strongly encouraged to volunteer on field trips. Parents are needed to escort to and from the bus pickup area, as well as support children as they experience a new environment.

Health

Daily Health Practices

Children who have infectious/contagious diseases are not allowed to attend preschool and must be treated by a physician prior to the child returning to school. In addition, parents are advised to recognize if their child has had the following symptoms during the 24 hours prior to attending school and keep them home:

Fever, Diarrhea, Vomiting

Rash – unless it is caused by heat or allergic reaction

Sore throat – if it is associated with fever or swollen glands

Severe coughing – episodes of coughing that can cause difficulty breathing or

vomiting

Lesions in the mouth – unless a doctor determines that there is no contagious disease

Lice – may return after evaluation and treatment

Illness: If your child becomes sick at school, you will be called immediately to come and get your child. If we are unable to communicate with you, the person listed as the emergency contact will be called.

Medications: Teachers cannot administer medications to children.

Immunizations

All vaccinations must be up to date. Religious or medical grounds for exception must be documented.

Conferences, Meetings, and Program Evaluations

Conferences between parents and teachers will be conducted at least two times each year. Parents are encouraged to attend these conferences. If you cannot attend the scheduled appointment, please schedule another time with the preschool teacher. Conferences give parents an opportunity to communicate with the preschool staff and learn about the progress of the child(ren).

Parents are encouraged to visit the school and help in activities or events that benefit your child's environment and help your child to learn at home.

The Fort Smith preschool program values parents and families. We know your child is important to you. You are the first and most important teacher to your child. Annual surveys to evaluate the preschool program will be distributed to parents. Parents are encouraged to complete the surveys, as well as share concerns with preschool staff throughout the year.

Religious Activity

Each ABC provider must maintain documentation that it has provided parents and guardians with the following written notice:

"To assure that no religious activity is paid or subsidized by public funds or occurs in any manner suggesting government endorsement of any religion or message:

ABC funds must be used exclusively to support allowable ABC program costs incurred to provide non-religious instruction and activities during the ABC day; and

No religious activity may occur during any ABC day regardless of the source of funds used to support the activity.

FORT SMITH

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Child's Name: _____ School/Teacher: _____

The preschool handbook contains procedures and policies for children enrolled in the Fort Smith Public Schools Preschool Program. The FSPS Preschool handbook and following documents can be found at:

fortsmithschools.org

Each bullet below is a link to review the required documents. By my signature, I am confirming that I have received copies of the following:

- [2023-2024 FSPS Preschool Program Parent Handbook](#)
- [2023-2024 Fort Smith Public Schools Calendar of Operation](#)
- [Shaken Baby Syndrome Brochure-Spanish](#)
- [Shaken Baby Syndrome Brochure-English](#)
- [Getting Ready for Kindergarten-English](#)
- [Getting Ready for Kindergarten-Spanish](#)
- [Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards: Birth through 60 months](#)

A hard copy of these documents may be requested at the Fort Smith Public Schools Early Childhood Education Department.

- I give permission for my child to be photographed for publication in print or other media.

Yes _____ No _____

By my signature, I am confirming that I have reviewed the documents:

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

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