

Early Childhood Parent Packet

The Saint Constantine School

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Early Childhood Objectives

The Early Childhood program at The Saint Constantine School seeks to provide the youngest students with play-based opportunities and explorations that:

- are developmentally appropriate (*Six Simple Ways to Assess Young Children*, Sue Gober)
- include child-led nature study, which grounds the child in their world (*School Education*, Charlotte Mason).
- emphasize imagination through Great Books, storytelling and open-ended play with the aim of awakening the moral development of the child.
- promote movement, through emphasis on fine and gross motor skills, to help develop and strengthen the physical world of the child.
- include concrete sensory-integrated experiences (*Sensory Integration and the Whole Child*, Jean Ayres).
- foster virtue development, especially emphasizing: order, sincerity, and obedience (*Character Building*, David Isaacs).
- help build healthy self-care habits; especially physical self-care, quality rest, completing chores and building healthy social relationships and self-identity. (*Habits*, Charlotte Mason)
- begin to introduce and strengthen the foundational building blocks leading to exploration and experience of letters, language and quality of numbers. (*Spell to Write and Read*, Wanda Sanseri)
- provide exposure to Truth, Goodness and Beauty and show how these are reflected in the dignity of every human person.
- encourage the pursuit of excellence through *virtue, wisdom and joy!* (*TSCS vision*)

~ In order for our teachers and students to be able and ready to live out the above objectives well, students will need to demonstrate readiness in toileting and behavior practices. (please see below for more details)

Early Childhood Toileting Independence Policy

Goals

At The Saint Constantine School we expect our preschool (PreK3 & 4) children to enter our Early Childhood program trained to effectively use the restroom by themselves. In detail, this includes:

- Self-directing and responding appropriately in the toilet to the physical sensations they experience
- Wearing underwear; recommended day and night

Our goal at The Saint Constantine School is to help children strive toward full toileting independence. We will work toward the following goals in the preschool classrooms:

- Entering and exiting the restroom independently
- Communicating restroom needs effectively to the teacher
- Gaining independence in dressing themselves
- Caring for personal hygiene

Philosophy

Research shows that children will best master the milestone of toileting independence when provided with:

- individualized attention
- defined boundaries
- consistency
- personalized practice

The TSCS preschool setting assumes mastery of toileting independence prior to enrollment and is not equipped for toileting support beyond occasional accidents.

Role of the Teacher

The role of the teacher differs slightly between the PreK3 and PreK4 classrooms. In PreK3, the teacher starts the year alongside the child and determines intervention based on the child's ability. In PreK4, the teacher will provide encouragement from outside the restroom, if needed.

Accident Procedure

Each child demonstrates readiness, ability and challenges in different ways and at different paces. Accidents are expected and do happen *on occasion*. When accidents turn into habits, occurring on a weekly or daily basis, more conversation is needed regarding what is most developmentally appropriate for the child to master toileting independence.

If a student has a bowel accident while at school the child will be sent to the nurse and the child's parents will be called. The parent will be required to come clean their child and either send them back to class or take them home.

Intervention

When a habit of accidents is observed, faculty and family will have a conference to discuss the child's personal situation and to create an *at school* intervention to try for one school week. After a week, if the habit continues, the child will be asked to work toward mastery at home. We expect the *at home intervention* (nursery for faculty students) to last at least 2-4 weeks.

The Early Childhood faculty are committed to supporting the child and family by developing a personalized potty training plan based on the child's demonstrated needs.

Potty Training 3 Phase Plan Example

Phase One: Awareness, Interest & Readiness - “ I want”

- Displays interest by watching others use the potty
- Starts to demonstrate pulling on and off diapers/clothes
- Begins to sit on the potty to “practice”
- Makes the connection between having the urge to pee or poop and going to use the potty
- Demonstrates awareness of the body's functions and uses appropriate potty words

Phase Two: Practice and Consistency - “I can”

- Wakes up dry in the morning
- Responds to physical sensations and uses the toilet effectively
- Verbalizes accidents and dislikes the sensations of soiled underwear
- Gets on the potty, stays on the potty long enough to pee or poop, and gets off the potty

Phase Three: Demonstration and Independence - “I did”/”I am potty trained!”

- Responds to physical sensations in the toilet in *all environments*
- Communicates restroom needs effectively to teacher/parent
- Is gaining independence in dressing themselves
- Is gaining independence in caring for their personal hygiene

Assessment and Evaluation

To determine if a student is ready to enter back into the classroom, the four goals under *Phase Three* must be assessed for one week while the child is at home (or in the nursery for faculty students). Entering back into the classroom too early could cause a repeat of regression. Parents and faculty will communicate the student’s abilities and determine a re-start date. After their return, the student will enter a *trial period* for one to two weeks to determine readiness for a full-time return to school. Faculty will determine school readiness based on observation of the student’s habits, detailed under *Phase Three*, while at school.

Early Childhood Behavior Policy

Philosophy

Learning right from wrong begins in the home. Parents are the primary educators of their children. Our goal, while your child is at school, is to reinforce the boundaries and the positive *habits* that parents have been implementing at home. Children need clear and consistent boundaries which lead them to build trust and security in the world around them. Charlotte Mason's approach to education has great influence at The Saint Constantine School. Her educational philosophy focuses on the development of the whole person and the significance of *these three components to education: Atmosphere, Discipline and Life*.

A word from Charlotte Mason:

“Education is a discipline—that is, the discipline of the good habits in which the child is trained. Education is a life, nourished upon ideas; and education is an atmosphere—that is, the child breathes the atmosphere emanating from his parents; that of the ideas which rule their own lives” (Vol. 2, p. 247).

Discipline, life, atmosphere—all three are necessary for a well-balanced education. You become unbalanced when you focus on one above the others.”

Behavior Expectations

At The Saint Constantine School we expect our children to enter our Early Childhood program displaying readiness for school by demonstrating behavior that is able to be formed in truth, beauty and goodness. Students need to be able to adhere to classroom policies and teacher-led boundaries that ensure their safety, respect for others and self, as well as behavior that encourages goodness in their peers.

Non-Negotiable Behaviors:

The following behaviors will result in the student being seen by a House Head:

1. Running away from teacher or escaping school property
2. Responding “no” to teacher directions *with inability to redirect* or resisting teacher authority
3. Physical violence toward student or teacher or inappropriate physical behavior with another student

Intervention:

A student will be sent to their House Head if one of the three non-negotiable behaviors are observed. The House head will determine an appropriate disciplinary action which may include a phone call home or dismissal from school for that day. If these behaviors become a consistent problem, our faculty will have a parent meeting to discuss how we can best help and encourage personal growth for your child. At this point, an *at home intervention* may be deemed appropriate until it is determined that the students behavior is displaying school readiness.

The Early Childhood faculty are available to provide conversations around how to help your family instill consistent boundaries in the home and any other parenting questions and conversations that would be beneficial for your family.

Evaluation/Re-Entry:

Re-entry to school will be determined through parent and faculty conversation, observed positive behavior and a school readiness assessment/trial week.

Helpful Parenting Practices for the TSCS Student

1. Encourage time outside in **nature** and time to *ponder, wonder, and imagine*.
2. Implement daily periods of **rest/silence** at home- sometimes this means saying “no” to too many outside activities - “*there is no better team than the home team*”.
3. Ask open-ended questions and provide a **supportive presence** of *listening* - “*observe more: speak less*”.
4. Implement and instill **chores** for all ages - children need to be needed; this builds confidence and self-esteem and helps give them ownership.
5. Establish **consistent routines and rhythms** around mealtimes, bedtimes, rest time and play time.
6. Instill firm **boundaries**- just say “no or not now.” Teaching **obedience** first is fundamentally foundational for any further growth and development.
7. **Family dinners and conversation** together are essential and have a great impact on the child and whole family. Schedule these!
8. Create a culture of **stories** by providing good books and read-alouds. Storytell and tell your life stories to each other. This helps form one of the most important faculties . . . **the Imagination!**
9. Limit exposure to technology/screens of all kinds. **Sensory experiences** are preferred and essential. Schedule **family leisure time!**
10. Less is more - cut back on clutter and implement work towards **order!** Provide **open ended play items** in the home; including blocks, colored silks, creative art supplies, general story telling people and scene pieces, etc.

More discussion on each of these points is welcomed and encouraged. Please reach out to Tricia LaRocca, Early Childhood Specialist, if you would like to have parenting conversations regarding how to best implement these practices in the home. Email: tlarocca@saintconstantine.org

Recommended Parent Resources

Books:

1. Charlotte Mason Education Series
 - a. [Habits](#)
 - b. [The Outdoor Life of Children](#)
 - c. [Formation of Character](#)
2. [Character Building](#), David Isaacs
3. [Simplicity Parenting](#), Kim John Payne
4. [The Temperaments God Gave Your Kids](#), Art and Loraine Bennett
5. [An Introduction to Classical Education](#), Christopher A, Perrin
6. [Discipline for Life: Getting it Right with Children](#), Madelyn Swift
7. [Balanced and Barefoot](#), Angela J. Hanscom

Articles:

1. [Education for Life](#), Charlotte Mason
2. [Wanda Sanseri \(Spell to Write & Read\) Senate Hearing Speech](#)

Audio:

1. [Parent Conference Lectures](#)

TSCS Blog

1. [From Habit to Virtue - at School and at Home](#), Tricia LaRocca
2. [Slow Learning](#), Sarah Fraps
3. [Learning to Read & Reading to Learn](#), Sarah Fraps
4. [The Whole Duty of a Child](#), Elizabeth Cogburn
5. [Want to Keep Kids Safe? Let Them Climb Trees!](#), Megan Mueller
6. [Why We Play](#), Cate Gilbert
7. [No Rules on the Playground? Good.](#), Megan Mueller