



ST. JOSEPH

SCHOOL DISTRICT

Early Learning Center HANDBOOK 2023-2024

Dear Families,



We WELCOME your family to the St. Joseph School District! The early childhood teachers and staff are excited to get to know your family and to help your preschooler learn and grow. We hope that we can answer some of your questions with this handbook, but please know that this is just the beginning of communication between home and school. Your child's education will benefit as we learn to exchange ideas with one another.

If you have questions or concerns at any time during the school year, please reach out.

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St. Joseph School District

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St. Joseph School District

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The SJSD Early Learning Center follows policies included in the SJSD Parent and Student Handbook (Grades PreK-12). Please go to the link below for more information:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-KjKFFHX_IuksYyPKyEgrGmrBmTB11r7sN5L_skGKF4/edit

Receipt of these handbooks is acknowledgement of the recipient's responsibility to know and abide by the policies and procedures listed within the handbooks.



The St. Joseph School District

Vision

*Creating a climate of achievement in
partnership with an engaged
community*

Mission

*Preparing students for success in a complex and
changing world*

Values

- *Learning*
- *Equity*
- *Community*

SJSD Early Childhood Education Commitments

🔑 The SJSD early childhood program is committed to providing experiences in an increasingly inclusive environment.

🔑 The SJSD early childhood program recognizes that learning in the preschool years is unique and developmental. The staff begins by working to understand individual preschooler's development, strengths, needs, and interests.

🔑 SJSD early childhood educators are committed to providing learning experiences that allow preschoolers to learn actively, thoughtfully, and socially in an environment that is safe and allows for mistakes.

🔑 SJSD early childhood educators honor parents/guardians as 'first teachers' and are committed to working together to help the children in our care learn and grow.



Preschool Programs



Peer programming:

Our district determines children eligible for peer placement programming by identifying preschool children most at risk of failing to meet the state's academic achievement standards based on multiple criteria. Children must participate in a district screening and be 4 years of age before August 1 to qualify as a peer. Peers may be placed in a full day or half day classroom, based on availability.

Special Education programming: Young students who have identified developmental delays may be eligible to attend classes that provide early childhood special education. These children, ages 3 through pre-kindergarten, demonstrate a need for Individualized Educational Programs. We offer a variety of classrooms with ECSE staff, and children are placed in classrooms based on their strengths, needs, and goals.

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- A birth certificate or other approved legal document, giving proof of the child's birthdate, must be presented at registration. Registration materials must be complete before a child enters SJSD preschool.
 - Children must be immunized according to state regulations before the first day of school.
 - We also require proof of residency in the St. Joseph School District attendance area in order to register your child for one of our preschool programs.

2023-2024 Preschool Sites

Lake Early Learning Center

1800 Alabama Street
St. Joseph, MO 64504



Half-Day Preschool:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

Morning Session 8:30-11:30 AM

Afternoon Session 12:30-3:30 PM

Full-Day Preschool:

Monday through Friday 8:30-3:30

Mark Twain Early Learning Center

705 S 31st Street
St. Joseph, MO 64507



Half-Day Preschool:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

Morning Session 7:45-10:45 AM

Afternoon Session 11:45-2:45 PM

Full-Day Preschool:

Monday through Friday 7:45-2:45



Showing up in Preschool Matters!

Early education is so important to long term school success! At preschool, your child will build skills in literacy & math. They will learn to solve problems and make friends. They will become stronger and gain control of motor tasks. But your preschooler will only gain these benefits if they attend regularly.

Some absences are unavoidable. Children who are showing signs of illness **SHOULD** stay home from school. If you are having difficulty getting your child to school because of something besides sickness, please reach out to us. If we see that your child is frequently absent, we will reach out to you to find out if we can help.

Please try to schedule appointments and vacations around these **important dates, 2023-2024:**

- August 21: First day of Preschool
- Monday, September 4: No School, extended weekend
- Friday, September 22: No School, extended weekend
- Friday, October 20: No School, extended weekend
- October 23-26: Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Friday, October 27: No School, extended weekend
- November 22-27: No School, Thanksgiving Break
- December 22-January 7: Winter Break
- Monday, January 15: No School, extended weekend
- February 16-19: No School, President's Day
- March 18-21: Parent/Teacher Conferences
- March 22-April 1: Spring Break
- May 22, 2024: Last Day of Preschool



Arrival and Dismissal

The St. Joseph School District is offering transportation to all 2023-2024 preschoolers with First Student. To facilitate this process, children will be placed in classrooms according to their drop off/pick up address.

If you choose to transport your child to an Early Learning Center, you may park and walk your preschooler(s) to the front door or wait in the drop-off line. When picking up your preschooler(s), we require that you park and walk to the door to pick up your preschooler(s).

By accepting a placement in preschool, you are signifying acceptance of our arrival/drop-off policy.

SJSD Early Childhood Program



Project Construct is an approach to teaching three to seven-year-old children that is based on ‘constructivist’ learning practices. Constructivism states that children are active learners who grow abilities as a result of interactions in the world. The Project Construct framework is linked to state and national early childhood learning standards and the Desired Results Developmental Profile, an assessment instrument for early childhood classrooms highly recommended by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The Saint Joseph District utilizes this framework along with the Emerging Language & Literacy Curriculum.



The **Emerging Language & Literacy Curriculum** (ELLC) prepares preschoolers for success in kindergarten and gives them a strong foundation in oral language and literacy with this scientifically based curriculum. This program not only addresses all developmental domains with theme-based units, children’s literature, multisensory activities, scaffolded instruction, and parental involvement but also creates an engaging environment with activity and play-based learning.



Sample Daily Schedule

- 8:30 **Family Style Breakfast** (self-care, conversation, counting, learning about nutrition)
- 9:00 **Opening/Group Meeting** (discussions, planning the day, movement & music, shared reading & writing)
- 9:30 **Learning Centers/Choice time** (creating, building, experimenting & investigations, cooking, puzzles & games, pretend play, independent reading & writing)
- 10:30 **Read-Aloud** (story, conversation, literacy)
- 10:45 **Outside/Gross Motor** (group games, environmental math, exploration & experimentation, movement, socialization)
- 11:15 **Closing/Group Meeting** (discussions, reflections on the day, distributing items/newsletter, music & movement)





Conscious Discipline[®]

The SJSD early childhood program follows the Conscious Discipline approach in order to integrate social emotional learning, discipline, and the growth of self-regulation in children. Self-regulation is so very important for learning. Conscious Discipline training helps SJSD teachers work with children to develop self-regulation skills. Our teachers use CD's five-step process and 'Feelings Buddies' in the classroom to help children reach self-regulation.

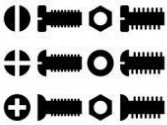
Here are the five steps:

- ★★ I Am: the child recognizes that he is triggered and finds a safe space.
For young children, sometimes the 'safe space' is the teacher.
- ★★ I Calm: the child begins to calm herself and identifies the feeling she is experiencing.
- ★★ I Feel: The child selects an appropriate Feelings Buddy, names the emotion, and works to help the Buddy regulate his emotion. The child develops positive self-talk.
- ★★ I Choose: The child chooses a strategy to make himself feel better.
- ★★ I Solve: The child identifies some lifelong problem-solving skills.



When you visit your child's SJSD preschool classroom, be sure to check out the Feelings Buddies.





Nuts & Bolts

designed by @Peggy.com

What to wear & bring to school:



Your preschooler should wear casual clothes that may get messy with paint or clay.



Send your child to school with a jacket or coat if it is chilly. We may go outside (even for just a bit) when it is over 20 degrees.



Shoes should be comfortable and safe.

Please do not send your child to school in flip flops or high heels.



Please put your child's name on hats, gloves, coats, and backpacks.



Please do not send a toy to school with your child. We do not want a special toy to become lost or broken.



Please send an extra set of clothes to school to be kept in your preschooler's backpack/cubby.

Birthday Treats:

We cannot have birthday parties at school, but we want to celebrate your preschooler's special day! Please chat about treats beforehand with the teacher.

Being Safe:

- When you visit your child's classroom (other than P.A.C.T. days), we ask that you stop by the office to get a badge.
- When picking your child up early, you must sign him/her out from the school's office.
- We will have regularly scheduled safety drills, such as fire drills, at preschool.
- In case of accident or illness, we may call home. Please make sure that we have current contact information and multiple, current emergency contacts.

Parent And Child Together (P.A.C.T.):

Your child's teacher will create a Family Involvement Plan to engage your family in preschool learning on a regular basis.





Parents As Teachers

Parents are a child's first and most influential teachers. Parents As Teachers helps families lay a strong foundation for a child's future success in school.

P.A.T. Services:

- 👤 Personalized home visits can start before a baby is born! A certified parent educator, specially trained in child development and eager to help families give children a great start, provides home visits. The SJSJSD Parents As Teachers program prioritizes children Birth-3 Years for this service.
- 👤 Group meetings with other parents provide opportunities where families can share parenting experiences, gain new insights, and talk about topics that interest them.
- 👤 Regularly scheduled play groups.
- 👤 Periodic screenings are conducted to better understand your child's strengths and needs. This is especially important if you suspect developmental delays.
- 👤 A referral network helps families find special services, if needed, that are beyond the scope of PAT.



For More Information,

Contact: 816-671-4018

