



Parent Handbook
2024 – 2025

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Welcome

Dear STEAMspark Families,

Welcome! We are excited to share more about the STEAMspark experience. As you explore our parent handbook, you will have the opportunity to review the campus operational policies.

At STEAMspark, we offer several programming options:

1. Full-Time Programming (8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. daily): Children from six weeks to Second Grade have the option of a full day authentic Montessori program.
2. [SPARKsquad](#): Children can participate in Before School (7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.), After School (3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.), and Extended Day (3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.) programs. This program includes a rich Montessori curriculum infused with a STEAMspark flare with our one of a kind [SPARKhub](#).

The SPARKhub is an interactive space where children can experience 21st century learning, science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) all in a fun hands-on environment.

3. [summerSPARK](#): Children up to twelve years old are invited to join our summer enrichment program.

Children participating in summerSPARK are allowed to participate in SPARKsquad.

You will feel the “spark” the moment you enter STEAMspark Montessori Experience. We pride ourselves in operating a clean, safe, and prepared environment. However, even more exciting than our state-of-the-art facility, is our well-trained and experienced staff, not to mention our top-notch children. We hope you see the “sparks” of excitement, feel the “sparks” with hands-on materials and equipment, hear the learning “sparks” taking place and ultimately enjoy becoming a part of our STEAMspark family.

Our parent handbook is a helpful resource as you navigate the admission process. You will also find helpful information on upcoming events, and so much more on our website. Please don't forget to follow us @STEAMsparkExp on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#). If you still have questions, just pick up the phone and give us a call at 214.809.5767.

We are honored that you are joining STEAMspark, and we look forward to nurturing your child as part of our STEAMspark family.

Come “sparkle” with us!

STEAMspark Montessori Experience

Contacting STEAMspark

Your child's **Guide** can be contacted with questions regarding academic and social development, classroom events or activities as well as to schedule an observation or meeting.

The **Front Office** can be contacted with questions regarding emergencies, absences, illnesses, payment support, campus vendors, before and after school programming, school policies and procedures, to receive feedback, to support questions or issues unresolved by your child's guide, or to schedule a meeting. They can also be contacted to answer any questions or concerns about the policies and procedures of the campus.

Parent Communication

All parent communication will take place through Brightwheel or Transparent Classroom.

Brightwheel

Brightwheel is a downloadable app that you will gain access to upon completing your child's enrollment at STEAMspark. There you will be able to sign your child in or out each day. It is also where you will be able to track your child's food, bathroom and sleeping habits throughout the day.

Transparent Classroom

Transparent Classroom is a downloadable app that keeps you connected to all things Montessori at STEAMspark. Your child's guide will monitor their progress through this software and allow you to follow along. It is also where you will receive pictures of things your child was working on so that you are always aware of what they are doing, why they are doing it and how you can incorporate school activities in the home setting.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Parent Teacher Conferences are an excellent opportunity for you to find out more about your child's performance. STEAMspark conducts an Open House in the summer for you to meet your Guide. We hold Mid-Year Conferences in the winter to review progress made during the first semester. We close out the year with an End of Year Conference to review progress made during the entire year.

Every family will receive a Parent/Teacher Orientation with their child's Lead Guide upon enrolling at STEAMspark.

Weekly Newsletter

STEAMspark produces a weekly newsletter for our families that covers upcoming events and important information, news from each learning environment, and next week's menu.

Programs at STEAMspark

Nido

Obviously, your home is the best environment for your infant. The next best thing is the Nido room at STEAMspark Montessori. The word “nido” means nest. The “Nido” environment has a home like feeling with caring Montessori staff to nurture and care for your child. This is the optimal environment for your child to build confidence and develop early language skills. From six weeks until approximately 18 Months, your child will be fed, soothed, read to, and nurtured.

Toddler

Your child will be encouraged to explore and investigate their surroundings within the Toddler environment. At STEAMspark Montessori the toddler room is a peaceful, supportive, and safe environment for your child’s natural passion for wonder, curiosity, exploration, and discovery to come alive. The toddler environment is prepared for your child to learn, grow, and develop his/her independence. With patient and trained staff your child will be guided and encouraged to embrace their independence. STEAMspark Montessori Guides will meet the needs of the “I do it” stage. This would include tasks such as toilet training, feeding times, and general self-care all while increasing self- awareness and self-confidence.

Primary

In the Primary Montessori environment at STEAMspark Montessori, your 3 to 6-year-old child will transition from self-awareness to awareness and care for others. This includes integrating grace and courtesy, the Peace Curriculum, and service learning into a rigorous academic Montessori curriculum. Along with strengthening your child’s social and emotional development, your child will use research based academic materials to develop strong foundations in sensorial, practical life, language, math, culture, and STEAM integrated concepts.

K – 2 Talented and Gifted Private School Program

In the K - 2nd Grade Montessori program at STEAMspark, your child will build upon their foundational skills in a nurturing and intellectually stimulating environment. This program is designed for children who demonstrate strong academic abilities, requiring a minimum test score of the 80th percentile in Math and Reading for admission.

Our rigorous academic curriculum integrates Montessori principles with advanced concepts in math, language, and STEAM. Through research-based academic materials, your child will develop critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and a deep understanding of cultural studies.

In addition to academic growth, we emphasize social and emotional development. Children will engage in the Peace Curriculum, service-learning projects, and lessons in grace and courtesy.

This holistic approach ensures that your child not only excels academically but also grows into a compassionate and considerate individual.

SPARKsquad

Time at home should be all about the family, giving the parent the ability to turn off their “teacher mode” after their workday and focus solely on the happiness and success of their child. For children in the SPARKsquad, we strive to actively provide engagement through an abundance of knowledge, life skills, and learning in both academic and active stations. From experiment stations, to robotics, crafting, and number walls, engagement never stops within our SPARKhub. The SPARKsquad can also take their adventures outside to utilize our multiple age-appropriate campus gardens, sport court, and play spaces.

Our program offers exciting learning opportunities that balance social, mental, and physical activities: from time spent nurturing friendships, finishing homework, and enjoying sports and other physical activities. SPARKsquad bridges the gap between school and a parent’s work schedule to encourage a child’s growing desire for new challenges and opportunities that nurture their expanding world.

As the pandemic continues, we know that times are uncertain for all. We understand parents and families with busy schedules—because of this, the STEAMspark team wants to offer as much help to your family as we can provide. We know those moments at home with your child are precious and that is why our goal is to help, guide, and direct your child’s academics and play so that when pick-up time arrives, you do not have to worry about anything except spending time with your wonderful child!

Children in both our full-time and part-time programs can engage in our SPARKsquad. Accessible in the morning from 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. and in the afternoon from 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m., STEAM is at each child’s fingertips.

Transportation is provided to/from select local elementary schools.

STEAMspark Partnerships

At STEAMspark, it is our goal to provide your child with a full day of activities, which is why we have partnered with local soccer, music, gymnastics programs and more to ensure that by the time you pick- up in the afternoon no other stops need to be made as you journey home.

"The child's development follows a path of successive stages of independence, and our knowledge of this must guide us in our behavior towards him. We have to help the child to act, will and think for himself. This is the art of serving the spirit, an art which can be practiced to perfection only when working among children." – Maria Montessori

Calendar and Schedule

Calendar

STEAMspark is open daily from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. We designed our school to meet the needs of working parents. Here is a link to our [2024 – 2025 Calendar](#).

Schedule

Throughout the school day, Toddler, Primary, and K - 2 children will engage in a Montessori work-cycle. Guides and Assistant Guides have the flexibility to choose their learning settings from the classroom, campus outdoor areas, or the indoor SPARKHub to maintain engagement and concentration. Before lunchtime, there is a 45-minute outdoor play session on their respective playgrounds. Following lunch, children either nap or have an extra work period for those who do not nap.

Nido schedules are designed around the needs of each child, therefore their classroom schedule will vary.

Our campus offers a before and after school program, which features our SPARKsquad. There, children can enjoy breakfast or snacks, read, garden, homework help, engage in outdoor play and more.

Logistics

Signing In and Out

All children must be signed in each morning and out each afternoon by a parent or guardian using our Brightwheel software. When a child is signed in, STEAMspark Montessori Experience assumes responsibility for their safety and wellbeing. When a child is signed out, the parent or guardian assumes responsibility for their safety and wellbeing. Every person who has permission to sign in and sign out a child has their own independent four (4) digit personal identification number. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure each authorized pick-up person is using their own code.

Drop-off

The Montessori work-cycle begins at 8:30 a.m. at the start of school day and lasts until 11:30 a.m. It is encouraged that your child(s) be dropped off by 8:15 a.m. to maximize their academic learning and reduce the interruption for other children engaged in work.

Upon entering the campus, children are encouraged to carry their own belongings to build confidence and independence. We encourage you to remind your child that you will see them after school, to enjoy their day and send them off with a warm physical gesture.

Parents are welcome into the building at any time. Please see the [Providers Guide to Parents Right](#).

Absences

We hope to see your child daily, however, we understand that several factors may prohibit this from taking place. When possible, please call STEAMspark Montessori Experience or send us a message via Brightwheel before 8 a.m. to alert our campus of your child's absence. This allows us to know that they are safe, be made aware of an illness, update your child's guide, and adjust our staffing for the day, as necessary.

Regardless of absence, tuition must be paid at STEAMspark.

Tardies

Due to the focus on high quality instruction, we prefer an 8:15 arrival for all our children.

Excessive tardiness could lead to dismissal from STEAMspark and the forfeiture of your deposit.

Pick-up

The school day ends at 3:00 p.m. and children should be picked up promptly at their designated pick-up time. If you are enrolled in our after-school programming, your child will need to be picked up by 5:00 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. A ten-minute grace period is allotted to account for minor traffic delays. In the event we are unable to contact a parent, guardian, or emergency contact, we are required to contact our local childcare licensing office in addition to local authorities for child abandonment.

Children will only be released to a parent, guardian, or emergency contact as listed on their Brightwheel account. If an alternative person who is not listed on your child's account will pick-up, it is required to call or email STEAMspark Montessori Experience with this one-time change and include the first and last name of the designated person. Upon arrival at our campus, their ID will be checked to verify its match.

Due to child safety and to protect instructional programming, pick up is performed at the door, curbside, or via the pickup line dependent on your child's age and the time you pick up. This helps us foster independence in our children.

What to Bring to STEAMspark Montessori Experience?

Clothing

Children at STEAMspark should arrive in their uniform daily, except for our Nido and Toddlers less than 24 months. **All clothing should be labeled with your children's initials to avoid being misplaced in the event they need to change clothes.** Shoes should be closed-toed with a supportive grip suitable for running and climbing.

All children are required to have at least two changes of clothes on campus (top, bottom, underwear, and socks), which does not have to be a STEAMspark uniform. Changes of clothes should be solid colors for tops and bottoms, free of logos and images with a warm weather and cold weather option available.

Swimwear, hats, and visors should be sent in warmer months and sweaters, jackets and coats should be sent in colder months.

Diapers and wipes should be sent with all children who are not toilet trained. Pull-ups are not to be utilized as they provide children with a false sense of independence and do not provide a quality absorbency.

Ointments

If you would like STEAMspark to apply a topical ointment to your child, such as lotion, lip balm, petroleum jelly, diaper cream, sunscreen, insect repellent etc., it must be provided by a parent or guardian and be accompanied by a completed Topical Ointment form.

Nap Materials and Safe Sleep Policy

At STEAMspark, we will provide your children with a clean sheet and blanket daily to use on our classroom cots or mattresses for Nido children. Nido children are unable to use blankets but can be sent with sleep sacks by a parent or guardian to provide added warmth while sleeping. Sleep sacks must be accompanied by an Infant Sleep Safe form.

Sound machines are welcomed for children enrolled in our Nido program. Children in our Toddler and Primary environments are welcome to bring an item to help them nap, such as a doll or bear, however it will only be utilized during the nap period and can be removed from your child if it poses a distraction to themselves or their peers.

All Nido children will sleep on their backs until they are able to roll over independently, with only a loose pacifier offered during nap, in accordance with our Safe Sleep Policy. Toys, bibs, and any restrictive devices are not permissible in the nap area.

Food

Allergy Policy

If your child has a documented allergy, we require a copy of the food allergy emergency plan as provided by a medical professional. This documentation allows us to accurately follow the protocol necessary to keep your child safe.

Religious and Cultural Beliefs

At STEAMspark, we welcome diversity and understand that your family may prohibit the consumption of certain food items. If you have not included this information on your child's enrollment form, please be sure to provide this information to your child's guide so that we may update your account.

Campus Provided Meals

Your tuition at STEAMspark includes a morning snack and lunch. If you are enrolled in before school programming, your child will also receive breakfast. If you are enrolled in after-school programming, your child will also receive an afternoon snack. All meals will be served using real glass plates and cups and real silverware, sized to accommodate the ages of each environment.

Breakfast is a meal consisting of fresh fruit, dairy, and whole grains. A snack is a meal consisting of a variation of the following components: whole grains, protein, fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, and dairy. Lunch is a meal consisting of protein, whole grains and/or fresh fruit and vegetables.

All meals are prepared onsite by our farm to table chef, with delivery from local grocery stores.

Meals from Home

You are welcome to bring breakfast, snacks, or lunch from home to be served apart from the provided school meals or in addition to. Meals from home must be packaged in reusable containers that can be easily opened by your child, except for Nido children. These meals must also be nutritious. Non-nutritious items like candy and cookies will not be served and sent back home with your child at the end of the day.

Nido children should be sent with bottles or cups prepared with their respective breastmilk or formula. All bottles and cups must be labeled with your child's name and the date or preparation. Nursing mothers are welcome to use our campus Nurturing Nest to feed directly or to pump.

Toddler, Primary, and Elementary (K – 2) children should bring a labeled water bottle daily.

Our campus will be unable to heat meals from home in a microwave, however each classroom is equipped with a mini fridge to keep items cold.

Food brought for special occasions must be prepackaged by the store or premade by the store.

Foods to Avoid

STEAMspark Montessori Experience is a nut free campus. Please avoid sending food items containing nuts and/or peanut butter.

Choking Hazard

Research has shown that 90% of fatal choking occurs in children younger than four years of age. Examples of foods that present a risk of choking include hot dogs sliced into rounds, whole grapes, hard candy, string cheese, nuts, seeds, raw peas, dried fruit, pretzels, chips, peanuts, popcorn, marshmallows, spoonful of peanut butter, and chunks of meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

Special Events

Birthdays

As a Montessori school, your child will have a Celebration of Life to mark their one-year trip around the sun. Your child will walk around the sun in their classroom and share a Chef prepared snack with their peers to mark the occasion.

Invitations

If your child is having a celebration outside of school, it is encouraged that all children from their class be invited when requesting to pass invitations out on campus. At STEAMspark, we promote an environment of inclusivity. In the event you decide not to invite all children from your child's class we ask that invitations be passed out outside of the school setting.

Field Trips

Primary and Elementary children will receive a permission slip ahead of an off- campus event that does or does not require shuttle service. This permission slip must be signed by all applicable parents/guardians for your child to attend.

A field trip will require you to authorize STEAMspark Montessori Experience to transport your child using our campus shuttle bus and understand that by doing so you expose your child to inherent risks that could jeopardize their safety whether knowingly or unknowingly. As a result, you release STEAMspark and its affiliates from all injuries, losses, damages, claims, lawsuits and any other liability to yourself, your child, family, and any individual in connection with a transportation related activity.

SplashPad

STEAMspark is excited to offer daily water play and learning in the Spring and Summer months. Children are welcome to enjoy these activities if they have appropriate clothing for water, hats and sunscreen provided by a parent or guardian. Sunscreen is considered a topical ointment, and a topical ointment form will need to be completed by a parent or guardian before a member of our team can apply it to your child.

By enrolling at STEAMspark, you grant your child permission to engage in the SplashPad at STEAMspark Montessori Experience, in addition to water play tables when weather permits.

Discipline Policy

Child Development

Maria Montessori observed that through a child's ability to move comes a desire to learn on a real adventure. When a discipline issue arises, it is essential to determine if the child is stimulated through their learning. A child completing work that is below or above their academic level could result in boredom or frustration. It is the lead guide's responsibility to provide high-quality lessons and observations to ensure children are interested, knowledgeable of their work, and appropriately challenged. Individual work plans should be planned, followed, and documented within the Montessori curriculum system.

On the STEAMspark campus, children are expected to show grace and courtesy toward their peers and guides. This is modeled daily by all adults on the campus, both in and out of the classroom. In addition to academic lessons, grace and courtesy lessons provide children the opportunity to practice waiting in line to wash their hands, cleaning up behind themselves after lunch, walking slowly in the classroom and quietly in the hallway, handling materials gently, etc. Our staff will go by Ms., Mrs., Mr., or Dr. and their last name when communicating with children.

Clear language helps further connect these points to children through verbal illustrations. For example: *"I noticed that you finished your work quickly and began talking to a friend after. During the work-cycle, we work independently with a quiet voice so everyone can concentrate. We can pair with a friend using a whisper voice only if they have also finished their work when you return to clean up your work. you may select a new activity to do on your own or silently observe if another child who has finished with their materials is ready to partner up."*

In certain situations, the above attempts may not register for all children. We acknowledge that certain instances require a firm, respectful approach from the adult in the classroom to prevent misbehavior. For example: *"When you pulled the book out of your friend's hand, a page ripped. Now no one will be able to use the book until it is repaired. Also, can you see the tears on their face? Why do you think they are crying? I'm sure your friend would have welcomed you to share the book, but we lost the opportunity to work with a partner when we forgot to ask with kindness."*

At STEAMspark, our goal will always be to address behavioral concerns within the environment. The concerns have taken place to build a child's confidence that they can make a better choice. However, we will utilize our discretion in temporarily removing a child from the classroom to complete the work of their environment or engage in an additional purposeful task to redirect their attention.

Children in each of our campus environments will exhibit age-appropriate behaviors. In our Nido and Toddler classrooms, it is common for children to bite, scratch, and pull hair as they have not

developed the means to communicate verbally when they disagree with their peers' actions. In our Primary classrooms, it is common to see children kick, hit, or push as they begin developing appropriate emotions centered around friendship. These behaviors can often be resolved through the above channels and serve as an opportunity for other children to understand the importance of self-control with their bodies.

Ongoing behavioral issues may warrant a meeting between parent and guide, parent and head of school or parent, guide, and head of school. Such an arrangement would be to work collaboratively by implementing an action plan for both school and home.

Suspension and expulsion, while rare, will be a joint decision between the head of school and executive leadership team. Families will be notified in writing of said decision and given one week's notice to find a new school for their child.

STEAMspark Montessori Experience reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to discontinue the enrollment of any child, for any reason, at any time, with or without notice.

"Since the child now learns to move rather than to sit still, he prepares himself not for the school, but life." - Maria Montessori

Biting

Biting is a serious safety concern for young children. Biting can be harmful to other children and staff. Biting, like other unwanted behaviors, may require repeated redirection as the child learns new ways of expression. With patience and positive redirection, children will learn positive outlets for their emotions.

Our goal is to help identify what is causing the biting and resolve these issues. This policy serves to protect children that are bitten. If a biting incident occurs, state regulations require that we contact the parent of the child performing the biting and the parent of the child bitten. We do not share the names of the children involved.

When A Biting Incident Occurs:

Our staff strongly disapproves of biting. The staff's job is to keep the children safe and help a child that bites learn different, more appropriate behavior. We do not use techniques to alarm, hurt, or frighten children such as biting back or washing a child's mouth out with soap.

For the child that was bitten:

1. First aid is given to the bite. It is cleaned with soap and water. If the skin is broken, the bite is covered with a bandage.
2. Parents are notified via Brightwheel.

For the child that bit:

1. The teacher will firmly tell the child “We do not bite,” and follow with emphasis that biting hurts and they would not want to be hurt themselves. Positive phrases that redirect behavior will be provided such as, “We bite apples and carrots, not people. Biting hurts.” or “People are for hugging, not biting.”
2. The child will be removed from the activity to allow time for them to reach an appropriate level of calmness.
3. The parents are notified via Brightwheel.

When Biting Continues:

1. The child will be shadowed by a classroom teacher to allow for intervention and redirection of behavior before the next chance to bite occurs.
2. The child will be observed by the classroom staff to determine what is causing the child to bite (teething, communication, frustration, etc.). The administrative staff may also observe the child if the classroom staff is unable to determine the cause. Reasons for biting are as follows:

Infants: Experimental, sensory pleasure, teething

Toddlers: Frustration, fatigue, attention-seeking, confined spaces, inability to communicate

Preschoolers: Aggression, deliberate

3. The child will receive positive attention and approval for positive behavior.

When biting becomes excessive:

1. If a child inflicts three bites in a 10-day period (10 weekdays) in which skin is broken, bruised, or the bite leaves a significant mark, a conference will be held with the parents to discuss the child’s behavior and how the behavior may be modified. The child will be suspended from school for 1 day.
2. At this time, STEAMspark leadership will assess if a change of classroom environment will be a needed strategy to assist in the prevention and interference of biting.
3. If the child again inflicts two bites in a one-week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, the child will be suspended for **three** school days.
4. If a child once again inflicts 1 bite in a one week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, **the parents will be asked to make other school arrangements as this can lead to dismissal from STEAMspark.**

Health and Safety

As your child masters their body, they will experience a series of bumps, bruises, and scrapes from adventures on our campus. An incident report will be sent home to give you an explanation of a minor injury. A major injury, such as excessive bleeding or a fall involving the head will warrant a call home in addition to an incident report.

Illnesses

The health and safety of your family is our top priority. If your child exhibits any of the following symptoms prior to their drop off or while at school, they must stay home or be picked up early: diarrhea, vomiting, 100-degree fever and above, nausea, unidentified rash, lice, colored mucus, sore throat, cough, etc.

Our campus is equipped with a Healing Haven so that children can rest in a private room with an adult outside of their classroom to avoid the spread of germs to other children. To return to school, a child must be symptom free for at least 24 hours without medication.

If your child is diagnosed with any communicable or contagious disease like chicken pox or hand, foot, and mouth, we require you to notify us through email or to call the campus directly. Upon doing so, an email will be sent to the families in your child's classroom or the entire campus depending on the illness. We value privacy and will never share a child's name during the process, rather informing those who may have been in contact so that they can be monitored for symptoms.

Immunizations and Statement of Health

STEAMspark Montessori Experience requires all children from any of our programs to have up to date vaccinations. Each time your child visits a medical professional and receives a new vaccine, it is your duty to provide us with a copy so that we may keep your child's file updated. Failure to provide updated vaccine records can result in a loss of enrollment.

During the enrollment process, you will be required to submit the following documents:

- **Statement of Health**, which is a written statement, from a health-care professional who has examined the child *within the past year, indicating the child is able to take part in the child-care program.*
- **Immunization Record** *with the signature (including a rubber stamp or electronic signature) of the health-care professional who administered the vaccines.*

If your family does not vaccinate for personal or religious beliefs, a valid vaccine exemption form must be on file and will be approved at the discretion of STEAMspark.

All children aged four and above must have a vision and hearing screening completed by a medical professional.

Medications and Emergencies

Any medication that your child needs to take, whether prescribed or over the counter, must have an associated medication authorization form. This form allows our team permission to administer and provides the correct dosage and frequency. All medication must come in the original packaging so that our staff can verify its label matches the medication authorization form details.

By enrolling your child at STEAMspark Montessori Experience you authorize STEAMspark to provide any necessary healthcare for the betterment of your child's health. This could involve your child being taken to the nearest hospital, which may or not be in-network for your respective insurance. As a result, you absolve STEAMspark and its affiliates from all claims of loss that may arise by providing such authorization.

Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather, STEAMspark will follow the guidelines recommended by the Carrollton Farmer's Branch school district. Please check the website <https://www.cfbisd.edu/> or <https://steampark.com/> or our social media accounts for closing or delay information.

If STEAMspark must close due to any unexpected circumstances, such as inclement weather, then full payment of tuition is required. We reserve the right to close any additional days needed to make sure we can operate in full integrity to our brand and full tuition is expected.

We will collaborate with families to make sure our decisions are fair and honorable.

Child Abuse Policy

The Texas Abuse and Neglect Hotline contact number (1-800-252-5400) is a required posting in a prominent location. The posting is also located in the front foyer area of the campus.

Gang Free Zone

Under the Texas Penal Code any area within one thousand feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to a harsher penalty.

Emergency Preparedness

Our campus staff and children are prepared for emergencies by practicing monthly drills to prepare in the event of a fire, lockdown, earthquake, tornado, or hurricane. All our staff members are pediatric CPR, first aid trained and certified for these purposes.

Fire Inspections

To keep the employees, children, families, and visitors of STEAMspark Montessori Experience safe, we will conduct an annual fire inspection by a state or local marshal. This information will

be kept on file for verification of inspection date and findings.

Fire Extinguishers

STEAMspark Montessori Experience will be equipped with a sprinkler system and have at least one fire extinguisher on each hallway rated 3A-40BC.

Smoke Detection Systems

STEAMspark Montessori Experience is equipped with working smoke detectors, either electronic, individual electric, or battery-operated, as inspected by the local fire marshal.

Carbon Monoxide Systems

STEAMspark Montessori Experience is an all-electric building with no gas present. However, the building is equipped with a working carbon monoxide detection system.

Evacuation

In the event of a fire or gas leak, each classroom will follow the written procedures listed below.

- The first responsibility of staff in an emergency evacuation is to evacuate children to the designated safe area (outermost edge of the west and east parking lot) or alternate shelter location (**located at Unifocus, 2455 McIver Lane; Carrollton, Texas 75066**).
- All employees, caregivers, parents, and volunteers will be made aware of the designated emergency evacuation area and the alternate shelter location.
- Staff will take the red emergency bag hanging near the classroom exit door with him/her and immediately guide the children to exit through the emergency exit doors of their classroom.
- The red emergency bag contains parent and emergency contact telephone number for each child in care, authorization for emergency care for each child in care. The child tracking system for children in care will be available via a designated app.
- Children under 24 months of age, or who have limited mobility, or who otherwise may need assistance in an emergency (mental, visual, or hearing impairments) will be placed in the evacuation cribs to ensure immediate assistance is provided during the evacuation.
- Upon exiting, staff is responsible for the orderly movement of their children to the safest area on the school grounds away from the school building (outermost edge of the east or west parking lot) or alternate shelter (located at Unifocus, 2455 McIver Lane; Carrollton, Texas 75066; 972-512-5000).
- Once the children and adults are in a safe place, an adult will check the roster to be sure all are accounted for and hold up the appropriate emergency card for the director to see (OK, HELP, ALERT, MEDICAL HELP). The director will give the signal when it is safe to return to the building.
- Important note: An emergency evacuation and relocation diagram including the name and address of the alternate shelter away from the center is in each room the children use. The diagram is also posted near the entrance and/or exit of the room and where children and employees may easily view the diagram.
- Parents will be contacted using the emergency telephone number that is on file with us.
- Staff will remain calm and continue to care for and supervise the children until each child has been released and/or reunified with their parents after the evacuations, relocation, or sheltering/lock-down has been lifted.
- Children will be unified with their parents in an orderly manner at the reunification point. Prior to reunification, parents will be required to sign children out with their assigned pin code verification number and present pick up documentation (Laminated Child Name Placard provided upon enrollment) to the Director and/or Designee.
- The Director and/or staff designee will communicate with local authorities (i.e., fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services, health department), parents and Childcare Licensing representative.

Relocation

In cases of flood, hurricane, medical emergency, or communicable disease that requires relocation of STEAMspark employees and its children, **Unifocus, 2455 McIver Lane; Carrollton, Texas 75066 will serve as our designated shelter.**

- The first responsibility of staff in an emergency relocation is to relocate children to the designated alternate shelter location (located at Unifocus, 2455 McIver Lane; Carrollton, Texas 75066; 972-512-5000).
- All employees, caregivers, parents, and volunteers will be made aware of the designated emergency evacuation area and the alternate shelter location.
- Staff will take the red emergency bag hanging near the classroom exit door with him/her and immediately guide the children to exit through the emergency exit doors of their classroom.
- The red emergency bag contains parent and emergency contact telephone number for each child in care, authorization for emergency care for each child in care. The child tracking system for children in care will be available via a designated app.
- Children under 24 months of age, or who have limited mobility, or who otherwise may need assistance in an emergency (mental, visual, or hearing impairments) will be placed in the evacuation cribs to ensure immediate assistance is provided during the relocation.
- Upon exiting, staff are responsible for the orderly movement of their children to the alternate shelter (located at Unifocus, 2455 McIver Lane; Carrollton, Texas 75066).
- Once the staff and children arrive at the alternate shelter location, an adult will check the roster to be sure all are accounted for and hold up the appropriate emergency card for the director to see (OK, HELP, ALERT, MEDICAL HELP).
- Important note: An emergency evacuation and relocation diagram including the name and address of the alternate shelter away from the center is in each room the children use. The diagram is also posted near the entrance and/or exit of the room and where children and employees may easily view the diagram.
- Parents will be contacted using the emergency telephone number that is on file with us.
- Staff will remain calm and continue to care for and supervise the children until each child has been released and reunified with their parents after the relocation has been lifted.
- Children will be unified with their parents in an orderly manner at the reunification point. Prior to reunification, parents will be required to sign children out with their assigned pin code verification number and present pick up documentation to the Director and/or Designee.
- The Director and/or staff designee will communicate with local authorities (i.e., fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services, health department), parents and Childcare Licensing representative.

Sheltering and Lock-Down

To protect employees and children from a tornado, volatile person on the premises, or an endangering person in the area, the closest restroom will be used as a means of protection.

- The first responsibility of staff in an emergency is to ensure child safety during a shelter in place and/or lock down.
- All employees, caregivers, parents, and volunteers will be made aware of the designated shelter in place and/or lock down emergency evacuation procedures and the alternate shelter location.
- Once the shelter in place and/or lock down commences, staff will take the red emergency bag hanging near the classroom exit door and immediately guide the children to the nearest restroom of their classroom.
- Staff will ensure the lights are off and the shades drawn prior to entering the classroom restroom.
- The red emergency bag contains parent and emergency contact telephone numbers for each child in care, authorization for emergency care for each child in care. The child tracking system for children in care will be available via a designated app.
- Children under 24 months of age, or who have limited mobility, or who otherwise may need assistance in an emergency (mental, visual, or hearing impairments) will be placed in the evacuation cribs to ensure immediate assistance is provided during the shelter in place/lock down.
- Upon entering the restroom, staff are responsible for the orderly movement of their children to the shelter in place/lock down seated position.
- Once the staff and children arrive in the shelter in place/lock down location, an adult will check the roster to be sure all are accounted for and slide the appropriate emergency card under the restroom door.
- Important note: An emergency shelter in place/ lockdown diagram including the designated shelter and lockdown location is in each room the children use. The diagram is also posted near the entrance and/or exit of the room and where children and employees may easily view the diagram.
- Parents will be contacted using the emergency telephone number that is on file with us.
- Staff will remain calm and continue to care for and supervise the children until each child has been released and reunified with their parents after the shelter in place and lockdown has been lifted.
- Children will be reunified with their parents in an orderly manner once the local authorities provide and all clear. Prior to reunification, parents will be required to sign children out with their assigned pin code verification number and present pick up documentation to the Director and/or Designee.
- The Director and/or staff designee will immediately communicate with local authorities (i.e., fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services, health department), parents and Childcare Licensing representative.

Under the Texas Penal Code any area within one thousand feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to a harsher penalty. You may inform the parents by: (A) Providing this information in the operational policies.

Financial Policies

Tuition and Fees

Please refer to the STEAMspark rate sheet for pricing information specific to your child's campus. An application fee and deposit are required before your child is offered a spot at STEAMspark. Upon enrollment, the first month's tuition will be prorated if started after the first. Tuition is always due on the first of the month with a 2-day grace period provided. If unpaid thereafter a \$25 late fee will apply for each day tuition remains unpaid, not to exceed \$100.

summerSPARK (Kindergarten – 12-Year-olds) Summer Program

Program information, including the camp schedule and fee structure, will be detailed on the summerSPARK registration form. summerSPARK operates on a weekly schedule, with each camp session lasting one week. Field Trips are a core component of summerSPARK.

Refunds (minus the enrollment fee) will be granted for cancellations made on or before May 1. After May 1, no refund will be made for withdrawals from all or part of a session. Tuition payments (minus the enrollment fee) will be refunded only if an offering is canceled by summerSPARK at STEAMspark and an alternate offering is not available.

Discounts

STEAMspark offers a sibling discount of 10 percent off the **youngest** child's tuition. Discounts are only available when at least two children in a family are full-time STEAMspark children.

Withdrawals

While we hope to provide your child with a continuous premier education, we understand a time may come when it is necessary for your family to withdraw. As such, we require a 30-day notice. Your 30-day notice allows us to inform a family on our waitlist that a spot has opened and apply your deposit to the final month's tuition. Any difference that remains will be applied to the original form of payment. Children enrolled less than 90 days will forfeit their complete deposit.

Please note: Children enrolled fewer than 90 days from the start of the academic year, normally the first Monday in August, will forfeit their deposit.

Vacations/Temporary Withdrawals

As a school, we strive to provide the highest quality education for your children, which includes maintaining a dedicated and talented staff who work tirelessly to ensure their academic growth and well-being. One of the key components of our commitment to excellence is our continued support of our educators, including providing them with fair and consistent compensation. We

understand that many families choose to take vacations during school breaks, and while we encourage you to spend quality time with your loved ones, we want to emphasize that our operational costs, including teacher salaries, remain constant regardless of whether classes are in session.

Therefore, it is important to clarify that tuition fees are not discounted or prorated for periods when children are on vacation. This ensures we can uphold our commitment to providing a top-notch educational experience for your children while also supporting our valued staff members.

STEAMspark reserves the right to add to or change any policies, procedures, or protocols of our Parent Handbook at any time and with or without notice. This handbook is a living document.

Handbook Receipt

By submitting your child's enrollment form, you acknowledge that you have received and reviewed the STEAMspark Montessori Experience Parent Handbook, which includes its operational policies.