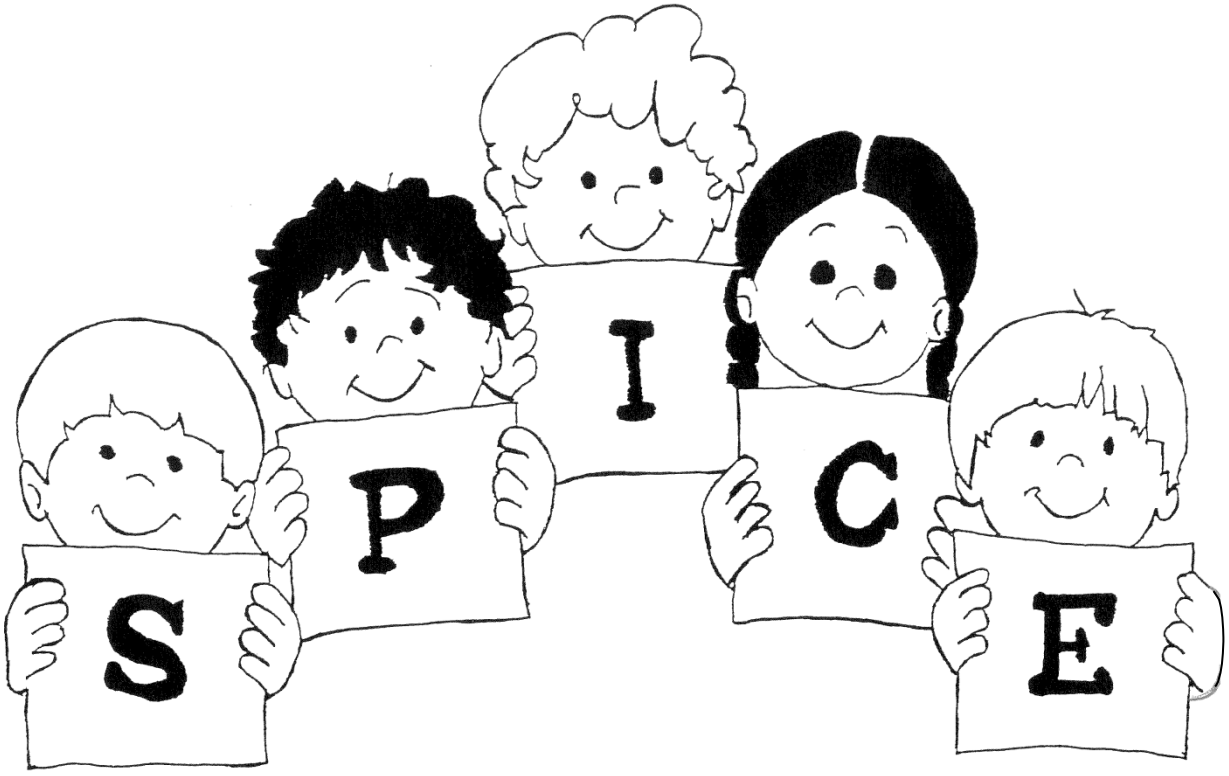

2026-2027

PARENT HANDBOOK

SUPERVISED PROGRAM IN a CARING ENVIRONMENT
- SPICE -

The SPICE program is a non-profit, self-supporting program of childcare provided for elementary age students and parents of the Fort Smith Public Schools. Currently SPICE is offered at Barling, Bonneville, Cavanaugh, Cook, Euper Lane, Fairview, and Woods Elementary Schools.

The SPICE program provides a continuation of important elements in the child's educational environment. This includes a well-known, comfortable place with a friendly staff and other children they already know. This manual explains the SPICE policies and operational procedures.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

As a school-age childcare service, the SPICE program provides an informal and unique environment for children of different ages to live and learn together. SPICE maintains a structured environment to ensure order and safety, yet provides children with opportunities to make choices and become involved in both group and independent activities. The program includes a wide range of social, recreational and creative opportunities. SPICE students are offered a snack planned by cafeteria staff with consideration given to nutritional content. The SPICE program is based on the following goals:

- provides a safe environment for students after school,
- offers a wide variety of creative and recreational activities,
- helps children feel good about themselves and develop positive attitudes toward school, and
- encourages growth in relationships and social skills.

HOURS AND DAYS OF OPERATION

The SPICE calendar operates in conjunction with the school calendar. When school is in session, SPICE is in session. SPICE operates a daily schedule starting at the close of school and ending at 6:00 p.m. See Appendix A for a copy of the school calendar.

THE SPICE PROGRAM DOES NOT PERMIT DROP-IN PARTICIPATION.

PAYMENT OF FEES

PAYMENT IS DUE THE 1ST WORKING DAY OF EACH MONTH!

Monthly fees for school days are averaged over 9 equal payments, September through May. Discounts are not given for the Christmas holiday or Spring Break because the fee schedule is averaged into 9 equal payments over the entire school year. There is no additional charge for the school days in August.

CATEGORIES	FEES
One-time Registration Fee	$ 30.00 **per *family***
Monthly After School Care	$100.00 per month, per child
Late Fee*	$ 25.00 **per *child***

*Applied after US mail is received on the 1st working day of each month

Payment is due in advance of childcare received. Reminder invoices are mailed on or about the 15th of each month and payment must be received by the **first working day of each upcoming month**.

Your first payment is due at the time of registration
$100.00 per child, plus $30.00 registration fee per family

You will receive a reminder invoice on or around the 15th of each subsequent month. Your payment must be received in our billing office no later than the first working day of each month. *Your payment is due whether you receive the invoice in the mail or not.* You may pay in advance if you wish. You may also send post-dated checks for the 1st of each month and we will hold them and deposit one per month on the due date.

A $25.00 late fee *per child* will be assessed if your payment is not received by the 1st working day of the month. If payment plus the late fee is not received by the 2nd working day, your child will be dropped and not allowed to return to SPICE until all fees are paid. All late payments must be made in the form of a Money Order.

If you elect to drop your child from the SPICE program or, once your child has been dropped due to non-payment, a $30.00 re-registration fee will be due.

SPICE payments can be brought by the Student Services at the Service Center, Building C, or mailed to us in the pre-addressed envelopes, which will be provided to you monthly with your invoice. *Please remember to mail your payment 5-7 days before the due date each month to make sure it will arrive on time*. Automatic payments from your bank account to SPICE are now available in lieu of mailed payments. This option is discussed in detail in the next section.

Payments are *not* to be sent to the schools. Please do not give your payment to any SPICE worker, the SPICE Director or any other Fort Smith Public School employee at your school. Except for automatic transfers, payments must be made by **cash, check or money order**. Your cancelled check is your receipt.

AUTOMATIC PAYMENTS

Automatic Payments are available for the months of October 2026 through May 2027. The form can be found on the District's website.

Individuals may complete the District's Authorization Agreement for Automatic Payment form to establish an automatic withdraw from the Payer's bank account which will be credited to the student's SPICE balance. Once the Automatic Payment is set up, it will continue throughout the school year.

The Authorization Agreement for Automatic Payment form requires your signature and a voided check from your bank account. It is your responsibility to ensure the information is accurate and funds are available each payment due date. The schedule below identifies the dates that payments will be withdrawn from your bank account. The District's bank has ensured that funds should not be withdrawn before these dates, but they may be delayed a day or two because of transfer rules of the Federal Reserve Bank.

To start the automatic payments, all completed and accurate paperwork must be in the billing office on/before the 20th of the previous month. Please review the following schedule, which is the **first working day of each listed month**:

Thursday, October 1, 2026
Tuesday, November 3, 2026 (2nd no school)
Tuesday, December 1, 2026
Wednesday, January 6, 2027
Monday, February 1, 2027
Monday, March 1, 2027
Thursday, April 1, 2027
Monday, May 3, 2027

If you desire to stop utilizing the Automatic Payment process you will need to complete a new Authorization Agreement for Automatic Payment form, found on the District's website, and complete only Sections 1 and 4. These must be in the billing office on/before the 20th of the previous month.

If you need to change bank accounts after your automatic payment has been established, please complete a new Authorization Agreement for Automatic Payment form and complete all sections and check the box stating this fact in Section 2. These must be in the billing office on/before the 20th of the previous month.

INSUFFICIENT FUNDS FOR RETURNED CHECKS OR AUTOMATIC PAYMENTS

A **$25.00** service charge will be assessed for all returned checks due to insufficient funds. In the event a check is returned, an automatic payment cannot be processed due to insufficient funds, or because of a closed account, **future payments for the remainder of the school year must be made by cash or money order. Also the child will not be allowed to attend until the payment along with the insufficient funds fee of $25.00 has been paid by cash or money order.**

REFUND POLICY

The Fort Smith Public Schools does not currently have capabilities to provide refunds of fees.

LATE PICKUP CHARGES

Late Pickup Charges (1-5 minutes) $1.00 for every 5 minutes, per child, will be applied.

LATE PICKUP CHARGES ARE PAYABLE ON THE SPOT EACH DAY

SPICE concludes at 6:00 p.m. each day. The late charge for arriving after this time is $1.00 for arriving 1-5 minutes late, per child. This charge must be paid directly to the SPICE worker upon picking up your child. A record will be kept of the dismissal time for your child. The SPICE program reserves the right to remove a child from the program when parents are late two times.

TAX STATEMENTS

Tax statements are sent out twice each year. Once in January, at the end of each calendar year, for the months of September - December and again in June, the end of each school year, for the months of January - May.

The Fort Smith Public School's Tax Identification Number is 71-6020978.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Please notify the SPICE lead worker of any changes in important information relating to your child (telephone numbers, allergies, etc.). If your child is sick, out of town, or just going home with a friend for the day, the SPICE workers would appreciate notification.

Notification of change of address, phone number or other information necessary for billing purposes should be directed to the billing office. If you wish to withdraw your child from the SPICE program, please let a SPICE worker know at the school, as well as notify the billing office at the Service Center.

If you have questions regarding your SPICE payment, please call the billing office at the Service Center 479-785-2501, ext. 91220.

CONTACT INFORMATION

SPICE billing office (8:00 am – 4:30 pm).....479-785-2501 Ext. 91220

Director, Cindy Johnston ..... 479-629-0224, Cell

Contact numbers are given to parents when they sign up for the program so parents will be able to reach the site lead worker.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

A child will be dismissed from SPICE only to his/her parents or other persons authorized on the registration form to pick up the child. Each child must be signed out with the SPICE staff on a daily basis before leaving the SPICE site.

INCLEMENT WEATHER PLANS

When school is closed due to inclement weather, SPICE will be closed also. The decision to close school is made by the Superintendent and is based on the safety risk involved for students and staff to reach the school building. **PLEASE NOTE,** the payment office does not close for inclement weather, so all payments are still due on the due date regardless of the weather.

STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE

The school district has purchased a group accident insurance program covering all students in grades K-12, including participants in the SPICE program. Student Accident Insurance is secondary to the parents' primary insurance.

ILLNESS IN SPICE

If your child becomes ill a parent will be requested to pick up the child. Should the staff be unable to reach parents or guardians, emergency persons listed on the child's registration form will be called.

MEDICATION

Any medication to be given a child must be authorized by a written statement from the physician and/or parent and given by the school nurse, principal, or secretary during regular school hours. All medication must be in the original container, with the child's name, type and date of prescribed medication, amount, and time of dosage. When medication is required, it is to be given to the school nurse, principal, or secretary and a medication sheet must be completed by the parent.

NO MEDICATION WILL BE GIVEN BY SPICE WORKERS

DISCIPLINE

The discipline plan for SPICE is outlined in Appendix B. SPICE children are expected to be responsible for their own behavior and respect the rights of others. Time-out from group activities may be used to encourage a child to calm down and reflect on his/her behavior.

Parental help will be requested for problems that cannot be solved by time-out. The SPICE program reserves the right to suspend a child from SPICE after three behavioral documents are sent to parents.

FORT SMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS SERVICE CENTER
SPICE PROGRAM
PO BOX 1948
FORT SMITH, AR 72902-1948

2026-2027 DISTRICT CALENDAR

ALTERNATE FORMAT*

- No School
- Parent-Teacher (PT) Conferences 3:30 - 6:30 PM
- School Begins & Ends

AUGUST 2026

M	T	W	TH	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

12: First Day of School

SEPTEMBER 2026

M	T	W	TH	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30		

7: Labor Day

OCTOBER 2026

M	T	W	TH	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

12: PT Conf. (MS/HS)
13: PT Conf. (Elem)
15: PT Conf. (All Schools)
16, 19: Fall Break

NOVEMBER 2026

M	T	W	TH	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30				

2: No School
23-27: Thanksgiving

DECEMBER 2026

M	T	W	TH	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

18: Semester Ends
21-31: Winter Break

JANUARY 2027

M	T	W	TH	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

1-5: Winter Break
6: Return to School
18: MLK Jr. Holiday

FEBRUARY 2027

M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26

15: No School

MARCH 2027

M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

15: PT Conf. (MS/HS)
16: PT Conf. (Elem)
18: PT Conf. (All Schools)
22-26: Spring Break

APRIL 2027

M	T	W	TH	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

2: No School

MAY 2027

M	T	W	TH	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

13: Southside Graduation
14: Northside Graduation
21: Last Day of School
31: Memorial Day

SCHOOL DAY

Elementary School
8:00 - 3:00 (390 minutes)

Middle School
8:05 - 3:30 (387 minutes)

High School
8:05 - 3:30 (380 minutes)

SCHOOL YEAR

1st quarter: 42 days/ 266 hours
2nd quarter: 42 days/ 266 hours
3rd quarter: 46 days/ 291.33 hours
4th quarter: 44 days/ 278.66 hours

Total: 174 days/ 1102 hours

Inclement Weather: The District is required to show 30 hours of make-up time in the event of inclement weather or other emergency circumstances. If the Superintendent cancels school, all 30 hours of instructional time are built into the calendar that would not need to be made up. If additional time is necessary to be made up, May 24-28 may be used or time may be added to the remaining instructional days at the discretion of the Superintendent.

In case of excessive inclement weather, please schedule summer travel after May 31st.

*The alternate format calendar allows the district to use instructional minutes to determine the school calendar.

SPICE PROGRAM
DISCIPLINE PLAN

Appendix B

Behavior rules for students:

1. Follow directions of SPICE teachers.
2. No cursing, teasing or threatening.
3. Show respect to others; respect the rights and property of all students.
4. Return all materials to their proper places.
5. Keep hands, feet and objects to self.
6. Leave assigned area with permission only.

Positive consequences may include:

1. Verbal praise and immediate feedback.
2. Positive comments to parents.
3. Good citizen display or individual recognition.
4. Ribbons, treats.
5. Special group activities, projects, rewards.

Negative consequences for breaking the SPICE rules:

Level 1: For the first infraction a conference between student and staff will be held to discuss the child's behavior. Child may receive time-out from group activities to consider his/her actions.

Level 2: Behavioral document or note to parent to be signed and returned. Child may lose a play or recreational privilege in SPICE for 1-2 days.

Level 3: Second behavioral document to parent. Conference between student, parent and staff required to discuss behavior. Child may lose a play or recreational privilege in SPICE for 3-5 days.

Level 4: Third and final behavioral document to parent. Child is removed from the SPICE program, and no refund of money for the remainder of the month is given.

Severe Clause: If a student is severely disruptive or endangers the safety of others, he/she will be immediately suspended from the SPICE program, pending a conference between parent and staff.

PLEASE NOTE: **CORPORAL PUNISHMENT (PADDLING) WILL NOT BE USED IN DISCIPLINING CHILDREN IN THE SPICE PROGRAM.**