



## St. Joseph School Early Childhood Handbook

Welcome to our St. Joseph School Early Childhood Program. This year, we welcome the future SJS Class of 2019 and 2020. What an adventure we will begin together this year!

The main goal of our Preschool Program is to provide young children with developmentally appropriate experiences which will meet their, spiritual, social, emotional, cognitive, and physical needs. The children will participate in a variety of learning experiences including, large and small group time, creative play, literacy and pre-math activities, fine and gross motor activities, and music and movement.

I am a strong believer in the power of play. Play is important for the growth of young children and will be an integral part of our program. Through play children learn to interact, share, cooperate, problem solve, and explore.

We will be using a theme-based curriculum. Each week will bring a new theme that will hopefully spark a new energy for learning. We will explore the many gifts God has given us and see how they impact our lives. We will learn songs, create art, use technology, listen to stories, and PLAY.

It is my goal to provide experiences where your children can learn through manipulating their environment and by exploring the world around them. Most of all, I hope to instill a love of learning and a positive experience at school. I am looking forward to a great year with your child and family at St. Joseph School.

*Mrs. Jill Kunst*

**“We don’t stop playing because we grow old;  
we grow old because we stop playing.”**

George Bernard Shaw, playwright



### **Parent/Teacher Relationship**

I believe that parents and teachers should work together to ensure that their child's first school experience is a positive one. Each month, I will send home a calendar which will highlight the themes, skills and activities we will cover throughout the month. I will also communicate with you through notes, progress reports, and parent teacher conferences.

**I encourage you to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. You can call me at school (838-8173) or send me a note.**

### **Faith Development**

Parents form the basis of a child's earliest experiences of faith and a loving God. In partnership with the parents, our program will build upon this foundation. Introducing Jesus as our friend, our children participate in daily prayer and faith based activities. Sharing time in prayer and liturgies at our parish will help your child and family grow in faith. We encourage you to pray each day with your child and share the rich experiences and grace that our St. Joseph Parish provides at weekend liturgies.

### **Goals for Preschool 3 Year Old Program**

- To develop a growing respect and love for God and his word
- To expound upon their sense of awe and wonder about their world
- To develop emotional skills, including appropriate expression of emotion
- To develop social skills, including participation in large, small, and individual activities, sharing, and problem solving with peers
- To hear, recognize, reproduce, and manipulate the sounds of language
- To introduce the names and sounds of letters in a meaningful way
- To increase language skills in both listening and communicating
- To develop basic math concepts using manipulatives and hands-on activities
- To develop perceptual/motor skills by practicing with many kinds of hands-on and interactive materials for fine and large motor development
- To increase self dependence in skills such as caring for ordinary toilet needs without undue assistance, proper hand washing, and putting on and hanging up coats and bags
- To appreciate his/her unique God given talents as an individual
- To build creative skills and enjoyment through experiences with art materials, music, building, and play
- To instill a love for learning through enjoyable, developmentally appropriate experiences



## **Goals for 4 Year Old Pre-Kindergarten Program**

### **Spiritual**

- Discovers that he/she is a child of God
- Recites common prayers
- Displays appropriate respect for God

### **Academic**

- Recognize all letters: both lower/upper case, isolated, and out of sequence
- Be able to recognize words that begin with the same beginning sound.
- Recognize and print their first and last name
- Draw and identify all members of the family
- Listen to others without interrupting
- Speak in simple sentences
- Follow 3-step instructions
- Remember and retain simple bible verses and nursery rhymes
- Rote count up to 50
- Recognize numbers 0-20
- Count with one to one correspondence
- Identify equal, less, or more
- Able to sit for 10-15 minutes during floor activity.
- Use words to solve problems
- Continue a simple pattern of concrete objects
- Match pairs
- Sort objects
- Know all basic colors by sight.

### **Fine Motor Skills**

- Follow lines and shapes when cutting
- Do simple transference (copying)
- Hold scissors and writing instruments correctly
- Do and undo buttons, zippers, and snaps

### **Gross Motor Skills**

- Jump over lines/shapes, down from a low level; within personal space
- Gallop with a preferred foot lead
- Kick soft objects
- Catch rolling or bouncing balls
- Throw a small object from an overhand position
- Attempt to avoid other's personal space
- Distinguish between safe and unsafe situations

### **Expressive Arts**

- Sing Songs in various meters and styles
- Echo short singing patterns and clapped rhythms
- Value his or her work and the work of others
- Create drawings and paintings from observing and recalling familiar situations and experiences



## **Goals for the PK4 Year Old Academy Program**

These goals are in addition to the goals stated for the PK 4 Year Old Program.

- Additional time in the technology lab
- Additional time for enrichment activities
- Reinforce concepts for struggling students
- More in depth exploration of themes/concepts
- Rote count to 100 (celebrate 100 days of school)
- Begin to identify alphabet sounds
- Identify rhyming words
- Use verbal math solutions
- Make connections between print and sound

The SJS staff will be assessing the PK4 Academy Program to assure that each child is ready for and appropriately placed in the PK4 Academy Program. If at any time a parent has concerns that the PK4 Academy Program is not a good fit for your child, we will discuss possible solutions as to how we can best serve the needs of your child. This may include moving to the three day morning program.

### **Classroom Discipline**

- Children assist with making clear and concise rules and limits.
- The teacher anticipates and redirects inappropriate behaviors.
- The teacher reminds students of expectation, rules and limits.
- The teacher helps the students use words to express and resolve conflicts situations.
- The teacher will assist students in the conflict resolution process.
- The teacher will speak in a friendly (never angry), but firm voice when necessary.
- The teacher may remove a student from an activity if inappropriate behaviors persist.
- If a child physically hurts another child, he/she will be removed from the activity and the child who is hurt will be comforted. The parents will be informed at the end of the session.



### **Assessment**

The Preschool 3 Year Old Program will be formally assessed with a report card twice a year. The 4 Year Old PK Program will be formally assessed three times a year. Parent Teacher conferences will be held in November for all students

### **Dressing for Preschool**

Students should wear comfortable clothing which will allow them to use the restroom independently. We are not allowed to help your child get their clothing on or off, so please send them in appropriate attire. **We do get messy**, so please do not dress your child in his/her Sunday best. Please send your child to school with a complete change (shirt, pants, underwear, socks) of extra clothes in his/her school bag, for messy days or accidents. Also, shoes with a rubber sole work best for our daily music and movement activities. Please make sure that all clothing is labeled with your child's name.

### **Arrival Procedure**

The entrance for our Preschool Program is located at the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> Street and Madison. At drop-off time, the parents are asked to enter our parking lot (heading east on 5<sup>th</sup> street) and pull around to entrance area. We ask all parents to remain in their vehicles parking in a "U" shaped fashion. As each vehicle pulls forward toward the entrance door, our staff will take your child out of the car and bring each child to the classroom. This system has worked very well for our school. We have found that this system eliminates the difficulty in separation from moms and dads. Some children will have a difficult time separating from moms and dads who want to walk the children into school. In an effort to make sure all children have a successful transition, no parents will be allowed to walk their child into the classroom after our orientation days. Starting on September 7<sup>th</sup>, all children will enter into school with the assistance of the SJS staff. If you have school business in the office to attend to, please enter at the Jefferson Street entrance and go directly to the school office which is located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. We appreciate your assistance to follow our procedures for the safety and security of all of our students.



### **Morning Dismissal for PS3 and PK4**

At the end of the school day for our Morning Sessions, we ask parents to enter into the parking lot in the same “U” shaped fashion pulling forward to pick up each child. Our staff will bring your child to your vehicle and buckle the child into the car seat.

### **Afternoon Dismissal for the PK4 Academy**

Because our entire school will dismiss from 2:45-2:50pm, we ask that our PK4 Academy parents park in the parking lot at the Madison and 5<sup>th</sup> street corner. Our staff will bring the students outside to the entry door at 2:45pm. At that time, each parent should come forward to receive their child. All children will remain with our staff and supervised until we safely turn the children over the parent. Once dismissed from our PK4 Academy program, **all cars will remain parked in the parking lot until the SJS staff assures all students are safely with parents.** Typically, our 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students will be safely dismissed to their carpools and our parking lots are cleared by 2:55-3pm. We do apologize for any inconvenience that this wait time may cause for our families. However, our greatest concern is for the safety of our children.

### **Dismissal Communications**

I will need to be notified **in writing** if someone else will be picking up your child from school. Please include the name of the person, a contact phone number, and the type and color of the car. It is not sufficient to tell your child. Children will often get confused or be anxious when the routine is changed. Sharing this information in the form of written notice or a phone call to the school office is very important. If the SJS office has not been informed of changes or you have not sent a note with your child, we will not release your child until to we speak to a parent. Again, this precaution is in place for the safety of the children. We ask our parents to take special care in the parking lot as children are exiting and entering the school.



### **Extended Care**

Children enrolled in the morning program are eligible to use the morning session of extended care which typically begins at 7a.m. Children enrolled in the afternoon program are eligible for the afternoon session of extended care which is open until 6:00 p.m. (Please refer to your family folder for more information.) At times, our parents may be caught in traffic or late for pick-up. In these situations, we will bring your child to our Extended Care Program (entrance at the Activity Center door located on 5<sup>th</sup> Street)

### **Snack Time**

Each month, students will bring a snack for the preschool class. A schedule for snacks will be sent home with your child. When it is your child's turn to send snacks to school, please send a large box of one of the following items: Teddy Grahams, Goldfish, Animal Crackers, Graham Crackers, or Pretzels. **(No peanuts or nut products)** If your child would like to have milk at snack, fill out the milk form in your family envelope at the beginning of the school year. If your child does not want milk, please send a water bottle or juice box with your child.

### **Birthdays**

Parents are invited to share their child's birthday in preschool. Please send a note a week before your child's birthday to let me know what day you would like to come to school. You may bring a snack (**no peanuts or nut products**) and read one of child's favorite stories to the class. For children who have summer birthdays, they can be celebrated in April/May.

### **Class Parties**

We will have the following class parties: Halloween, Christmas, Valentines Day, and an End of the Year Picnic. The St. Joseph School Parent Club Board will coordinate the parent helpers for our parties and picnic. All parents will be invited to a "Room Mom" meeting in September. Our parent support and assistance is very important to our special events and to your child. We hope you will be able to assist as your schedule permits.



### **Sending money to school**

At times, it may be necessary to send funds to school. In those instances, please send money in a sealed envelope with the following information written on it.

- Your child's first and last name
- The amount of money
- The purpose for the money (book orders, party money, milk money, etc)

Please do send any communications to school in a clearly labeled envelope.

### **Book Orders**

Your child will bring home a form to order books several times during the school year. If you wish to order, simply fill out the order form and send a check made payable to the book company in an envelope.

Please print your child's first and last name and label the envelope as a book order. These orders are provided as a convenient way for parents to buy quality books for children at a low price. As an added bonus, I earn bonus points, which are used to purchase books for the classroom.

### **Special Classes**

While our classroom will be filled with music and movement throughout our day, all preschool classes will go the Activity Center once a week for large motor activities. The 4 year old PK Morning Class will visit our Technology Center once a week. Our 4 Year Old PK Academy students will have additional technology time. The children will also participate in formal Music class with Mrs. Ray or Mrs. Trippiedi starting in mid September. A schedule of special classes will be sent home in the fall.

### **Typical Schedule**

Our school day is filled with small group, large group, teacher directed activities, student directed activities and learning in a multitude of settings. The following page identifies a typical timeline for our program.



### **Morning:**

- 8:23-8:30-Unload students from cars, put away bags, get ready to learn
- 8:30-8:40- Morning prayer, classroom helpers
- 8:40-9:00 Circle Time- Calendar, Introduce daily theme, explain art project, letter of the week activity (four year old class), estimation jar, etc.
- 9:00-9:45-Center Time- Writing, blocks and puzzles, dramatic play, language and math activities, sensory table, science, computer, and arts and crafts
- 9:45-9:55- Clean-up
- 9:55-10:15-Story, flannel board activity, and finger plays
- 10:15-10:30-Washroom break and snack time
- 10:30-10:45-Music and movement
- 10:45-11:00- Religion activity and prayer

### **Afternoon:**

- 12:05- Unload student from cars, put away bags, get ready to learn
- 12:15-12:30- Prayer, classroom helpers
- 12:30-12:50- Circle Time- Calendar, Introduce daily theme, explain art project, letter of the week activity (four year old class), estimation jar, etc.
- 12:50-1:35- Center Time- Writing, blocks and puzzles, dramatic play, language and math activities, sensory table, science, computer, and arts and crafts
- 1:35-1:45- Clean-up
- 1:45-2:00- Story, flannel board activity, and finger plays
- 2:00-2:15- Washroom break and snack time
- 2:15-2:30- Music and movement
- 2:30-2:45- Religion activity and prayer