Purpose

The purpose of Spark Preschool is to provide a multi­faceted learning experience, where a child’s educational goals and spiritual growth is creatively developed; where a parent’s hopes and goals for a student are thoroughly honored; where our staff’s commitment to love God and love people is authentic and evident.

License

At the end of this handbook you will find an attachment about licensing and other important information.

Enrollment Policy

Enrollment is on a first come, first served basis. A child is considered enrolled when the registration fee is received, availability is confirmed, and required paperwork is received, including basic enrollment and health information along with one tuition payment. Please remember to communicate any change in contact information (such as a new phone number) to the office as soon as possible so that information is always current in our files. This is for the safety of your child. A medical statement and immunization record signed by a physician or nurse practitioner is required to be submitted within 30 days of admission, and must be updated every 13 months. We require children to be immunized. Classes are offered for children from age 2.5­5.

Operating Hours

Spark will operate from Monday­Friday. Morning preschool classes run between 9­11:30. Afternoon classes run from 12:30-3:00 PM. Dismissal will take place in person from each classroom teacher. If you happen to be running late, a phone call would be appreciated. We reserve the right to implement a late fee if late pick­up becomes a chronic problem.

Child/Staff Ratios

The State requires the following staff/child ratios:

2.5 year olds 1 adult/ 8 children

3 year olds 1 adult/ 12 children

4­5 year olds 1 adult/ 14 children

Because we believe lower ratios are more beneficial, our ratios:

2.5 year olds 2 adult/ 12 children

3 year olds 2 adult/ 14 children

4­5 year olds 2 adult/ 16 children

Daily Schedule

Sample Daily Schedule A.M. Classes

9:00 a.m. Arrival (will vary, hand washing, free play, table activities)

9:40 a.m. Clean up

9:45 a.m. Group time (attendance, Pledge, introduction of daily activities, group literacy/story)

10:10 a.m. Centers: language arts, math, science, fine motor, art

10:45 a.m. Snack

11:00 a.m. Bible/group literacy activity

11:10 a.m. Gross motor/music in the Arena or outside

11:30 a.m. Dismissal

Sample Daily Schedule P.M. Classes

12:30-12:45 p.m. Arrival, hand washing, free play

12:45-1 Clean up

1-1:25 Group time (attendance, Pledge, introduction of daily activities, group literacy/story)

1:25-2:05 Centers: language arts, math, science, fine motor, art

2:05-2:20 Snack

2:20-2:35 Bible/group literacy activity

2:35-2:55 Gross motor/music in the Arena or outdoor play time

3:00 Dismissal

Tuition/Fees and Payment Policies

Tuition is due on the 1st of the month in 10 equal installments, with the first payment made at enrollment, then payment due monthly from September 1st through May 1st. A non­refundable $60 registration fee is required to reserve your child’s spot in our program., Tuition for the 2 day/week program is $145 per payment, 3 day/week program is $210 per payment, 5’s half day program (4 days/week) is $275 per payment, and 5s full day is $550 per payment. Tuition is divided into 10 payments as a budgeting tool and is not based on the number of days attended in any given month. Tuition payments are made through the Procare Tuition Express payment system. Any payment received after the 5th will be charged a $25 late fee, unless prior arrangements have been made with a director. Our tax ID number is available upon request. There will be a $40 fee for payment returned for any reason. Spark reserves the right to disenroll a student in the event that school policies are not followed by parent or student, or in the event that tuition obligations are not met. If a family chooses to withdraw a child for any reason, we require 30 days written notice. Any tuition due in that time frame must be paid.

Weather Closure

Spark usually follows Westerville Schools regarding weather closures. If Westerville closes for bad weather, we will also be closed. We may occasionally close on our own if our parking lot is icy. In the case of a 2­hour delay, morning classes will be cancelled. If Westerville closes for afternoon Kindergarten, Spark afternoon classes will not meet. Weather closures will be posted on the Spark website, Spark Facebook page, and on each class’s Shutterfly Share Site.

Arrival and Departure

At arrival time, each preschooler must be escorted to either their classroom door or to their meeting space and teachers in the lobby. Children should never be dropped off or left unattended inside or outside of the building. If your child is going to be picked up by someone other than those authorized on your Enrollment form, we must have written permission. In the event of an emergency, you may call the preschool and give verbal permission. People not recognized by the staff will be asked for identification. If there are custody issues involved with your child, you must provide Spark with court papers indicating who has permission to pick up the child. Spark may not deny a parent access to their child without proper documentation.

What to Bring to Preschool

Each child will need to bring a bookbag (typically a tote bag or backpack) which MUST be marked on the outside with his/her name to school each day. Please make sure your child has a change of clothing, appropriate for the season, in case of spills or accidents. Each child also needs to bring a labeled, filled water bottle each day.

Snack

Snack will be provided by parents on a rotating basis. For the 2022-23 school year, snacks must be pre-packaged/factory sealed. Please let us know of any dietary restrictions that your child may have. We are a nut free facility.

What to Wear to Spark

Please dress your child in comfortable playclothes. Our program is very hands­on. In other words, we get messy! Tennis shoes or other soft­soled, close­toed shoes are preferred, and socks are required for our time in Central Park. Clothing that your child can handle independently helps to foster a sense of competence. *Please leave appropriate outerwear each day as we may choose to go outside, weather permitting (temperature above 25 degrees)*. We also need to have outerwear available in the unlikely event of an emergency evacuation.

Parent/Child Separation

Separation anxiety is a normal behavior and can occur anytime at any age. Parents can encourage the child’s first school experience by:

1. Telling your child that you are happy that they attend preschool.

2. Telling your child that you are sure they will have fun.

3. Telling your child that you will be back to get them when school is over.

4. Encouraging your child to put his/her belongings in his/her cubby, saying goodbye, and leaving. *Prolonging departure raises anxiety in children because the child may feel the parent is afraid to leave them.*

5. Demonstrating trust in teachers.

Parent Participation

Due to COVID-19 we are continuing to limit people in the building. If you must come into the preschool for any reason, you must call the office first and be met at the door by a preschool staff member.During the school year, there will be opportunities for parent involvement such as orientation, parent­teacher conferences (we conduct assessments but do not share assessment data with the State), on-site field trips, and programs. At Spark, we know that you are your child’s first and most important teacher. It is important to us to develop and maintain a positive relationship with you and your child. If you have concerns, please address them with your teacher. If you feel you have unresolved concerns, please contact the office to work toward a solution. It is our desire to work with you and your family as your child begins his/her educational journey.

Parent Roster

A roster of children enrolled at Spark is available upon request. This roster is only for personal use, such as setting up playdates, etc. The roster is not to be used as any kind of contact list for business or marketing purposes. If a parent does not wish to be included on the roster, please check the appropriate space on the enrollment form.

Absences

When your child will be absent from preschool, please let us know the reason, either by phone, email or text to your child’s teacher or the preschool office.

Fieldtrips

Your child’s class may choose to go on fieldtrips during the school year; we will also be hosting on-site field trips. Parents will be asked to transport their own children to and from fieldtrips. During the course of a fieldtrip, each staff member will have specific children that they are responsible for supervising. Before any child participates in a fieldtrip, the preschool will obtain written permission from the parent or guardian.

Accidents/ Emergencies

Spark has devised several procedures to follow in the event that an emergency would occur while a child is at preschool. In the event of a fire or tornado, staff will follow the written instructions posted in each classroom, describing emergency evacuation routes, and the procedures to be followed to assure that children have arrived at the designated spot. In order to prepare children for the unlikely need to evacuate, the center does conduct monthly fire drills, and periodic tornado drills. Should we need to evacuate due to fire or weather conditions, or the loss of power, heat, or water to the center, our emergency destination is the soccer field at the east side of the church parking lot. In the case that we need to move a greater distance from the church building, we will take shelter at the American Legion Hall, 389 E. College Ave. A sign will be posted in front of the Spark entrances indicating that we have been evacuated and the location where you can pick up your child. Parents will also be contacted as soon as possible to come to pick up your child. If a parent cannot be reached, we will contact the emergency contacts listed on your child’s enrollment information.

In the unlikely event there would be an environmental threat or a threat of violence, the staff will: secure the children in the safest location possible, contact and follow the directions given by the proper authorities and contact the parents as soon as the situation allows. An incident report would also be provided to the parents.

Every staff member is trained in First Aid, CPR and Child Abuse. Multiple staff members have training in Communicable Disease recognition. In the case of a minor accident/injury staff will administer basic first aid and TLC. If the injury/illness would be more serious, first aid would be administered and the parents would be contacted immediately to assist in deciding an appropriate course of action. If any injury/illness is life threatening, the EMS will be contacted, parents will be notified, and a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital with all available health records. Staff may not transport children in their vehicles. Only parents or EMS will transport. We must have permission to transport on file for every child in our program.

An incident/injury report will be completed, and given to the person picking up the child, on the day of the incident/injury, if any of the following occur: the child has an illness, accident, or injury which requires first aid; the child receives a bump or blow to the head; the child has to be transported by emergency squad; or an unusual or unexpected event occurs which jeopardizes the safety of the child. If a child requires emergency transportation, the report shall be available within twenty­four hours after the incident occurs. The preschool shall also contact licensing personnel from the appropriate ODJFS office within 24 hours when there is a “general emergency” or “serious incident, injury or illness”. The report will be provided to licensing staff within 3 days of the incident.

Management of Communicable Diseases

Spark provides children with a clean and healthy environment. However, we realize that children become ill from time to time. If this is your child’s first preschool experience, it is possible that they may experience more frequent illnesses. Children who are enrolled at Spark Preschool must be fully immunized or on a modified immunization schedule.

1. At all times there will be a staff member present who has completed six hours of training in the recognition and prevention of communicable diseases.

2. The following precautions shall be taken for children suspected of having a communicable disease.

A. The Preschool will immediately notify the parent of the child’s condition when a child has been observed with signs or symptoms of illness.

B. A child with any of the following signs or symptoms shall be immediately isolated and discharged to the parent or person designated by the parent.

\*diarrhea (three or more abnormally loose stools within a 24 hour period)

\*severe coughing, causing a child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound.

\*difficult or rapid breathing

\*yellowish skin or eyes

\*redness of the eye or eyelid, pus discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching or eye pain

\*temperature of 100 degrees taken by the axillary (armpit) method with a digital thermometer

\*untreated infected skin patches

\*unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool

\*stiff neck with an elevated temperature

\*evidence of lice, scabies or other parasitic infestation

\*unusual spots or rashes

\*sore throat or difficulty in swallowing

\*vomiting more than one time or when accompanied by any other sign or symptom of illness

C. A child isolated due to suspected communicable disease shall be:

\*cared for in a room or portion of a room not to be used for other types of care

\*within sight and hearing of an adult at all times. No child will ever be left alone or unsupervised.

\*made comfortable and provided with a cot.

\*discharged to parent, or person designated by the parent as soon as possible

D. In the event that a communicable disease is confirmed, a notice will be posted outside the door of the classroom to notify families of the illness

In the event of a community outbreak of communicable disease, children without up­to­date immunizations may be excluded from the program until danger of contagion has passed.

This policy will be available to all parents of children enrolled in the preschool.

Spark Covid Policy

August 2022

**When to stay home:**

**Sick with *any* of these COVID-19 symptoms**

* Fever
* New or worsened cough
* Loss of taste or smell
* Sore throat
* New or worsened nasal congestion/runny nose
* Headache
* Body aches
* New or worsened fatigue
* Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea

**Sick students may return with:**

* A negative Covid test
* Completion of 5 days at home with diminishing symptoms **AND**
* Symptoms are improved and fever free without medication for 48 hours
* Students may be asked to mask when they return depending on community spread

**If a student is exposed to an immediate family member who tests positive for Covid, he or she may return**

After 5 days without symptoms\*

\*Depending on the household situation, a negative test result or additional days of exclusion may be required

In the event of a Covid outbreak in a classroom, all families will be notified as soon as possible.

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Medications

The preschool will administer medications for asthma (inhaler) or life threatening allergic reactions (Epipen) to a child only after the parent completes a Care Plan and Request of Medication form. All sections must be completed and the medication handed to the teacher. Medications will be stored in designated areas inaccessible to children. Medications may not be stored in a child’s bookbag. Medications other than Epipens and rescue inhalers will be considered on a case by case basis. Prescription medications must be in their unexpired original container and administered in accordance to instructions on the label.

Guidance and Discipline Policy

Spark staff believes that helping children to learn self­control is very important. Our hope is that each child will learn self­discipline through careful guidance. Your child will *always* be treated with love and respect. If children are treated with respect, they in turn learn to respect the teachers and their friends. Our expectations will be kept within the child’s capabilities and the child will be made aware of these expectations. Positive reinforcement (commenting on children doing the “right” thing) and positive redirection (removing the child and giving them an appropriate activity) will be used. A child may be asked to sit for a short period of time to give the child a chance to regain control if they are having a difficult time. Staff will not impose punishments for failure to eat, sleep or toileting accidents.

This discipline policy applies to all staff and to parents while they are at the preschool. No child will ever be left unsupervised.

If a situation arises where a child is consistently endangering himself, peers or staff, it may become necessary to disenroll the child. Every attempt will be made to work together with the parents and the child to correct the behavior. However, the safety of children is always our primary concern. The administrator would be in communication with the parents prior to this occurring.

If the child demonstrates behavior that requires frequent “extra attention” from the staff member, we may choose to develop and implement a behavior management plan. This plan would be developed in consultation with the parents and would be consistent with the requirements of Rule 5101: 2­12­22 OAC.

Additional Policies

Abuse Reporting Requirement: Staff are trained to recognize abuse and neglect and are required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Franklin County Children’s Services hotline at (614) 229 7000.

Complaint Number: To report abuse or neglect, parents can call the Children’s Protective Service at (614) 220 7000. For further information about the quality of children’s programs or concerns about the operations of this preschool, call the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family at (614) 466 7765.

If you are in need of a place to breastfeed an infant, there is space available in the women’s restroom across from the Worship Center.

Center Parent Information

The center is licensed to operate legally by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. This license is posted in a noticeable place for review.

A toll-free telephone number is listed on the center’s license and may be used to report a suspected violation of the licensing law or administrative rules. The licensing rules governing child care are available for review at the center.

The administrator and each employee of the center is required, under Section 2151.421 of the Ohio Revised Code, to report their suspicions of child abuse or child neglect to the local public children's services agency.

Any parent of a child enrolled in the center shall be permitted unlimited access to the center during all hours of operation for the purpose of contacting their children, evaluating the care provided by the center or evaluating the premises. Upon entering the premises, the parent, or guardian shall notify the Administrator of his/her presence.

The administrator's hours of availability and child/staff ratios are posted in a noticeable place in the center for review.

The licensing record, including licensing inspection reports, complaint investigation reports, and evaluation forms from the building and fire departments, is available for review upon written request from the Ohio department of job and family services.

It is unlawful for the center to discriminate in the enrollment of children upon the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin or disability in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 104 Stat. 32, 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.

For more information about child care licensing requirements as well as how to apply for child care assistance, Medicaid health screenings and early intervention services for your child, please visit http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/families.stm