



Connecting, serving, and growing together...bearing much
fruit for the Kingdom!

Parent Handbook 2023-2024

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3601 W. Belleview Ave. 303-798-7844
www.sjpreschool.org

Hillary Newton, Director of Preschool Ministries
hillary.newton@sjpreschool.org

Kim Arnhols, Assistant Director of Preschool Ministries
Kim.arnhols@sjpreschool.org

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Dear Parents:

The St. James Preschool Board and the Staff welcome you to our school. We are glad that you have chosen us, and we anticipate a wonderful experience for your child.

Our dedicated professional staff provides a well-balanced curriculum which is developmentally appropriate for young children between the ages of 2 1/2 and 5. Teachers carefully prepare a variety of learning opportunities which foster intellectual, spiritual, social/emotional and physical growth.

This Christian, developmentally appropriate program is based on the assumption that growth is a sequential and orderly process and that children do indeed pass through stages of development which occur in a predictable sequence in their physical, social/emotional and cognitive growth. A balance between free choice and structure encourages independence, responsibility and self-confidence. We are looking forward to helping your child discover the joys of learning at St. James Preschool.

This guide was written to help familiarize you with our program and to provide information which will be useful before school begins and throughout the coming year. We hope you read this guide and keep it as a handy reference.

St. James Preschool respects parents as the primary and most important provider of care and nurturing for their children. We believe parents and teachers are partners in children's care and education and are looking forward to establishing this partnership.

We know how important these early years are to you and your child, and we want you to be aware that our staff is available to answer any questions you may have about your child and our program.

Sincerely,

Hillary Newton
Preschool Director

Kim Arnholz
Assistant Director



Mission Statement

As a ministry of St. James Presbyterian Church, our school mission is to provide a safe, loving Christian environment where children ages 2 ½ - 5 years can grow physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially and spiritually. By nurturing children in these areas, we will be God's instruments of transformation for the children themselves, their parents, extended families, and our community.

Our Core Purpose

"To equip children with tools that provide a strong foundation, inspiring a lifetime of learning."

Our Core Values

The following core values form the framework that guides St. James Preschool:

- Rooted in faith
- Grounded in the significance of early childhood development (a unique time)
- Cultivate nurturing relationships
- Provide a caring, supportive environment
- Believe in the power of play

Our Statement of Philosophy

The educational philosophy of St. James Preschool is based on meeting the developmental needs of young children between the ages of 2 1/2-5. It is our intent to provide a loving, play based program which will meet each child's cognitive, social, emotional, spiritual, and physical needs in a Christian environment. Love is our foundation and is something that cannot be measured or described fully. "We love because God first loved us." 1 John 4:19. *Love is a combination of positive feelings in our hearts, love helps us feel gracious, kind, caring, valued, and accepted. Love motivates us to feel willing and generous, to sacrifice, to surrender, forgive, trust, be patient, encourage, be compassionate, serve, and be nonjudgmental to ourselves and others. Love is letting go of control, gives freedom to our self and others to grow, be and really live.* So many of our families believe that there is a feeling of love and caring that can be felt when you enter our preschool. This comes from our belief in Christian principles and is lived out by our dedicated staff that is the heart of St. James.

Licensing and Rating

St. James is licensed as a preschool by the Colorado Office of Early Childhood at the Colorado Dept. of Human Services. In addition, **St. James has been awarded a level 5 rating in Colorado Shines**, our state quality rating improvement system, which conducts on-site visits to early childhood programs across the state and rates them in the areas of teacher to child interactions, ratios, classroom environment, staff education and training, and parent partnerships. This is the highest rating that a program can achieve.

Program Overview

St. James Preschool is a Christian program that operates a 4-hour day from 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. St. James is open Monday through Friday. The preschool serves children between the ages of 2 1/2 to 5 and are grouped according to their ages. It is a church sponsored, non-profit school. It is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors which is comprised of parents, church members, community members, and early childhood professionals. The teaching staff receives 15 hours of on-going training in early childhood education every year. All our teachers are credentialed and meet the qualifications required for ECE Teachers in the state of Colorado and

have many years of experience working in early childhood education. The school has a qualified director and assistant director.

Primary Caregiver Policy

The ECE lead teacher in your child's class serves as your child's primary caregiver. The primary caregiver works with other program staff to ensure a positive childcare experience for children and their parents. The primary caregiver system ensures that every child has a special person and that each parent has a primary contact. Some classes have two ECE Lead teachers. In that case, the teachers divide the children into primary care groups. This is often based on a teacher's previous work with other siblings in the family to continue those relationships, matching a teacher's specific area of expertise with a child's needs, or dividing children equally by gender.

The responsibilities of primary caregivers include:

- **To Communicate.** A primary caregiver is the essential link in the communication chain between parents and program and children and program. Primary caregivers ensure that every day, each child's experience is communicated to parents — not just what the teacher personally witnessed but what others observed or participated in. Also, a primary caregiver relays parents' concerns and suggestions to other staff.
- **To Advocate.** A primary caregiver empowers parents and children by translating their individual concerns and needs into action through the efforts of all program staff.
- **To Nurture.** A teacher who is the primary caregiver tunes in to each child and develops a special bond while ensuring all needs are met and all caring times are carried out in ways that empower the child and establish a sense of security and basic trust.
- **To Teach.** A primary caregiver is a teacher who cares for children in ways that maximize language experiences and learning potential in all interactions and who ensures that the learning environment works for all children.
- **To Observe, Monitor, and Evaluate.** A primary caregiver makes sure children's experiences in the program are positive and that parents' concerns are addressed by continually assessing each child's and parent's experience. Observation, discussions with other staff and parents, and analysis of the actual experience of the child and family are regularly made and noted. The primary caregiver will be the teacher who leads your child's parent conferences and documents your child's progress throughout the year.

Continuity of Care Policy

At St. James Preschool we practice keeping groups of young children and their teaching team together for at least 1 year, which promotes the formation of trusting relationships, secure attachments, and long-lasting bonds. Along with providing each child with a primary caregiver we also provide continuity of care for a full school year.

Teacher/Child Ratios

The licensed capacity of the preschool each day is 46 children.

St. James Preschool follows NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) recommended group sizes and adult/child ratios in all our classrooms. These ratios are consistently maintained. We ensure staffing levels always make these ratios possible and enrollment is limited to fulfill ratios listed below:

2 ½-year-olds to 3-year-olds (30-48months) 1:4 max of 8 children

3 & 4-year-olds 1:8 max of 16 children

5-year-olds 1:8 max of 16 children

Curriculum Overview

The Creative Curriculum functions as a framework for planning and implementing our developmentally appropriate program. It is based on a strong foundation of research in early education. Its effectiveness in helping children acquire social competence and the skills they need to excel as learners is well documented. Teachers incorporate their own interests and teaching styles to create weekly lesson plans which follow different studies throughout the school year. All classrooms utilize the Creative Curriculum approach to learning, honoring creativity with a respect for the role that teachers play in making learning exciting and relevant for every child. Each classroom is divided into learning centers where the children may choose from a variety of play and materials, including loose parts, designed to extend the child's awareness and understanding of his/her environment and community. We follow the children's lead as we facilitate open-ended investigations which create opportunities for learning through playful experimentation and the thoughtful manipulation of materials.

- **Creative Art** - The Creative Art Area is a place filled with materials that children can enjoy on a purely sensory level. Here children can create and represent their ideas in a visual form. On a table or at an easel, children draw, paint, knead, cut, glue, and put together unique products of their own choosing. Sometimes they simply explore the materials and enjoy the process. At other times they create designs or make something that represents a real object, place, or living thing. Creative art is another language children use to express what they know and what they feel.
- **Library/Writing Center** - In the Library Area children develop the motivation and skills necessary to read and write. As they hear stories read aloud every day, look through books on their own, listen to stories on CDs, recite familiar stories, and make up their own stories, they also have many opportunities to grow in all areas of development.
- **Dramatic Play** - In the Dramatic Play Area children break through the restrictions of reality. They pretend to be someone or something different from themselves and make up situations and actions that go along with the role they choose. When children engage in dramatic play, they deepen their understanding of the world and develop skills that will serve them throughout their lives.
- **Blocks** - Blocks naturally appeal to young children because they feel good to the touch, are symmetrical, and invite open-ended explorations. When children construct, create, and represent their experiences with blocks, they grow in each area of development.
- **Science/Discovery** - The Science Area is a place to find answers to questions. It is a place to spark curiosity and wonder using new and interesting materials. In the Science Area, children can use their senses to touch, feel, taste, smell, and see. They can act on objects and observe what happens next. Teachers help nurture children's curiosity by joining children in the Science Area and posing questions. Children respond by using their thinking skills to investigate and explore. In the Science Area, all areas of development can be enhanced.
- **Manipulatives**-This area includes puzzles, various table blocks, small constructions materials, and collections of objects. When children use manipulatives, they explore how things work, use their imaginations, strengthen and control the muscles in their hands, work cooperatively, solve problems, and learn content area concepts.
- **Music and Movement** - Music naturally delights and captures the interest of children. By including time for music and movement, we provide an outlet for children's high spirits and creative energy. Music and movement experiences help develop both sides of the

brain (an important finding in recent brain research) and contribute to children's social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development.

- **Sand and Water** - Play with sand and water involves sensory experiences that appeal to young children. They need little introduction to playing with these materials. While sand and water play can delight the senses, it also can challenge children's minds and promote all areas of development.

*This information was taken from the *Creative Curriculum for Preschool*, a curriculum program used by St. James Preschool. *Dodge, Diane Trister, Colker, L., and Heroman, C. (2002). The Creative Curriculum for Preschool. Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies, Inc.*

We believe children learn and develop skills and confidence through active engagement with these centers and each other. Children are encouraged to explore activities and materials at their own pace which have been planned to stimulate each of the five developmental areas (social, emotional, physical, language, and cognitive). It is our goal to create a nurturing environment where a child's natural love of learning will thrive. Each teaching team plans weekly to create developmentally appropriate plans that are aligned with the Colorado Early Learning & Development Guidelines which focuses on the developmental needs of the individual children, as well as the group, and that are embedded in the children's interests. We utilize the Creative Curriculum's learning objectives, which are aligned with national Core Curriculum objectives. We desire to partner with you regarding your child's care and education. Please take the time to review the weekly curriculum plan as well as communicate daily with the teaching staff regarding goals you may have for your child.

The Program/ Goals and Objectives

St. James is child centered and based on the belief that play is the best way for children to learn. Children are encouraged to choose freely from a wide range of play and learning experiences, including creative expression through the media of movement, musical rhythms and art; development of manipulative skills and motor coordination through puzzles, blocks, and climbing equipment; the increase of knowledge through special events, cooking and science activities; the integration of sensory skills through water, sand, and play dough as well as other sensory experiences; the growth of language skills through stories, songs, and dramatic play and the development of the spiritual dimension through daily prayers, Christian stories and songs.

It is a balanced program offering both child-directed and teacher-directed activities. The daily schedule includes free choice of time spent in learning centers as well as group times for creative movement, music, storytelling, and dramatization.

Our 2 ½ , 3 & 4 year old classes are designed to provide experiences that focus on exploration and whole-child development. Our teachers plan meaningful, hands-on experiences that are engaging and balanced, providing both child-directed and teacher-directed parts of the school day. Children will be exposed to experiences that support learning in all areas of development including:

1. A lasting appreciation for music and art by providing opportunities for exploration
2. Sensory experiences
3. Language and literacy skills through dramatic play, stories, songs and a classroom environment that surrounds children with written language that is meaningful to them
4. Manipulative and fine motor skills to build pre-writing muscles
5. Gross motor skills to build strength and coordination

6. Daily exposure to age-appropriate math concepts and operations
7. Social and emotional skills through interaction with their school family, including teachers and peers, building upon the Conscious Discipline foundation so children will be empathetic, self-confident, and problem solvers
8. Spiritual development through daily prayers, Christian stories, and songs
9. Emotional development through self-regulation, self-assurance, and confidence translating into a desire to learn and take risks

Our teachers use systematic and sequential instruction to ensure that “learning builds on learning.” Our curriculum is aligned with the Colorado Early Learning & Development Guidelines.

Parents receive a weekly Connection Letter via email from teachers that describes the activities that have taken place in the classroom throughout the week. This letter provides a bridge between home and school that allows parents to get a snapshot of what their children have been learning and what they can reinforce at home.

Our Transitional Kindergarten class is primarily designed for children with summer or early fall birthdays to provide an extra year in the preschool setting before moving into Kindergarten. It is designed to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Gain confidence and self-assurance translating into a desire to learn and take risks.
2. Bridge the play based approach of preschool with the more structured environment kids can expect in the Kindergarten year. (School Readiness).
3. Provide a classroom environment that surrounds children with written language that is meaningful to them, laying the groundwork for becoming an avid reader.
4. Provide basic principles underlying written language—the alphabetic principle.
5. Offer instruction which is systematic and sequential — “learning builds on learning.”
6. Begin a lasting appreciation for music and art by providing opportunities for exploration.
7. Provide daily exposure to age-appropriate math concepts and operations.
8. Emphasize learning the fundamentals of math, reading, and writing.
9. Offer a balanced mix of play and structured learning meeting state benchmarks and standards.
10. Support children with positive social/emotional tools in a Christian setting.

Parents receive a weekly Connection Letter via email from teachers that describes the activities that have taken place in the classroom throughout the week. This letter provides a bridge between home and school that allows parents to get a snapshot of what their children have been learning and what they can reinforce at home.

Our transitional kindergarten curriculum includes the following subjects: Math, Social Studies, Science, Reading, Writing, Music and Art in a loving environment that is engaging, fun, supportive, and challenging.

Admission and Registration

St. James Preschool admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the Preschool. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national, and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship programs, and other school-administered programs. **We welcome all children** who may benefit from our type of

program. Children must be 2 ½, 3, or 4 years old by October 1st and *need to be toilet-trained for the 3 and 4-year-old classes*. Transitional Kindergarten children must be 5 years old by December 1st. A pre-interview with child's parent(s) and/or guardian(s) will be made with the Director.

At the time of registration, the parent must fill out an online registration form and pay the set registration fee, which is non-refundable. Parents will also need to download and sign up for the Procure app. Each parent will need to complete a doctor's statement of health signed by the doctor and provide an immunization record as well as complete the online enrollment form, which needs to be returned by August 14th or prior to attending preschool. These forms can be found on the Enrollment page on our website: www.sjpreschool.org. New registration form, enrollment form, immunization and health forms must be completed each year.

Tuition Schedule per Month

The Tuition Schedule is:

2 Days, 2 ½ yr. olds	\$302
4 Days, 2 ½ yr. olds	\$602
2 Days, 3 and 4 yr. olds	\$262
3 Days, 3 and 4 yr. olds	\$393 (\$65 when UPK qualifications are met for 10 hours funding per week)
5 Days, 3 and 4 yr. olds	\$655 (\$164 when UPK qualifications are met for 15 hours funding per week)
4 Days, TK	\$525 (\$33 when UPK qualifications are met for 15 hours funding per week)

By May 1st you must pay September's tuition. If you do not make this payment by May 1st you will forfeit your registration fee and will be taken off the school enrollment list. ***September's tuition is non-refundable.***

By August 14th you need to provide ALL enrollment forms, including the immunization forms and medical history forms signed by a physician. ***ALL the enrollment forms must be turned into the preschool prior to attending.***

In September, May's tuition will be due. In the month of May, you will not have to make a tuition payment. The May tuition would be refunded to you if you need to leave the program before March 1st and give the preschool the proper one-month notice.

Payments shall be made on a monthly basis. The payments will be due on **the first day of school for each month**. There will be no refunds if your child must be absent from school due to illness, vacations, or domestic problems. If a child is to be withdrawn from the preschool by the parent for any reason, notice should be given a month in advance. Payment is due by the 15th of each month starting in September. A late fee of \$25.00 will be charged for all late payments. Tuition payment made on the 16th of the month or after is considered late.

Tuition Assistance

Limited scholarships are available to help families and is referred to as "**The Grace Fund**". Families can ask for an application from the Director or submit an application online on our website under "Enrollment." All scholarship requests are kept confidential by the Director and approved by the St. James Preschool Board.

2023-2024 School Calendar (The school year is based on 32 weeks.)

School starts with an Orientation week September 5:

School Calendar Closure Dates follow:

In Service Days	November 17 & TBD
1st Parent Conference	October 17 & 19 (All Classes)
Thanksgiving	November 20 - 24
Christmas	December 25 - Jan. 8
M.L. King Day	January 15
Presidents' Day	February 19
Conference Prep	February 13 & 15 (All Classes)
2nd Parent Conference	March 5 & 7 (All Classes)
Spring Break	March 25 - 29
Last Day	May 24

Parent-School Communication & Partnerships

PLEASE, notify us of any changes in your place of living or employment. We must always have a working emergency number, and we must be able to reach you. In order to work effectively with your child, it is important that we have a full understanding of him/her. If there is information which is not covered on the intake form which will give us a more comprehensive understanding of your child, please discuss this information with your child's teacher or the director. All such information is strictly confidential.

Also, throughout the year it is vital that we are well informed about your child and you about our program. Please share with us any happenings that affect your child's feelings. Close ties between home and school are important. Please let the office or teachers know if your child will be absent.

CALENDARS & NEWSLETTERS: Once a month a preschool newsletter will be emailed. Make sure you *read, read, read* so you will remain informed about all the special activities and opportunities provided to you and your child throughout the preschool year.

PRESCHOOL WEBSITE: Our website is www.sjpreschool.org. Monthly calendars and newsletters will be posted.

PRESCHOOL TEACHER EMAILS: You can connect with your child's teacher directly via email. The contact list will be distributed to families the first week of preschool. You can also send a message to your child's teachers through the Procure app.

CLASSROOM CONNECTION LETTER: This will be emailed to you on a regular basis. This is another means of keeping parents informed about school happenings and gives parents a peek into their child's school day.

PARENT PARTICIPATION: Parents are urged to be actively involved in their child's earliest learning experiences. Parent participation is enriching and satisfying to both parent and child. Parent volunteers are needed to participate on the Preschool Board, to help in the classroom, and to help with special fund-raising events that are held throughout the school year. Do you have a special talent you want to share? (music, baking, science, etc) Please let us know!

PARENT EDUCATION/INFORMATION OPPORTUNITIES:

St. James Preschool offers several meetings for parents on health & nutrition, behavior, and education throughout the preschool year. We also offer a parenting class based on Conscious Discipline. These parent learning opportunities will be noted in the monthly school calendar, newsletter and on flyers posted around the school. Please sign up in the preschool office. Most of these sessions are free. Childcare is available.

SCHOOL WIDE SOCIAL EVENTS:

We offer four family social events during the year. Our Fall Festival is held in September. This event also includes a live band and a bouncy house for kids. Many of our church and preschool family members, including children, parents, grandparents and alumni, fill our parking lot for a great time!

Our Thankful Feast is held at school in November. This harvest festival is complete with decorations, soup, cornbread, music, and dancing. Everyone is invited including extended family members.

In April, our annual Art Show and Reception celebrates the learning children experience when engaged in creative art making. We love celebrating creativity and expression all together! The highlight of this afternoon is watching our children share their artistic accomplishments with their parents in a museum style atmosphere.

In May, we come together one last time to celebrate the end of the year as a school family.

PARENT FEEDBACK AND CONCERNS

At the end of each year, each family receives a copy of the annual family survey. The survey will ask several questions, "What did we do well?", "What needs improvement?", "What suggestions do you have to increase our quality of care for your child and your family?". We appreciate your input. The surveys are carefully reviewed by the preschool board. At least two of the suggestions will be used to inform our center's Quality Improvement Plan for the following school year.

A hard copy of our Quality Improvement Plan is filed in the preschool office. Staff, families and stakeholders can access a copy of the QIP in the Family Resource Center.

We also welcome feedback from families regarding specific concerns and suggestions for improving our program throughout the year. Should a concern or a great suggestion arise, please communicate first with the staff member with whom you have a concern, if possible, or talk with the Director.

FAMILY RESOURCE/LIBRARY: A variety of community resources are found in the bookshelf across from the 2 ½'s classroom as well as on the parent table by the preschool office. A book of Family Resources is also located in the parent resource library. Updated information about child development and learning, resources for special needs, food banks, child nutrition, health, mental health, family services, expectant parents, home health care, medical, dental, hearing, vision, skills training, and financial and tax information are some of the things that are included in this resource. We also have a variety of children's literature and activity backpacks that you can check out, take home, and enjoy with your children.

HELPING YOUR CHILD AT HOME: As a parent you are your child's first teacher. We believe that parents and teachers are partners in children's care and education. Your attitude and

example are very important. Take time each day to sit down with your child and let him/her tell you about their school day. Use your child's connection letter, newsletters and calendars to help prompt your child with specific questions about their art experiences, songs, or circle time discussions. Let your child know that you are interested in what he/she does in school. This home extension helps children build vocabulary, listening skills, and have pride in their accomplishments at school.

Transitions

Transitions work better for everyone when we know what to expect. By planning for transitions, we can help parents and children adjust to new settings and approach new experiences in a positive way. Transitions happen when:

- Children enter a program for the very first time
- Children move from one class (age group) to another
- Children go from preschool to kindergarten

The directors and teachers get acquainted with and **welcome new children and parents into the program** in the following ways:

- Registration and a tour of the preschool for both parent and child.
- Parent and staff orientation are held the first week of preschool with a parent orientation meeting (see below for more details).
- Information gathered by teachers about each individual student and discussed with individual parents in the enrollment forms, get to know you forms, as well as in the Ages and Stages Questionnaires (see Assessments for more details).
- Teachers provide predictable, structured daily routines in which children feel secure and teachers seek opportunities to expand on children's ideas and interests. Our transitions are structured to promote interaction, communication, and learning! This includes ongoing daily greeting routines and good-bye rituals of all children and parents, including daily sign-in and sign-out procedures.
- Weekly or, if needed, daily communications with parents on child's progress or concerns through personal conversations, emails, as well as parent/teacher conferences twice a year.
- Parent resource library where materials are available on a variety of topics as well as resources in the community.

The directors and teachers support parents and children as they transition **within the program (when they move to another age group)** in the following ways:

- Introducing parents and children to the teachers in their new classroom
- Information gathered by teachers about each individual student and discussed with parents in the enrollment forms, get to know you forms, as well as in the Ages and Stages Questionnaires.
- Allowing them to spend time in their new classroom with small groups of their peers in order to explore and get to know the new environment

The directors and teachers support parents and children as they transition **from preschool to Kindergarten** in the following ways:

- Providing resources and supports in our Family Resource Center/Library
- Sharing information with parents about Kindergarten registration at local schools
- Providing resources from the teachers in the weekly Connection Letter from the child's classroom

- Having conversations with parents about Kindergarten Readiness during Parent/Teacher conferences, both in the fall and in the spring.

ORIENTATION WEEK and The First Day of School: An Important Transition

This first week of school is an orientation time for children and parents. Parents will be experiencing the first day of school with your preschooler. All our preschool classes will attend one day, this first week, from 9:30 am—11:15 am. The schedule for Orientation Week will be emailed to parents by the end of August. Parents and students will arrive at 9:30 on their assigned day and visit their classroom for the first half an hour. Parents and students will have an opportunity to explore their classroom together sharing in many fun activities and visiting all the learning centers that are available. At 10:00 parents will leave their students with their teachers and go to Avery Hall to attend a Parent Orientation meeting with the director and board members. This meeting will end at 11:15 a.m., at which time you will pick up your student from his/her classrooms and head out to the playground to eat lunch together and get acquainted with the teachers and new friends. Make sure to pack a healthy lunch for both you and your preschooler! This is a very important “**connecting**” time for you, your young learner, and your teachers. We do ask parents to please make sure you attend this meeting for new information about our school year together!! You will receive your parent handbook and security card at this meeting and get all your questions answered!!

It is our belief and our experience that establishing strong connections between school and home this first week will make your transitions easier and happier for both you and your student.

HELP WITH SEPARATION ISSUES: We understand young children often have difficulty with separation. We want to reassure you that we are always ready to talk to you and comfort your child. Always say good-bye with a kiss, hug and a wave! Be firm but friendly about leaving. If your child whines or clings, prolonging the good-bye will only make it harder for yourself and your child. Saying goodbye on the first day of school can be very hard. (Especially for the parents!!) Here are a few suggestions, but feel free to talk to your child’s teacher about what is best for your child during your orientation week.

- We have found that showing confidence in your choice of school and teachers will help your child feel more relaxed. We recommend that you give him/her a great big hug, a kiss or two, and then some special words of assurance that it will be “A GREAT DAY.” Then, bravely depart the room. Lingering may make the separation even harder. Please know we care very deeply for all the children in our care and you are welcome to call and check on them during the day!!
- If your child has a favorite blanket, toy, or stuffed animal, feel free to bring it to school to help with your child’s transition.

We are there to help during these transition times and will help comfort your child once you leave. We offer comforting words such as, “I know it’s hard to say good-bye, let’s see what we can do at preschool.”

Once you have gone through your good-bye routines a few times, your child will get to know what to expect and the good-byes will be less difficult. After a short period of time, your child’s anxiety about you leaving ends quickly after you leave. Should this not be the case, we want you to know that we would call you to let you know how he/she is doing.

Your child will pick up on your confidence about having chosen a good place for him/her to be while you are away. Good feelings are contagious. So, the first step in adjusting to saying good-bye is to be sure you are comfortable with your decision to enroll your child in our program. Please let us know if we can be of further help. We want you to know that separation adjustment is normal, and we have the experience to help you and your child ease through this transition time.

CLASS PLACEMENT: When choosing your preference for your child's placement in his/her class, remember the following "helpful information points" about how our classes are structured:

- Our classes are structured for a sequential progression. Our 2 ½ - year olds typically move into our 3-year-old classes and likewise our 3-year olds typically move into our 4-year-old classes (pre-k) and our 4-year olds typically move into kindergarten **or** our transitional kindergarten classroom. Each "step"/ "class" matches where children are in their development of growth. We value a developmentally appropriate classroom structure. This means we strive to meet children where they are developmentally and then structure an environment that supports and offers experiences for further growth.
- Remember, to be READY for our 3-year-old classes your child must have learned to use the toilet independently. Toileting includes telling, undressing, going, wiping, dressing, flushing and hand washing. Your child must also be 3 years old by October 1st.
- To be READY for our 4-year-old classes your child must be 4 years old by October 1st. The 4-year-old classes are considered to be a pre-kindergarten class. It is a smoother and easier transition for children entering into this class to have been in our 3-year-old class prior to entering the 4's class.
- To be READY for our Transitional Kindergarten class your child must be 5 years old by December 1st. This class is structured for our 4-year olds who would benefit from one more year of preschool. We have named it a transitional kindergarten because these children are still "transitioning" into the next "step" — Kindergarten. This class offers an extended curriculum beyond the 4-year-old curriculum for additional development before Kindergarten.
- Our teachers are your best resources for helping you figure out which class would be the best placement for your child. These preschool years are critical developing years. We are here to help you and your child with these transitions. At no other time in your child's education is it easier to give your child the gift of time and self-confidence in getting ready for the "big" elementary school.

END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR: Planning carefully for the final days of school can ease transitions and help children feel more comfortable and secure. We have spent an entire school year with your children, and we want to prepare them well for their next steps.

- We prepare children for "moving on" by reviewing their individual developmental portfolios, reflecting and celebrating children's accomplishments during the year. We read books about moving onto Kindergarten, and we incorporate fun music and games to create an atmosphere of an end-of-year celebration!
- Children who are graduating from the program celebrate special good-bye activities. The goal is to help these children make a smooth transition into their next school experience.
- "Moving on" activities are embedded into the curriculum in May of each year for children going on to the next class, which includes visiting their new classrooms (at St. James) and meeting their new teachers.
- Children and parents are invited back to visit St. James Preschool.

- Information is shared and available to families about local schools and the various community Kindergarten registration opportunities.

Arrivals and Departures

Children should not be brought to class before 9:30 a.m. and need to be picked up promptly at dismissal time (1:30 p.m.). The time before and after class is for teachers to set up the room and to clean up. If you will be delayed for some reason, please phone the school office and leave a message. All classes will be dismissed from the playground unless there is inclement weather. For the safety of your child, school policy requires that he/she be brought directly to the assigned classroom at the beginning of the day and picked up in the assigned classroom at the end of the day by a parent or authorized person. Always sign your child "in" and "out" using the Procure app by scanning the QR code in your child's classroom or using the iPad kiosk that is available in the hallway. **Never leave your child unattended in the classroom or the school building.**

- If an unauthorized person attempts to pick up a child, **the child will not be allowed to leave.** If an unidentified, but authorized, person attempts to pick up a child, identification will be required. If we are suspicious of any person picking up a child or if any aggression is used, the police will be called.
- If, on a given day, your child has permission to leave school with someone other than those authorized individuals listed on the enrollment forms, please advise the classroom teacher in writing or call the office. If you wish to change the names of persons who are authorized to pick up your child at any time, you must do so by written notice.
- If a child is not picked up at the closing of the preschool, the remaining staff will attempt to reach the parent(s) at work or at home. If this is unsuccessful then the staff will attempt to reach the emergency contacts. If this is unsuccessful then the Director will contact the Littleton Police Dept. **The only time your child can be transported is in an emergency situation.** The staff ensures that all children are picked up at the end of the day before the last staff member leaves. At no time is your child left unattended at St. James Preschool. If your child is not picked up by 1:40 p.m. a late fee of \$10.00 for every five minutes will be assessed.
- If a child is brought to school late and the class is not in their classroom you may not sign your child into the classroom. Please bring your child to the school office so we can make arrangements for their care, if no arrangements can be made, you must keep your child with you, missing that particular day of preschool.
- If a parent or other authorized person arrives to preschool and the staff suspects that the parent or authorized person is highly intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol or drugs, those persons will be detained and the police will be called.

RESTRICTED ACCESS: St. James Preschool's entrance doors will always be locked. Every family will be issued one security entrance key fob with an assigned pin number. Families will be able to use their key fobs for morning drop-off from 9:15 a.m. until 9:45 a.m. and for afternoon from 1:15 p.m. until 1:45 p.m. At all other times of the day you will need to ring the doorbell, identify yourself, and tell us why you want to enter the preschool. The entrance doors will be able to be opened using a manual release buzzer which will allow you access after identification has been made.

- Families can pick up their security key fob during the Orientation week (first week of preschool in September). We can issue an additional key fob for a \$10 fee. We can only issue a maximum of 2 key fobs per family.

- These key fobs cannot be given to anyone who has not been assigned the key fob. Please do not “pass the cards around!” If you lose your key fob, please notify either Ms. Hillary or Ms. Kim. The cost to replace a lost access card is \$10.00.
- Please do not hold the door open for anyone you do not recognize or know to be an SJP family. Please make sure the doors close and latch behind you once you have entered the preschool.
- During the week before the last week of preschool you will need to return your key fob to either Ms. Hillary or Ms. Kim in the preschool office.

Please remind children who may be leaving with you to “wait for your adult” before entering the parking lot. Please do not let children leave the building without an adult. Families may ONLY exit through the front doors. No other doors can be used for exits. Please make sure the doors close and latch behind you. This is for the safety of all.

If a parent observes a suspicious person or activity around or in the parking lot, please report it to a staff person immediately.

PARKING: Exercise extreme caution in the parking lot! Parking is available on the north and west side of the preschool entrance. Please drive slowly and carefully in the parking lot as there are many children in these areas. Parking in the loading zone or disabled parking stall (without a placard) is not allowed. Please abide by the designated handicap only parking area and the loading area. **NEVER LEAVE CHILDREN UNATTENDED IN YOUR CAR!** It is not safe, nor is it legal, to leave children (e.g. siblings) unattended in cars while other children are brought into the center. If you are unable to escort your child into the classroom (e.g. sleeping sibling in car) and would like a staff member to escort your child to the classroom, please ring the doorbell (or call the front office from your cell phone) and wait until a staff member who is known to you arrives at the door to assist your child. If we notice a child alone in a car in the St. James parking lot, it is our responsibility to notify Health and Human Services Child Abuse & Neglect.

CHILD CUSTODY: Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation. **The preschool cannot legally deny release of any child to a natural parent unless we have a written court order regarding this.**

Assessment of Child Progress

St. James Preschool uses different assessment strategies as an integral part of our program. We use the assessments to support children’s learning by planning program improvements and adapting teaching practices in order to meet the individual needs of children. We use a variety of methods such as observations, checklists, rating scales, and individually administered screening tools which are standardized and approved by NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children). Our assessment plan includes the following:

AGES AND STAGES (ASQ-3 or ASQ-SE2) QUESTIONNAIRE: We want all children at St. James to receive a developmental screening within the first 3 months of program entry to help identify children’s abilities. This is accomplished with the help of our parents. The ASQ is a set of questions about children’s physical development and social-emotional development. It has been used for more than 20 years to make sure children are developing well in all domains of growth. A screening provides a quick look at how children are doing in important areas, such as

communication, physical ability, social skills, and problem-solving skills. The ASQ can help identify your child's strengths as well as any areas where your child may need more support. As a parent, you are the best source of information about your child. That's why ASQs are designed to be filled out by you. If needed, referrals are made for supportive services. A child's growth is more than just physical. Children grow, develop, and learn throughout their lives, starting at birth. A child's development can be followed by how they play, learn, speak, and behave. You are an active partner in your child's learning and development. By completing the ASQ, you are making sure your child is off to the best possible start!

WRITTEN DEVELOPMENTAL PROFILES: This staff-developed assessment is aligned with the Creative Curriculum goals and objectives providing an accurate picture of all children's abilities and progress. The developmental profile describes the progress and learning of children in all areas, including cognitive skills, language, social-emotional, approaches to learning, health and physical development (including self-help skills). These profiles are shared with parents at Parent/Teacher Conferences.

WRITTEN DEVELOPMENTAL PORTFOLIOS: Documentation of all children's developmental growth and progress is collected across the full range of children's experiences. Samples of children's work (including photos, writing, cutting, creative art, physical growth, & personal interests) will reflect growth in a sequential timeline. The portfolios are given to parents during the last quarter of preschool and can be reviewed upon request at any time during the preschool year.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES: Twice a year St. James Preschool schedules parent/teacher conferences. All classes will have a Parent/Teacher Conference in the month of October and in the month of March. Conferences may also be held anytime during the year at the teachers and/or parents request.

Confidentiality

Individual child records, screening, and assessment results remain confidential. Child records are stored in a locked file cabinet in the office. The individuals who have access to student files include St. James Preschool staff, our sub-contracted registered nurse consultant, Colorado Dept. of Human Services officials, and Colorado Shines program assessors. Their access is regulated and necessary to complete regulatory inspections.

Health/Medical Information

Your child's health is a matter of major importance to all of us. This program is in compliance with the Nurse Practice Act and has a nurse consultant who delegates the administration of medications. Upon enrollment, you must file with us a current **health form signed by a physician**, and a **certificate of immunization** signed by the physician as well. The **registration form and enrollment form** must include all allergies, chronic illnesses and special health situations, as well as names and phone numbers of persons to contact in the event of an emergency.

PHYSICALS: Routine physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (www.aap.org). A copy of your child's physical MUST be received before your child begins the program. Families are responsible for assuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the CURRENT results of the child's health assessment is given to the program.

IMMUNIZATIONS: Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services, American Academy of Pediatrics, (www.aap.org), and Colorado law requires proof of immunization be provided prior to or on the first day of admission. Our state regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons are followed. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department. There may be under-immunized children at this facility.

HAND WASHING: Washing hands regularly is one of the best ways to keep all children healthy and germ-free. Hand washing is the single most effective practice that prevents the spread of germs in the preschool setting. Children and adults must wash hands upon arrival to the preschool before entering the classrooms. Hands will be washed before and after eating, after using the toilet/diapering, before and after using sensory tables, after playing on the playground, after handling pets, after coughing or contact with runny noses, and whenever hands are visibly dirty. We use foaming soap which does not require wetting hands first. Teaching the proper handwashing technique is an important part of the classroom curriculum. In addition, parents will be given a handout regarding the center's handwashing technique and will be asked to practice it at home with their child.

ILLNESS: For all symptoms of illness, we will be following the guidelines in "[How Sick is Too Sick?](#)" from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. This document includes all symptoms for COVID-19. Our program will follow the most recent guidance from state and local health departments regarding COVID-19 and will make adjustments to our sickness policy and our health and safety practices according to their recommendations.

One of the most important things you can do to help us prevent the spread of illness in the preschool setting is to keep children home if there is any indication of illness. For the benefit of all our children and staff, we will call the parent of any child who appears to be ill. In such cases, if the child is suspected to be contagious, the child will be made comfortable in the Director's office, safely isolated from the other children and supervised by a familiar caregiver. A parent is then immediately contacted. In case the parent cannot be located, we will call the number of a friend or neighbor listed as emergency contacts in Procure. **If your child was sent home due to an illness (other than COVID-19) and was found to be contagious, PLEASE keep your child home for at least 24 hours before returning to school.** *In the event of a gastrointestinal outbreak, the Arapahoe County Health Department requires children to stay home with any vomiting or any diarrhea until symptom free for at least **48 hours.***

MEDICATION: **ALL** medication must be brought to the school and given to the director with required written instructions from a doctor. Prescription medication must be in the original container with the pharmacy label. Non-prescription medication must be accompanied with written instructions from the physician. **We cannot dispense medicine without written instructions by the physician.** *Please, if possible, administer all medicines at home!* If a child has a condition that might require medication on an emergency basis (e.g. in the case of a child's allergic reaction, asthma attack, etc.), the child's family shall provide all medications and paperwork necessary. All emergency medications will be stored out of children's reach in the child's classroom. The medication must be brought in a container appropriately labeled with the child's name, emergency phone number, picture, and contact person.

ALLERGIES: In the case of a child that has multiple or significant food and/or drink allergies, the parent must furnish all their child's food at school. The staff of St. James Preschool will not substitute any food or drink to a child with severe allergies.

An allergy list will be posted in the classroom to alert the staff to a child's food allergy. St. James is an allergy aware program. We will work with you to provide the safest care for your child's individual needs.

TOILETING ACCIDENTS: Accidents happen! Please provide an extra change of clothes for your child. Place underwear, socks, pants, shirt, etc. (diapers if your child is not potty trained) in a large Ziploc bag. If you forget, the preschool does have extra articles of clothing available. Children prefer their own, however!

INFECTIOUS DISEASES: All staff are trained in the use of Standard Precautions for infectious diseases. For **all** incidents when ANY child is bleeding, the staff uses gloves and cleans up with an approved solution. The children will be taught how to use Standard Precautions for their own safety as well as others. If we experience a large group outbreak, we are required by the Colo. Dept. of Health to report suspected outbreaks to our local public health agency (Arapahoe County Public Health) within 24 hours.

SUNSCREEN: Because all children spend at least 30 minutes outside each day (unless the weather is severe), we want to protect children from too much sun exposure to avoid the risk of sunburn and skin cancer risk later in life. Therefore, we ask for the cooperation of parents in applying sunscreen! We also ask that parents consider sending your children to school wearing protective clothing such as a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, and provide a wide brimmed sun hat each day.

We ask that parents apply sunscreen to their child BEFORE dropping them off at class.

We have available sunscreen that parents can apply upon arriving at preschool in case you forget. It is in the preschool office. The sunscreen used at St. James Preschool is Rocky Mountain Sunscreen Broad Spectrum SPF 30. If you want more information regarding this sunscreen, please see the company's website at www.rmsunscreen.com. Teachers will NOT apply sunscreen to children in the morning. **Sunscreen must be applied by a parent or guardian, and it must last at least 6 hours in order to be effective during your child's 4 hour preschool day.** The Colorado Rules Regulating Child Care Centers states that centers must document the time that sunscreen was applied. Parents will be able to enter this information when they sign in through the Procure app.

In the rare instance that a staff member applies sunscreen, it can only be applied to healthy skin. (For example, if the skin has a rash or injury, sunscreen will not be applied to this area.) Consent for application of sunscreen is given by the parent at the time the enrollment forms are signed.

ACCIDENTAL INJURIES: All accidents or injuries that have occurred at the preschool will be reported to the parents and to the regulating authorities as needed. A child who is injured will be given first aid by a staff member(s). All staff members are required to have First Aid and CPR training. If the injury poses an emergency, the paramedics will be called. Every attempt to contact the parents will be made.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY TRANSPORTATION: In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

MEDICAL INSURANCE/MEDICAL HOME: Parents are asked to indicate their child's medical and dental provider on the enrollment form. The Director or Assistant Director reviews this indicated information. If a medical or dental provider is not listed, St. James Preschool has a resource guide to medical homes and screenings, compliments of the Arapahoe County Early Childhood Council, that we can give families. Brochures on Medicaid/CHP+ program are also available.

VISION, HEARING, SPEECH/LANGUAGE & DENTAL SCREENING RESOURCES: St. James Preschool recommends that all children receive vision, hearing, speech/ language and dental screenings every year and we provide these to all children free of charge. Early detection and treatment of vision and hearing problems, even mild problems, can make a difference in a child's health, speech, learning, and socialization. We have contracted with Children's Advisory Network (www.childrensadvisorynetwork.org) to provide these screenings in the fall of each year as well as Dr. Hurd from Dentistry for Children (www.drgoodsmiles.com) for dental screenings.

Emergency Information

A critical ingredient in a safe preschool recipe is the classroom response to an incident at preschool. Weather events, fire, accidents, intruders, and other threats to children's safety are scenarios that are planned and trained for by children, teachers, and administration. St. James Preschool is expanding our safety protocols to include the Standard Response Protocol (SRP). The SRP is based on these five actions, Hold, Secure, Lockdown, Evacuate and Shelter. More information can be found at <http://iloveguys.org>. We would always call 911 to alert the emergency system as to our circumstances. Parents would also be contacted through the Procure app and a voice message alert would be provided on the preschool land line (if the situation allows) which is 303-798-7844.

- * **Hold--"In Your Room or Area"**: Hold is the protocol used when the hallways need to be kept clear. Adults and staff will close and lock the door, account for students and adults, and do business as usual.
- * **Secure—"Get Inside. Lock Outside Doors."**: Secure is called when there is a threat or hazard outside of the school building. Children will return to the inside of the building if they are outside. Inside classroom activities will resume as usual. Teachers will recover children and other staff from outside the building, have an increased situational awareness, provide inside classroom activities as usual and take attendance, accounting for all children. Additionally, window blinds will be closed. **No one will be permitted to enter or exit the building until law enforcement officials indicate that it is safe to do so.** When a secure event is brief or the hazard is non-violent, like a wild animal on the playground, there may not be a need to notify parents while the Secure is in place. With longer or more dangerous events, the school should notify parents that the school has increased their security. Periodic drills occur during the year.
- * **Lockdown—"Locks, Lights, Out of Sight"**: Lockdown is called when there is a threat or hazard inside the building. Children will move away from sight and maintain silence. Teachers will lock classroom doors, turn out lights, move away from sight, maintain silence and wait for First Responders to open door. **No one will be permitted to enter or exit the building until law enforcement officials indicate that it is safe to do so.** Teachers participate in periodic lockdown drills once a year.
- * **Evacuate—"To a Location"**: Evacuate is called to move children and staff from one location to another. Teachers will take their Emergency Backpack, which includes First Aid supplies and Emergency Contact Information for each child. They will lead children

to the evacuation location, take attendance, and account for all children. Periodic evacuation drills occur during the year.

- * **Shelter for a Hazard Using Safety Strategy:** Shelter is called when the need for personal protection is necessary. Sample hazards are tornados or hazmat. Sample safety strategies could include evacuate to shelter or seal rooms. We will wait until we hear further instruction from law enforcement officials or First Responders. Periodic Shelter-in-place drills occur during the year.
- * **Active Shooter on Premises:** An Active Shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area; in most cases, active shooters use firearm(s) and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims. Active shooter situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly. Typically, the immediate deployment of law enforcement is required to stop the shooting and mitigate harm to victims. Because active shooter situations are often over within 10 to 15 minutes, before law enforcement arrives on the scene, individuals must be prepared both mentally and physically to deal with an active shooter situation. Depending upon the scenario, the protocol is to **Run, Hide, or Fight**.
- * **FIRE/TORNADOES:** The preschool has two exits in the event of fire or explosion. The children are trained and practiced in performing fire drills. The school will have fire drills monthly. In the event of a tornado warning, the children are brought to an inner room away from glass. The school will have at least two tornado drills during the year.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION AND PARENT REUNIFICATION POLICY: If we need to evacuate the building and cannot return to our building for an extended length of time, the teachers and children will walk to Centennial Lutheran Church directly across Lowell Boulevard. The phone number is 303-798-1424. We would also be calling 911 to alert the emergency system as to our circumstances. Parents will be contacted and instructed on where and how to pick up your children.

Weather

SNOW DAYS: At the discretion of St. James Preschool Administration, we will announce snow days based on the local weather conditions for the safety of children, families, and staff. We will use area public school snow closures as a guideline for making the decision about now closure days for St. James. These closures will be announced on News Channel 4, News Channel 9, email, and Procure message. Families may also refer to the school website or Facebook page for updates.

OUTDOOR PLAY: Children go outside to play every day. If the temperature is below 20 degrees or higher than 90 degrees, considering humidity, wind chill, and shade, we will stay inside and play in our indoor fitness room.

Field Trips

All our Field Trips are **walking field trips on the church property.**

Photographs and Media

St. James Preschool staff may use mobile devices to document children's activities. These photos are primarily used to document your child's progress and may be hung up for view in the classrooms or hallway bulletin boards. You will receive a release in the enrollment packet for you to initial, granting or declining permission to St. James and all staff to use still, motion, video

or audio recording of your child's image for use in conjunction with the production of visual bulletin boards, social media, or other educational purposes.

Classroom Pets

Some of our classrooms may have a goldfish as a pet that children and staff name and take care of. Teaching staff supervise all interactions between children and our classroom animals.

Children do not handle the classroom pets. All these pets are recognized as being suitable for children in a classroom setting. Each pet has their own living environment. Children learn about their pets, feed them, and observe their behaviors and habits. During "long" vacations, such as Christmas Break and Summer Break, our classroom pets are "adopted" by the preschool staff and are taken to their family's home over that time frame. Families are asked if their children have any allergies pertaining to foods and/or animals. All allergies are posted in the classroom. If a child is allergic to one of our pets, then we would make the necessary arrangements in order to keep the child healthy and safe in our classroom. Teachers will do their best to make sure that children are not exposed to an animal that they are allergic to. Parents, make sure to disclose this information in the enrollment packet.

VISITING ANIMALS: Arrangements must be made before pets visit our school. On occasion, pets are brought by the children's parent (s) for their "sharing day" (Show & Tell). After the Show & Tell time, the pet must be taken home. The pet may not stay at the school for the day. When pets visit SJP the owners must always remain with their pet. The pet must be fully immunized and suitable for contact with children according with Rules and Regulations pertaining to childcare settings. The children are instructed on safe behavior with that particular pet.

Fundraising

Each year St. James conducts fundraisers to help support some of the cost of the program. Tuition alone does not cover all our program costs. Parents are invited to help the board with "person power" and participation. We host monthly fundraiser dinners on Tuesday nights, either at Romano's or other community restaurants. Each month, we have another fundraising opportunity planned. You are not required to participate in any of our fundraising opportunities. Your participation is voluntary and very much appreciated by the board, staff, and your children, who directly benefit from our efforts. Our efforts help us provide high quality programming for our SJP Kids!

Personal Belongings

All children are provided with a cubby space in the classroom for coats, baskets and other personal belongings such as "Lovies". We recommend that children not bring personal toys or other valuables, including jewelry and money, to school. This avoids much heartbreak when items become lost or broken. Sharing Time is, of course, an exception.

WHAT TO WEAR TO SCHOOL: Simple, sun protective clothing is most appropriate for preschool. Whenever possible, provide clothing with fastenings which your child can manipulate. Send your child in clothes that are appropriate for messy play as we engage in messy activities both inside and outside. Sturdy shoes are especially important; sandals, crocs and flip flops are examples of shoes that are difficult to wear on our playground. For safety reasons, your child may be denied the opportunity to play on the climbing equipment if the teacher feels that they will slip. All outer garments, including hats and boots, need to be labeled with your child's name. Children need to be properly dressed for all weather conditions as we play outside on mild and sometimes not so mild weather days. (IF in doubt, dress for OUT). Preschool students need to bring a complete change of clothing, including socks and shoes.

diapers, and wipes which will be stored in their classroom. Please label everything that belongs to your child with his or her name.

Outdoor Play Guidelines and Policy

We plan to play outside every day! If your child is not well enough to play outside, then your child is not well enough to come to school. PLEASE dress your children appropriately for the weather. In the event of *extreme* hot (over 90 degrees) or cold (below 20 degrees) weather the director and teachers will determine the safety of children playing outdoors. As a rule of thumb, (with some flexibility for individual class needs) if the weather conditions are *extremely* hot or cold, rainy, snowing, and/or *extremely* windy, alternate indoor large motor play will take place in our STAR Room. Likewise, on high pollution warning days children will play inside. On sunny days, if you want your child to wear sunscreen, please apply it to your child before school. Likewise, if you want your child to wear insect repellent, please apply it to your child before school. It is recommended by the public health authorities to use repellents containing DEET. Teachers will not be applying sunscreen or insect repellent at school without written consent from the parent. St. James playground has multiple shade structures and trees to provide shade. Water will be provided on sunny, warm weather days.

Child Supervision

Children attending St. James are always supervised by an adult. Teachers keep attendance and note children's absences. Children are counted frequently during their class time, especially when exiting and entering the classroom, before and after outdoor play time, at snack time, circle time, or special programs. When going outside to our playground one teacher leads the children while the other teacher follows the last child out. Headcount is checked a minimum of three times a day. Should a special activity be planned at St. James that requires bringing in an outside instructor, (community helpers, music, performers, etc.) the teachers will remain with the children while attending the special activity.

MISSING CHILDREN: Should we not be able to locate a child, the director and one other teacher for that class will begin an immediate search. All means will be initiated to locate the child. If the child is not located after a thorough search, the parent and the police will be notified.

St. James Preschool takes their responsibility very seriously when caring for your children.

Television and Video Viewing

Television or Videos are not used in our daily school curriculum. The philosophy behind our curriculum is that young children learn best by doing. We encourage and provide an environment where children can be active and creative explorers. During classroom emergent curriculum times such as fact finding and research teachers may use iPads for educational purposes. On special occasions such as Halloween and Valentine's Day we might show an age appropriate video.

Cooking Activities

Our curriculum includes opportunities for children to cook. This is a fun enrichment activity that children enjoy and sets the stage for hands on discovery learning. Children are involved in a concrete, real-life experience providing natural opportunities to develop math, language, beginning reading, science skills and *self-confidence!* You will often hear children express their accomplishments. *"I did it. I made it myself!"* During the cooking experience in our classrooms, teachers emphasize and use safety precautions. We ask for parent volunteers for added supervision. We wash and dry hands before handling food. Only the teacher or supervising

adult places items in and removes them from any heated appliance. We wash all serving and cooking utensils according to health department standards. Cooking ingredients are purchased specifically for each cooking experience to assure freshness and are stored appropriately according to health department standards. The preschool refrigerator is inspected weekly. Food items that are nearing the expiration date are thrown away.

Lunch Guidelines

Please send a **nutritious lunch** (which meets 1/3 of the daily nutritional requirements) and water or milk for your child every day. This includes: 1 protein, 1 fruit, 1 vegetable, 1 grain, and a dairy product. Make sure to label the lunch with your child's name. It is also recommended to include a labeled self-contained ice pack. It's best to use labeled storage type containers for all food items. Remember we do not warm food. Finger foods are best. Please send labeled utensils and food that your child can feed themselves.

We recommend you try to limit sugar and offer children a chance to sample new foods. Family favorites or ethnic foods are especially fun! Fresh fruits and vegetables are encouraged.

Food items that are **NOT** considered safe for children younger than four years old are hot dogs whole or sliced into rounds, whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, spoonfuls of peanut butter, or chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole. Staff will not serve the food items listed above (whole) to children younger than four. Cut foods such as grapes and carrots into lengthwise pieces that children can swallow safely. THANK YOU for your assistance with this.

***NOTE: It is the policy of the school that parents of children with severe food allergies must notify the Director and teachers.**

On Special Occasions (such as birthdays), food that is to be shared with the class is permitted under the following conditions:

- Perishable food to be shared with other children must be store-bought and in its original package.
- Children will not be allowed to share food provided by the child's family (individual lunch items) unless the food is intended for sharing with all the children.
- Leftover food will be discarded except for foods that do not require refrigeration and/or come in a commercially wrapped package that was never opened.

Good Lunch Box Suggestions for a Balanced, Nutritional Lunch.	
½ turkey sandwich (whole wheat bread) Celery sticks Grapes Milk/water	Chicken strips Whole wheat Roll Orange wedges Broccoli Milk/water
Cream Cheese on graham crackers Apple slices Carrot sticks Milk/water	Yogurt with fresh fruit Crackers Sugar snap peas Milk/water

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Birthdays

We celebrate birthdays with our friends at school. Parents may bring a special snack to help celebrate their child's special day. *Cupcakes, sheet cakes, or anything extremely messy to eat may be provided at the teachers' discretion. Please refer to "On Special Occasions" above.*

- * If a birthday is to be celebrated away from the classroom and the whole class is not invited, please mail the invitations as well as any thank you notes. If the entire class is invited, please feel free to bring the invitations to school. Please be considerate of our children's feelings and comply with this request.
- * Parents often donate a book, puzzle, or game to the classroom in honor of their child's birthday. The birthday child has the honor of giving as well as receiving on their special day. If you wish to donate an item, the classroom teacher can give you ideas on what the class would enjoy.

Sharing Time

Children may bring things from home on their designated "sharing" day or they may choose to simply share information about their weekend, etc. with the class. Sharing items should be placed in the bag with the child's name on it and will be returned to his/her cubby basket. We discourage guns, war toys, and other toys of destruction. *Limit number of items to one.*

Classroom Support for Children

A reasonable effort will be made to accommodate any child's needs and to integrate the child into the classroom within the capacity of the existing staff.

Upon enrollment of a child with special health care needs, we must obtain a copy of an existing individualized health care plan for the child that can be reviewed, adopted, and implemented by our staff. Working with the parents, we will inform our nurse consultant and our child development specialist about the needs of the child. A team consisting of teachers, administrative staff, parents, nurse consultant and other professionals who work with the child will develop an individualized health care plan for the child. Admittance will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

For children who are receiving other services including but not limited to speech/language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, or mental health support, the family must notify the staff at the time of registration. Our staff will meet with parents and therapists to learn about the child's needs and explain our school philosophy, curriculum, and classrooms schedules and routines in order to determine if our program is the best educational fit for the child. Admittance will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

In both cases, students would be admitted on a trial basis of one or two months, depending on the age and classroom placement of the child. During this time, we will work closely with the child's parents, our consultants, teachers, and any other person(s) responsible for the child's growth and well-being. At the end of the trial period, we will meet with the parents and any other necessary case workers to determine if we are able to adequately meet the needs of the child within our current staffing patterns. If we are not able to meet the child's needs, we will assist parents in finding a more suitable program for the child.

REFERRAL POLICY: If a family would like information about referring their child to a specialist, please discuss this with the Director. If a concern about your child's development occurs, we will contact you by telephone and email to schedule a meeting. During the meeting we will share our concerns and provide the necessary referrals to support both child and family. We may also provide accommodations to support the child's success in the classroom, which may include an adjustment to the child's daily schedule. St. James Preschool has a variety of health, behavioral, and additional educational resources that we can share with you. We have contracted with Susan Hill (Hill-Kleespie LLC) to provide screenings and referrals for children in our preschool. Susan can also help guide the parent through the evaluation process, if necessary, and serve as a liaison between outside agencies that provide services and St. James Preschool. We have also contracted with Children's Advisory Network(www.childrensadvisorynetwork.org) to provide Vision, Hearing, and Language Screenings at St. James Preschool. In some instances, families might be referred to their local Child Find, which offers free screenings through the school district where the family lives.

HOME LANGUAGE AND INTERPRETERS: Families sometimes express concern about their children learning English and/or retaining or continuing to acquire their home language. At St. James we strongly always encourage you to use your home language with your child. Current research shows that very young children acquire language in the context of a relationship and that children do best if they hear a single language from a single adult. In addition, research shows that mastery of one language offers the best foundation for learning other languages. Our teachers mostly speak English with the children at St. James and your child will gradually acquire English through their experiences with us. During our orientation week teachers will ask you for critical words in your child's home language if it is not English.

- * The policy of St. James Preschool is to support meaningful communication with all our families. We respect the diversity of our preschool community. If we do not have a staff member who speaks the language of a family, we will utilize the outside translation vendor Voiance to support communication. Additionally, we use Creative Curriculum which is a bilingual curriculum providing written lesson plans and other parent resources in both English and Spanish. We would be able to support families whose home language is Spanish with these written communications.

Diapering

The policy on diapering and toilet training is a Colorado Child Care Licensing rules and regulations. These procedures only apply to our 2 ½'s classroom, which is licensed for diapering.

Children requiring diapers will be checked for wetness or feces at least every two hours, or whenever the child indicates discomfort or exhibits behavior that suggests a soiled or wet diaper. The child shall be changed when found to be wet or soiled. A diaper changing station or changing area shall be provided and located separate from any food preparation, storage, or serving area and will comply with Colorado Department of Health and Environment Rules and Regulations Governing the Health and Sanitation of Child Care Facilities

Toilet Training

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically,

and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

Discipline and Guidance

The staff makes every attempt to discipline and guide children with love and dignity. The term guidance is used for several reasons. It is a positive term and implies working WITH the child to develop internal control of his/her behavior. St. James Preschool has created systems and implements best practices that promote and sustain the use of the Pyramid Model as well as Conscious Discipline curriculum developed by Dr. Becky Bailey. Our staff members are trained in the use of both models and infuse these practices throughout the classroom day. We use a collaborative teaming approach.

First, forming responsive and nurturing relationships with children, families, and colleagues is the foundation for all our practices. Strategies include actively responding to children's needs, supporting children's play, supporting and responding to children's communication, providing positive feedback and encouragement for appropriate behavior, and partnering with families.

Secondly, we strive to create a high-quality, supportive environment. Practices include designing the classroom for safety and predictability, planning a rich, exciting developmentally-appropriate curriculum, providing adequate, motivating materials, creating well-defined play centers, providing a balanced schedule for large and small groups and teacher-led/ child-led times of instruction, teaching classroom rules, and providing clear directions and expectations of promoting social-emotional competence and preventing challenging behaviors.

Thirdly, we focus on the explicit instruction of social emotional skills. We use the Pyramid Solution Kit, the Tucker Turtle strategy for anger management, calm down techniques in the safe place, individualized social stories, role plays, and puppets to help children learn how to identify and express their feelings and emotions, play cooperatively with peers, use problem-solving skills, make friends, initiate and maintain play, strategies to handle disappointment, and delayed gratification. Instruction to teach these social-emotional skills is intentional, systematic, and focused.

Our goal is to encourage the children to become creative, independent, responsible, and socially mature human beings. This involves learning to make responsible choices and accepting the consequences of such choices.

A quick review, Guidance takes several forms:

- * **Nurturing Relationships.** Teachers show love, care, and are responsive to the needs of the children, building trust with each child.
- * **Supportive Environment.** A place that is designed for children. Centers are clearly designed and arranged to promote hands on learning and discourage inappropriate behaviors, such as running inside.
- * **Logical Rules.** Rules such as keeping your hands to yourself and taking care of the learning environment are discussed with the children, as well as why rules are needed.
- * **Curriculum.** Our curriculum is developmentally appropriate based on children's interest and level of readiness.
- * **Positive Behavior.** We reinforce the behaviors we encourage. Catch them being good!

- * **Redirection.** Often interesting a child in another activity can eliminate a potential difficulty. We might ask them to help us or send them to a different area to play.
- * **Positive Reminder.** Telling the child what we want them to do, rather than using "no" or "don't."
- * **Renewal Time.** Occasionally a child needs to be removed from the situation for a brief time, allowing them to consider alternate behavior.

NOTE: **NO** corporal punishment will be allowed. This is defined as the use of negative physical touching (spanking, slapping, pinching, etc.). No verbal abuse will be allowed, such as humiliation, ridicule, threat or coercion.

Challenging Behavior Policy

We have a Team-Based Process for Responding to Challenging Behavior

In a young child, challenging behavior is defined as being hurtful to self or others, persistent, disruptive, destructive, or interfering with child's or peer's learning.

Staff will respond to challenging behavior at each level of Pyramid practices.

1. Relationships

- * Review child's Ages and Stages–Social Emotional Questionnaire with parents. Reflectively listen to any concerns. Be honest about child's behavior in class, while remembering to validate parent's care and love, as well as emphasize the child's strengths. Let parents know the teacher will be trying some strategies to help their child learn how to get needs met more appropriately.
- * Discuss with the Director the option of a home visit with Susan Hill (Hill-Kleespie LLC), our child development specialist.
- * Check the ratio of 7:1 "deposits-to-withdrawal" statements to child by all staff who work with the child.
- * Inform/invite families to St. James Preschool's Conscious Discipline trainings.

2. Environment

- * Staff will review the classroom environment organization and structure to determine if all Pyramid practices are in place.
- * Is there a predictable visual schedule that is consistently maintained? Are all children kept informed of transitions in routines throughout the day?
- * Are there "routines within routines?" Staff will discuss what methods are being used to help children answer four questions.
 1. What am I supposed to do?
 2. How do I know if I am progressing?
 3. How do I know that I am finished?
 4. What comes next?
- * Staff will review all routines to see if there is a clear beginning, middle, and end.
- * Staff will consider creating additional individual visual strategies such as a social story, first-then picture schedule, transition schedule, or center choice schedules.

3. Intentional Teaching Strategies

Staff will self-reflect on the following practices:

- * Are behavior expectations and rules posted in the classroom in a way that is meaningful for all children?
- * Are behavior expectations and rules (general rules and rules for specific routines, such as circle time) being intentionally taught and reviewed daily?

- * Are a variety of teaching strategies being implemented to teach rules, appropriate attention seeking, requesting and giving an object, friendship skills, problem solving, self-calming skills, and emotional literacy? These strategies will include teaching the concept in large and small groups, modeling “wise” and “unwise” choices relating to the skill being taught, creating daily activities for practice, providing descriptive praise which links positive behavior with specific expectation, and verbally modeling adult’s emotions and solutions when teachers are feeling frustrated as well as supported. This is a powerful strategy.
- * How often are children given planned social opportunities to work together with their peers? Peers are a natural reinforcement! Many challenging behaviors occur because children are seeking peer attention without knowing how to do that appropriately. Teach them!
- * Are a variety of visual play schemes taught and posted in centers? Many children do not know how to create play schemes with materials or peers. They will need to be taught, modeled, supported, and specifically reinforced to begin to learn to play appropriately with materials and peers.

4. Steps for addressing chronic disruptive behaviors

If challenging behaviors have not decreased after self-reflection and consulting with a child development specialist (Susan Hill-Kleespie LLC) or with the director on the above practices, staff will initiate the following steps with the team. The Team will consist of each staff member who works with the child at school, family members, and/or care givers whom the parents want to include.

- 1) Begin collecting Behavior Incident Report data. Collect data for a week. The data will include a description of the behavior, the frequency and severity of the behavior, the antecedents, consequences, what happens immediately after the behavior, time of day, routine, and other persons or children who were involved.
- 2) The team will begin collaborating and working together to create a functional behavior assessment. The Team will brainstorm a hypothesis of the function of the behavior and identify antecedents and consequences which surround the behavior. The team will collaborate to create strategies which will assist in preventing the challenging behavior, identify replacement skills which need to be taught, and discuss reinforcements for appropriate behavior, both at home and school.
- 3) If the teaching staff feel that they need further assistance in resolving the behavior problem, St. James Preschool may, with parental permission, request the assistance of an outside agency. If the teaching staff feels the behavior may result in a special need, our program may, with parental permission, refer the child for an evaluation. If the parental permission is refused, and the problem behavior continues, the continued enrollment of the child will be reconsidered with the provisions listed below.
- 4) If the results of an outside evaluation suggest the need for accommodations of special needs, the program will provide these or other appropriate accommodations as long as they are not an undue hardship on the program as outlined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In some cases, certain adaptations to our program may be impossible (an additional teacher at the cost of the family, for example) and we may recommend a different placement for the child. Please know that wherever possible, we will draw upon all resources to meet the child’s needs.
- 5) If all the above steps fail to resolve the behavior problem, St. James Preschool may ask the parent(s) to obtain education or services for their child at another program. St. James Preschool will provide the parent(s) with 2 weeks’ notice, except where such

notice is not reasonable because of safety concerns and will try to assist the parent(s) in obtaining alternative early education, care, and resources.

- 6) Written documentation of all the steps above will be provided to the parent(s) and placed in the child's file.

Discharge Policy

St. James Preschool reserves the right to cancel the enrollment for a child for the following reasons:

- * Non-payment or excessive late payments of tuition and fees
- * Not observing the rules of the school as outlined in the Parent Handbook.
- * Child requires additional classroom support which we cannot adequately meet with our current staffing patterns.
- * Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or children by parent or child

Child Abuse and Neglect Law

The staff members are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities. In the case of either suspected abuse or neglect, the preschool teacher or the director will make the report. If you, as a parent, suspect child abuse or neglect and need to file a report, call the State of Colorado Department of Health and Human Services Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline, 1-844-264-5437.

To protect your children, all staff members who work with children are required by law to be fingerprinted and to be checked against the Central Registry of Social Services. Anyone with a history of child abuse cannot work in the school.

Family Neutrality Policy

All staff and administrators are directed to remain neutral in all situations involving family law issues such as custody arrangements between parents, divorce proceedings, and authorized releases, except in the case of suspected or confirmed child abuse or neglect as demonstrated to the school's satisfaction. Neither staff nor administration will give voluntary statements or take a position in non-child-abuse matters.

Obligation to Inform Law Enforcement or When We Must Inform Police

If we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs, including marijuana or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child, to protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

Reporting Suspected Licensing Violations

If you need to report a situation which involves a complaint concerning suspected licensing violations, write or call The Division of Child Care with the Dept. of Human Services: 1575 Sherman St., Denver, CO. 80203, 303- 866-5958.

Grievance Procedure and Conflict Resolution

If a parent has a grievance, first go directly to the person(s) involved. If the grievance involves a teacher, the parent needs to present the situation directly to the teacher(s). Failing to reach settlement with the teacher(s), the parent may then present the situation to the director. Failing to reach settlement with the director; the parent may submit to the chairperson of the Board a

written statement of the situation, requesting that the Board review the grievance. The Board will review the grievance and make recommendations for actions. Changes can only be made, and problems resolved when all parties concerned are in direct communications with each other. We want to creatively use conflict, striving to resolve issues according to Matt. 18:15-16, avoiding unhealthy triangles.

Smoking/Drugs

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies; therefore, the indoor and outdoor school environment are always non-smoking areas. The use of tobacco or marijuana in any form is prohibited on the school's premises.

Visitors Policy

Visitors are always welcome at St. James. No appointment is necessary. However, visitors do need to sign in and out and state the reason for visiting. If the visitor is a stranger to the staff at least one form of identification must be presented. Visitors will always be under supervision of the staff.

We are praying that during this year, with parents and teachers working together, we will be able to help your child develop his/her potential --- Spiritually, Emotionally, Socially, Intellectually and Physically. Looking forward to a great year together!

St. James Preschool Parent Handbook. Revised June August 2023