

Southgate Community School District
GSRP Preschool
Family Handbook
734-246-4636

Philosophy Statement:

We have developed our program to meet the needs of your child. In our program, we have planned to include the developmental areas that will provide for the well-rounded growth of your child. These developmental areas include social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development. We are licensed by the State of Michigan Child Care Licensing (LARA Division) and are a Great Start to Quality 4-Star Center. For further information please visit Greatstarttoquality.org

Class Details:

❖ 4 Year Old - School Day, lunch and snack included, rest period every day, students must be toilet-trained; adult:child ratio is 1:8

Students must be fully independent in a school restroom situation which includes getting on and off the toilet independently, attending to toilet needs and ability to redress themselves. Pull-ups and diapers are not allowed as an alternative to restroom independence. Staff are not permitted to physically assist students in the restroom, but can provide coaching and encouragement.

Eligibility and Admission:

Initial registration takes place online (www.southgateschools.com) with additional documentation submitted to an enrollment Paraprofessional.

The GSRP preschool enrollment considers all children who will be 4 years of age on or before September 1 of the current school year.

Eligibility is based on income level (scaled to an income chart provided by the State of Michigan) and secondly, on certain criteria (risk factors) as charted by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). Programs are required to enroll the most needy students based on reported income and then with considerations of qualifying risk factors. The enrollment process requires the ranking of eligible students to identify the most needy to receive available slots in GSRP classrooms.

Risk factors include, but are not limited to: limited English proficiency (student or household), delayed motor development, teenage parent, single-parent family, long-term or chronic illness of child, parent or sibling, abuse or neglect including substance/alcohol abuse, special needs, qualification for an Individual Education (IEP).

The program is free to children who are enrolled, with income that is 250% or lower than the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). The program is funded by a grant from MDE.

Registration paperwork must be submitted to the office prior to the student starting class.

Forms/Information Required for Enrollment:

- ❖ Online PreEnrollment
- ❖ Child and Family Information
- ❖ Early Childhood Program Agreement
- ❖ Updated Immunization Record
- ❖ School Health Information Form
- ❖ Health Appraisal/Physician Form
- ❖ Certified Birth Certificate
- ❖ Parent/Guardian Driver's License
- ❖ Proof of Residency (tax or utility bill with address listed)
- ❖ Proof of Income
- ❖ Free/Reduced Meal Application

What We Believe...

- ❖ Each child is unique in terms of development, personality, learning style and cultural background.
- ❖ The family is the primary influence in the development of the child and critical as participants in the educational process.
- ❖ Students' learning needs include those which are academic, emotional, social, nutritional and physical in nature.
- ❖ Young children learn best through active, hands-on experiences at school, home and within their community.

Program Mission Statement

The Southgate Early Childhood Program promotes a positive preschool experience for children and their families in a safe and secure environment while enhancing self-esteem, personal growth, social responsibility and increasing parental involvement opportunities in their child's education. We promote lifelong learning and value education for the students and their families.

District Mission Statement

Learning for Life.

District Vision Statement

Southgate Community Schools: The best choice for students and parents.

Non Discrimination Statement

It is the policy of the Board of Education and the School District not to unlawfully discriminate on the basis of handicap, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, height, weight, sexual orientation or gender identity. The District reaffirms its policy to comply with Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act, the Michigan Handicappers' Civil Rights Act, Americans with Disability Act of 1990, and all other applicable Federal and State laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination.

Diversity Statement

The Southgate Early Childhood Program values diversity within the student population, staff and community. Diversity includes race, ethnicity, disabilities, sexual orientation, gender, religion, culture, function, hierarchy, physical ability, physical appearance, language, lifestyles and geographical origin. It is mandatory that all Southgate Early Childhood Program staff demonstrate cultural responsiveness in their daily work and interactions with students, families and colleagues.

Discipline Policy

The staff handles discipline problems in a positive manner. We encourage self-control, self-direction, self-esteem and cooperation. Our goal is to incorporate a happy and positive learning environment for all our students. Staff will encourage children to interact in a positive manner and to use redirection methods as necessary. Staff will use developmentally appropriate language and behavior to assist the child in staying calm and facilitating with problem solving of a solution. Staff will communicate this information to the child by getting down to the child's eye level and keeping their language simple and understandable.

Staffing Requirements and Professional Learning

All staff have met clearance requirements of Southgate Community Schools which include fingerprint screening. Staff working in the Early Childhood Program have met additional screening requirements required by the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) which include additional fingerprint screening, safety training and current CPR and First Aid certification.

All lead teachers are required to hold a State of Michigan teaching certificate with certification or endorsements in Early Childhood or a Child Development Associate degree.

All lead and assistant teaching staff in licensed programs are required by the State of Michigan to complete a minimum of 16 hours of professional development training each year. In accordance with the Great State to Quality rating system, through which all of our 3 and 4 year old classrooms are rated, Southgate Early Childhood Program staff members are required to go beyond the state-required 16 hours and complete 24-30 hours of professional development each year. Topics include: child development,

curriculum, assessment, social/emotional learning, communication, health and safety, nutrition, and licensing regulations.

What will my child learn at preschool?

The curriculum and methodologies used result in daily experiences designed to provide opportunities for children to develop and learn:

- ❖ A positive self-concept and self-confidence
- ❖ To interact effectively with children and adults
- ❖ Expansive use and understanding of expressive and receptive language
- ❖ Independence in caring for themselves, self-advocacy
- ❖ To explore and adapt to their expanding environment
- ❖ To explore a variety of art and play materials
- ❖ To have an interest in listening to/reading a variety of types of texts and songs
- ❖ To recognize basic colors and shapes
- ❖ The use of school tools such as pencils, crayons and scissors
- ❖ Concepts of numeracy such as counting and number identification, grouping
- ❖ Pre-literacy skills including rhythm, rhyme, letter and sound identification
- ❖ To ask questions and seek information from a variety of sources

The Southgate Early Childhood Program uses the Michigan Department of Education Early Childhood Standards of Quality in conjunction with Teaching Strategies© Creative Curriculum, a research-based curriculum, designed to encourage learning through exploration and play. Teaching Strategies© GOLD is the assessment tool used to monitor student progress and program effectiveness throughout the school year. Families are required to complete the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) at the beginning of the school year in order to provide information about their child.

GSRP classrooms are required to be evaluated by an Early Childhood Specialist throughout the school year. The evaluation tool used is the Program Quality Assessment - Revised (PQA-R), provided by the State of Michigan in order to properly monitor and evaluate the performance of staff and fidelity of the learning environment according to Early Childhood Education best practices and standards. If the director is not qualified to be the acting Early Childhood Specialist, one will be appointed via Wayne County Regional Education Service Agency (WC RESA). Early Childhood Specialists are required to have a background in Early Childhood Education, Educational Leadership and to be certified as PQA-R Reliable Assessors.

Daily Routine

Each day children are involved in a variety of activities as a part of the class structure. While the daily routine and structure are predictable, a variety of materials and activities are utilized. Activities are both student-directed and teacher-directed. Classroom instruction is hands-on and inquiry-based, allowing children to question,

explore and experiment.

Sample Daily Schedule:

- ❖ Arrival/Greeting
- ❖ Large Group/Music and Movement
- ❖ Breakfast
- ❖ Planning
- ❖ Work/Choice
- ❖ Clean-up/Recall
- ❖ Small Group
- ❖ Outdoor/Gross Motor
- ❖ Lunch/Rest
- ❖ Planning/Work/Clean-up/Recall
- ❖ Outside
- ❖ Dismissal

Classes typically experience outdoor play each day, weather permitting. The district policy allows for outdoor play when the temperature with the windchill is 15 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. When the temperature with the windchill is between 10 and 15 degrees Fahrenheit a modified or shorter outdoor play period may occur.

Clothing, Bedding Needs & Backpacks

Students should come to school dressed in clothing that will allow them to move freely, enjoy potentially messy art and outdoor play activities and allow them to be independent when using the restroom and preparing to go outdoors. Per licensing and staffing regulations, staff are not permitted to assist in toileting, and pull-ups are not permitted to be worn to school.

All students should have a complete set of clothing that remains in the student's backpack to be used in case of a spill or bathroom accident. In the case of a bathroom accident involving urine, students will be prompted to change their clothes and the soiled clothes will be sent home. In the case of a bathroom accident that requires more clean up, a parent/guardian will be contacted for assistance.

It is recommended that students wear sturdy shoes with non-slip soles to support safe motor activity. Open toe shoes, hard heeled boots and children's plastic dress-up shoes are discouraged. Sandals should have a strap around the back. In the winter, shoes are requested in addition to boots are requested for your child's comfort during the day and to help keep the classroom clean and dry.

Children should be dressed adequately for the season and weather in order to support physical activity in the classroom and on the playground. Weather-permitting students will play outdoors each day. In the winter months a warm jacket with a hood, snow pants and boots, hats and mittens are needed each day. Please label all of your child's clothing.

Students who are enrolled in GSRP preschool class are required to have a rest period each day as a part of the daily schedule. Families are asked to provide preferred bedding for their child's use during the day, if possible. Crib sheets, small blankets and pillows and/or a small stuffed animal (not the bedtime favorite!) can be sent to school in a small container with a lid. Bedding will be sent home at the end of each week for laundering purposes.

Toys

The classrooms are well-stocked with a variety of school materials and equipment. It is preferred that students leave their personal toys and belongings at home. Teachers who opt to have sharing days, when students may bring items from home, will provide this information in their regular home/school communications. Weapons or look-alike weapons of any kind are not allowed at school. The program/district is not responsible for the loss or damage of personal possessions.

Field Trips

Throughout the school year, your child's teacher may plan one or more field trips for the class. Families will receive written notification of the details of any field trips in advance. A parent/guardian is expected to drive the student to and accompany the preschooler on the trip. These special excursions are designed to enhance classroom learning and to provide a special time for the preschooler and parent/guardian. Please make other arrangements for siblings. The cost for attendees will be covered by the GSRP funding grant.

Arrival/Dismissal/Parking

Start times and traffic patterns at all of our locations have been designed to ensure the safety of every child at arrival and dismissal times. It is important that all parking, driving and walking patterns designated at the building level be strictly followed. Please be extra alert and patient in our parking lots. The safety of all is important to us. Please keep your child close to you and hold their hand when in the parking lot.

Classroom doors will open promptly at the designated start time. Prior to that time, teachers and assistants are busy preparing for the day's activities and are not available to monitor students. Students must be signed in and out of their classroom each day by a responsible adult.

It is important that parents/guardians be prompt when picking children up after school. Children can become anxious or frightened when not picked up at the appointed time. Children will not be released to anyone other than a parent/guardian or adult designated on the emergency card. Picture identification will be required if the staff member does not recognize the adult picking the student up from school.

Classroom Volunteers

Family members are encouraged to volunteer in the Southgate Early Childhood Program classrooms. Please note how your child's teacher structures volunteer opportunities and then communicate any wishes to volunteer to the teacher. Siblings are not able to accompany family members when they volunteer.

Home/School Communication

Communication between the home and school is on-going. All families will have access to the use of the Classtag app or another similar app, which teachers will use for on-going communication. In-person classrooms will each maintain a communication bulletin board with up to date information available for families, as required by LARA licensing guidelines.

For Southgate Early Childhood Program information and updates, families may wish to set up district web alerts in order to be notified whenever the website is updated. This is typically for registration and school closing information. Additional program information will be sent home via email from the school office.

GSRP teachers will schedule two home visits with each family. For 2020/21 it is anticipated that the home visits will utilize a virtual format. Classroom teachers will monitor student progress using observation, small assessments embedded throughout the school day and a variety of other methods to gather progress data. These data will be recorded in the Teaching Strategies© GOLD Assessment System and results will be shared with families during Student Progress Conferences scheduled in November and March. Families may contact their child's teacher for additional information at any time.

Please know that our staff of teachers is committed to providing timely responses to family inquiries and messages. In order to maintain a healthy balance of home and work life and due to the focused nature of the teachers' work with their students during class time, we will endeavor to return calls and emails within 24 business hours.

Participation in Site Schoolwide Events

The Southgate Early Childhood Program has classes in a variety of school settings. As such each of these settings may host a variety of schoolwide or evening activities. Please rely on communications from the classroom teacher regarding which events may be appropriate for Early Childhood Program students to attend, unless, of course, attending with an older sibling who is a student at the school as well. This includes but is not limited to back to school open house events and Parent/Teacher organization-sponsored events. The Early Childhood Program typically schedules Parent-Child events at the start of the school year, separate from other building open house events.

Cultural Competence

Young children and their families reflect a great and rapidly increasing diversity of language and culture. In our GSRP classrooms, we follow the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) recommendations which emphasize that early childhood programs are responsible for creating a welcoming environment that respects diversity, supports children's ties to their families and community, and promotes both second language acquisition and preservation of children's home languages and cultural identities. Linguistic and cultural diversity is an asset, not a deficit, for young children. The GSRP staff participate in cultural competency and exceptional children professional development. Classrooms contain many items and materials such as books, puppets, dolls, play figures, posters/photos, musical instruments, dress-up clothes, etc. to help represent the diversity of the families we serve as well as neighboring community cultures.

Student Behavioral/Social/Emotional Support

The Early Childhood Program staff strives to encourage children to respect themselves, other people and property. Interacting positively, sharing, taking turns may be new experiences for preschoolers that must be taught and practiced over time before students may become adept at using such skills. Reinforcing appropriate behavior and choices while redirecting less appropriate behavior and choices provides feedback for students as they develop new skills. Children are encouraged to problem solve and express their feelings and needs in response to conflicts which may arise.

Please communicate with your child's teacher if there are any significant issues or changes that may impact your child's emotional state and therefore, his/her behavior at school. This will allow us to support your child in the most beneficial and appropriate manner throughout the school day.

Support for Students with Special Needs

Students may qualify for Specialized Education services for speech and language, motor or cognitive development support. Please contact Southgate Special Services at (734) 246 - 4619 for more information or to schedule an evaluation.

Nutrition

Snacks and lunch will be provided for each child daily. Our menus are prepared by the Southgate Food Service department and are based on guidelines from the State of Michigan Department of Licensing & Regulatory Affairs, Children and Adult Licensing. Families are responsible for providing our program with information about special dietary needs or allergies. Families may supply their child's food if preferred. If you prefer to provide food for your child on a regular basis, we are required to have a signed waiver on file in our program office. All foods supplied by families must comply with allergy restrictions posted in the classroom.

The Food Service Department and Early Childhood Program staff members are responsible for what is presented to students to eat and the manner in which it is

presented. The children are responsible for how much and whether or not they choose to eat.

We are unable to accept any food for sharing with the class due to the prevalence of dietary restrictions and health concerns involving various foods. This includes birthday treats. Please refrain from sending in food items for distribution to the class. Classroom teachers will have special ways to recognize children's birthdays. Please do not send goody/gift bags for each child to the classroom.

Health

The State of Michigan requires that every child have a physical examination (health appraisal), complete with up to date immunizations prior to attending preschool. It is also encouraged that students receive regular dental check-ups. The Early Childhood Program staff will encourage and remind students to wash hands before meals and after toileting.

Illness

Students should remain home from school if any of the following symptoms present:

- Fever
- Earache
- Sore throat
- Runny eyes
- Rash of any kind
- Diarrhea/vomiting
- Persistent coughing
- Cloudy/green discharge from nose
- Other communicable disease

Please note that students must be fever, vomit and diarrhea-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication before returning to school. Please contact your child's teacher by phone or email if your child will be absent from school. If your child has received a diagnosis, please let the teacher know. The teacher will contact the Early Childhood Program office and if warranted, an illness-specific cleaning protocol will be administered.

If your child becomes ill at school, a parent/guardian is responsible for transporting the child home. Please make sure we always have up to date contact information for such emergency situations.

Absence Reporting

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the classroom teacher in the event of illness or other necessary absence of a student. Please email the teacher or call the classroom phone and leave a message including the child's name, your phone number, the reason for the absence and the anticipated date of return.

Medication Policies

Staff will not administer any medication to a student unless absolutely necessary. Arrangements for the administration of medication must be made through the Early Childhood Program office as follows:

1. Family obtains Medical Authorization Form from office or website
2. Doctor prescribing medication completes and signs the form
3. Family contacts the Early Childhood Program office to indicate that they would like to bring the form and medication (in the original labeled prescription bottle or package) to the school and meet with the teacher and program director to detail the plan for administering the medication.
4. The Early Childhood Program reserves the right to contact the prescribing doctor if needed.

This plan must be followed for any medication including prescription and over the counter medications, inhalers, cough drops, supplements and essential oils.

Medical Emergency Procedures

Classroom teachers will inform the family of any minor injuries that may occur during the school day. Ice and bandages will be utilized as needed. When an accident or injury occurs which requires professional medical attention, a parent/guardian or if necessary, another individual listed on the emergency card will be contacted. The staff present for the incident will complete a written accident report. A copy will be sent to the family and also to the Early Childhood Program office.

Sunscreen and Insect Repellent

Sunscreen should be applied by parents prior to arrival at school. If a student requires the use of insect repellent, the Medical Authorization Form should be completed and submitted with the insect repellent.

Emergency Cards

A completed emergency card listing contact numbers for parents/guardians as well as any family members or friends who are permitted to pick up the student in the case of an emergency must be on file for each student. Please assist by making sure that there is room in your voicemail for messages from the school in case of an emergency. We often find that families have full voice mailboxes when we try to leave messages about students who have become ill, or have experienced an injury or a restroom accident at school. Please be sure to notify your child's teacher as well as the program office if there are any changes in your home address, phone numbers or other contact information.

Waiting lists

Waiting Lists will be maintained for all fully enrolled classes. As openings arise, families will be contacted, in the order they signed up on the waiting list, to determine if they wish to enroll their child at that time.

Class Cancellations

Classes will be cancelled when Southgate Community Schools are closed. There are many ways to be notified or to determine if school has been cancelled including district app alerts, the district web page and local news. Exceptions may be made due to the current COVID-19 situation.

Late Pick-up Policy

Program guidelines state that children must be picked up on time each day. The classroom clock is the official timepiece of the class.

If your child has not been picked and we are unable to make contact with a parent/guardian or others listed on the emergency card, it may be necessary to enlist the assistance of the local police department.

Licensing Notebook

All Southgate preschool classrooms are licensed by the State of Michigan and are required to maintain a licensing notebook which includes all licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports and any related corrective action plans (CAP). The notebook must include all reports issued and CAPs developed on or after May 27, 2010 until the license is closed. The notebook is available for families to review during regular business hours.

Licensing inspection reports and special investigation reports from at least the last two years are available on the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs website at www.michigan.gov/lara.

No Smoking Policy

Southgate Community Schools prohibit smoking or vaping on school property. This includes both in the school buildings as well as on school grounds.

Pictures/Videos

Taking pictures and/or filming during class is strictly prohibited for parents/guardians. This is for the safety and privacy of all students.

Child Abuse and Neglect Statement

The Child Protection Law requires that a teacher, school administrator, nurse, social worker, or duly regulated child care provider, "who has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect must immediately by telephone or otherwise made an oral report or cause a report to be made of the suspected child abuse or neglect, a written report shall follow." Parents/guardians may or may not be informed of the report, depending on the nature of the situation and the direction given by Child Protective Services. If you ever suspect abuse or neglect, you should call 855-444-3911 (24 hour hotline) to make a report. The school is unable to make a report based on a third party observation or suspicion.

Emergency Procedures

Fire and tornado emergency procedures are posted in all classrooms. Students will learn safety procedures to use in the case of a fire, tornado or the need for evacuation or lockdown.

Each school site will conduct fire, tornado and intruder emergency drills as required by the State of Michigan. Staff are trained annually on procedures for various drills and emergency scenarios.

Security Measures

Staff will greet families at the start of each preschool session. **COVID-19 exception - only students and staff may be in the learning spaces when the need for virus mitigation measures are necessary.

Issues Involving Custody - According to the Michigan Department of Child Day Care Licensing: "Until custody has been established by a court action, one parent may not limit the other from picking the child up from your (preschool program) care. It is not within your (preschool program) legal right to withhold a child from a parent, unless there has been a court action which limits one parent's right to the child." A copy of any such court action must be on file in our office in order to prevent a non-custodial parent access to their child.

Confidentiality

Information regarding your child and family is kept in strict confidence. This includes written documentation and personal information about your child and his/her progress in school. Information concerning enrollees and their families will be limited to purposes directly connected with the administration of the program. Staff will respect each family's right to privacy. No other use of a family's personal information shall be made without prior written consent from the parent/guardian. Parents/guardians will have access to information in their child's school records. Classroom volunteers are also expected to respect the same confidentiality standards as staff.

Questions/Resolution of Issues

Should you ever have a question about your child's preschool experience or a classroom issue that requires discussion and resolution, it is important to first speak directly with your child's teacher. If you are unable to reach a successful resolution, the next step would be to contact the program director for additional assistance.

COVID-19 Addendum

The COVID-19 pandemic may create the need for the Early Childhood Program to alter programming or pause in-school learning opportunities. Every attempt will be made to provide a variety of options for families.

If the district is engaged in in-person K-12 teaching and learning, the Early Childhood Program will be operating in-person as well. Families would be expected to either participate in the program at that time or forego their child's spot.

Families are always encouraged to keep sick children at home. During a pandemic situation this is even more critical for the safety and well-being of all students, staff and families. If a student is experiencing any of the following symptoms, they must be kept home until the symptoms subside or written clearance is obtained from a physician:

- Fever (100.4 degrees F or higher)
- New or worsening cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Runny nose or congestion
- Body aches or tiredness
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- New loss of smell or taste

It is recommended that families obtain medical documentation regarding any chronic conditions that may cause symptoms that mimic those of COVID-19. This will help to avoid unnecessary school exclusions.

Southgate Community School District and the Early Childhood Program will follow the latest guidelines provided for schools and childcare facilities from the LARA, the State of Michigan, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Wayne County Health Department (WCHD). Please see the Return to School Roadmap for information about how possible exposures will be handled.