

St. Joseph County Preschool Centreville GSRP



Family Handbook

Monday - Thursday

Full Day 7:40 a.m. - 2:59 p.m.

$\frac{1}{2}$ Day 7:40 a.m. - 11:25 a.m.

"These materials were developed under a grant awarded by the Michigan Department of Education."

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To accommodate the unique needs brought on by COVID-19, the 2021-22 Continuity of Learning and Return-to-Learn Plans will replace/supersede applicable handbook language as needed throughout the school year.

PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

We believe every child is unique in terms of life experience, developmental readiness, and cultural heritage. We also recognize that parents are their child's first teachers. Partnership between family and school is essential to the optimal growth and development of young children. Our aim is to provide a safe, nurturing, stimulating environment that accommodates and embraces differences. Our goal is to promote the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of each child through a consistent daily schedule.

Teacher-child interactions are based around acceptance, respect and trust. Positive guidance is used to encourage caring relationships in our program. We believe that when children feel safe, they gain self-confidence and are able to make independent choices.

Our program is evaluated throughout the year using the Preschool Quality Assessment-Revised (PQA-R), which looks at areas such as the learning environment, daily routine, adult-child interaction and curriculum planning and assessment. In addition, our program works with our families as partners, seeking their input about the education of their children. Our teachers believe in on-going communication with parents, administration, and colleagues.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

GSRP is Michigan's state funded preschool program for four-year old children with factors that may place them at risk of educational failure. Participation in GSRP helps strengthen positive child outcomes. Depending on income level, parents may be required to pay tuition, but parents are never charged additional fees for program elements. Through advisory committees, parents assist to evaluate and make recommendations about the program.

The Michigan State Board of Education criteria for GSRP requires adherence to the program implementation manual and the Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten. GSRP programs must also implement or use an approved comprehensive curriculum, an approved ongoing child assessment tool and the Preschool Program Quality Assessment-Revised.

ADMISSION POLICY

The Great Start Readiness Program is a preschool program for children who are four years old by September first of the year they enroll. The program is funded by a grant from the State of Michigan Department of Education and is provided for children and families residing within the State of Michigan. To be eligible for the program children must meet grant criteria. This is determined by information provided on the enrollment forms by parents or guardians. Most classes will consist of 16 children. Remaining eligible applicants will be placed on a waiting list and considered for enrollment if space becomes available during the school year.

Upon admission to the program, parents must complete a child information card, provide a copy of immunizations and have a health appraisal form completed and turned in within 30 days.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Parents may withdraw their child at any time during the year by informing the classroom teacher, the principal or the center director. The Great Start Readiness program is licensed by the State of Michigan under the Department of Human Services, Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing. Families are required to assist the staff in obtaining all information and paperwork necessary for program compliance.

Children may be excluded when a short term injury or contagious illness endangers the health and/or safety of the affected child or other children. Children will NOT be excluded or expelled because of the need for additional medical or behavioral support or assistance with toileting.

SCHEDULE OF OPERATION

The Great Start Readiness Program runs in conjunction with the local school district's daily schedule. We run school from Monday - Thursday with the hours of 7:45 am - 2:55pm. A minimum of 2 home visits and 2 parent/teacher conferences will take place within the district's calendar school year. The initial home visit will occur after the child is enrolled but before the child begins the classroom program. Because of this, each GSRP will have a later start date for students than their district's start date. The last parent/teacher conference will occur before the district's school year ends. Because of this, each GSRP will have an earlier end date for students than their district's end date. A school year calendar will be given to parents at the orientation/home visit. Our program runs Monday-Thursday. Friday is designated for staff professional development, planning and various home/school connections.

SNOW DAYS

Occasionally winter weather may be severe enough for school to be called off or delayed for 2 hours. If the district is on a 2 hour delay, we will also operate on the 2 hour delay. If school is called off for kindergarten through 12th grade, then we will not have school either. You can check with local TV stations for this information. We will also send a closure alert on our communication format.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

In order for children to be most successful in learning new skills, consistent attendance is important. Children are expected to attend school Monday through Thursday. Please make every effort to have your child in attendance every day. When your child will not be able to attend for any reason, including illness, please call the classroom teacher as soon as possible. Also if you know in advance that your child will not be attending please inform the classroom staff. If your child should become ill we will contact you or your emergency contact to come and pick up your child. We will make your child comfortable until you can come. Please see our health policy for more information.

CURRICULUM

St. Joseph County GSRP preschool programs use Highscope. Highscope is a research-based curriculum that is play based and uses exploration and discovery-based learning experiences. Each individual child is given the opportunity to move through specially designed learning centers at his or her own level of interest and ability. Every activity is planned with one underlying goal in mind; to allow the freedom of each child to grow and explore through first hand experiences in a warm, secure, and stimulating environment. Through our program, each child is given the tools needed to encourage the growth of the whole child.

CHILD ASSESSMENT

Upon enrollment in the Great Start Readiness Program each child will receive a developmental screening called the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). The screening will be done and reviewed with the parent. The screening will give the program a better understanding of where the child is developmentally.

During the school year, the form of assessment used will be COR Advantage. Children will be continually assessed on a daily basis. As a part of this assessment system, teachers will take on the following tasks:

1. Observe and collect facts through observation and documentation using anecdotal notes as a method for recording.
2. Analyze and respond to children by considering their skills in relation to specific objectives and then scaffolding their learning.
3. Evaluate by comparing a child's skills and behaviors to research-based indicators of learning and development.
4. Summarize, plan and communicate, making use of the collected information to plan experiences and share with others.

Three data collection points are scheduled for October, February and May. Information at these checkpoints is then shared with parents via conferences or home visits.

CHILD AND FAMILY REFERRALS

Our GSRP is committed to serving children who have special needs/disabilities. We work closely with families, the Intermediate School District and the specialists serving your child, to ensure every child is participating in all of the classroom opportunities and receiving the appropriate services as indicated in their program plans. GSRP has a list of community resources to help parents and families in need which is given to every family.

FEE POLICY

Families whose income falls at or below 250% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) pay no tuition for GSRP. Based on revisions made to Public Act 60 in June 2013, any enrolled GSRP family with an income in excess of 250% of the FPL must pay tuition based on a SJCISD district-wide common sliding fee scale (SFS). All tuition payments will be handled through the St. Joseph County ISD. Bills will be sent out the first full week of each month. Payment will be due the 15th of each month through cash or check. Tuition payments are uniform and will not be reduced due to absences including but not limited to illnesses, holidays, vacations or other center closings. If you pay tuition and have questions, you may contact Amy Brauer at [269-467-5309](tel:269-467-5309).

Annual Tuition Rate	250% of FPL and Below	251% of FPL to 350% of FPL	351% of FPL and Above	Tuition for Ineligible Children
School-day GSRP	No tuition charged	\$362.48 <i>5% of state GSRP allocation</i> 8 monthly payments of \$45.31	\$725.04 <i>10% of state GSRP allocation</i> 8 monthly payments of \$90.63	Determined by the subrecipient

EXEMPTION:

1. If a child is eligible for special education and has an Individual Education Plan (IEP), then the family is exempt from the sliding fee scale payment policy.
2. If an over income Head Start child is enrolled in a Head Start/GSRP blended slot, then the family is exempt from sliding fee scale payment policy.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

We strive to make parents feel as much a part of their child’s education as possible. Parents are their child’s first and most important teacher. Open and ongoing communication between teachers and parents is important. Parents may receive a newsletter, email, phone call or information about their child at drop off or pick up. We encourage parents to participate in any parent meetings including our county wide Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings and to also belong to the Parent Coalition.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

The employees and volunteer participants of GSRP are required to hold all information gathered in the performance of their duties in the strictest confidence. Staff should not give out information regarding children and their parents. Such information should be held in strict confidence and should not be discussed with anyone outside the Center. Inside the Center, such information should be discussed only when it will benefit the care we offer the children and the parent. Refer any inquiries on children, their performance, and parents to the teacher. No information will be released to any unauthorized person.

COMMUNICATION

Open positive communication is essential to the well-being and growth of your child. We will make every effort to keep you informed of your child's growth and development within our program. Please keep us informed when your child is experiencing any changes in his/her routine at home.

FOOD PROGRAM AND NUTRITION POLICY

Breakfast, snacks and lunches are of sufficient quantity and nutritional quality to meet the dietary needs of preschool children. Meals and snacks will be in accordance with the minimum meal requirements of the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Lunch will be served throughout each day for full day programs. Full day programs will also serve breakfast and/or snacks. Children in part day programs are served a minimum of 1 snack. If your child is present at the time one or more of these are served, he/she will receive whatever is being offered. Children are offered each meal component and make their own choices based on individual preferences. Weekly menus, with noted food substitutions, are posted for parent's review. GSRP complies with rule 400.8330(3) to ensure that children with special dietary needs receive meals/snacks in accordance with the child's needs. If your child has a food allergy please let us know what foods they need to avoid so that we may make appropriate substitutions.

DISCIPLINE

Our discipline is age appropriate. We use positive methods of discipline which encourage self-control, self-direction, self-esteem and cooperation. Adults treat conflict situations with children as matter of fact. Adults diffuse the conflict situation before moving into problem solving. They approach children calmly, stop any hurtful actions and acknowledge children's feelings. Adults involve children in identifying the problem by gathering information from the children (what happened, what upset the children). They restate the problem and involve children in the process of finding and choosing a solution for the problem. Adults ask children for solutions and encourage them to choose one together. They are also prepared to give follow up support when children act on their decisions. The following behaviors WILL NOT take place in the classroom:

- Corporal punishment (measures intend to induce physical pain or fear)
- Restricting a child's movement
- Threatened or actual withdrawal of food, or use of the bathroom
- Abusive or profane language
- Any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment.
- Any form of emotional abuse, including shaming, rejecting, terrorizing, or isolating a child.
- Excluding a child from outdoor play or other gross motor activities or from daily learning experiences.

BITING POLICY

We want to ensure that every child is safe while in our care. Our program provides an environment that encourages and promotes cooperative interaction, respect for others, and non-aggressive problem solving between the children. Biting is a normal stage of development for young children who are teething and are still developing their language skills. It is usually a temporary condition that is most common between thirteen and twenty-four months of age.

For safety and health concerns, we take biting seriously. When it happens, it's very scary, frustrating, and stressful for children, parents, and teachers. It is also not something to blame on children, parents, or teachers, and there are no quick and easy solutions to it. Children bite for a variety of reasons: simple sensory exploration, panic, crowding, seeking to be noticed, or intense desire for a toy. Repeated biting becomes a pattern of learned behavior that is often hard to extinguish because it does achieve results: the desired toy, excitement, attention. Knowing that the effect of their biting will hurt another person is not yet a part of a child of this ages' mindset, so the "cause-effect" relationship is not internalized. Our teachers plan activities and supervise carefully in order for biting not to happen. There are times, however, when everyone cannot be within immediate reach to prevent a bite.

Our policy for handling a biting incident is the following:

- The biter is immediately removed from the group with a firm NO. The bitten child is consoled and the bitten area washed with soap and water. If necessary, ice is applied to reduce any swelling or bruising. The biter is not allowed to return to play until he/she is talked to on a level that he/she can understand, and then is redirected.
- A written incident report is given to the parents of all children involved when they are picked up that day. The name of a biting child is not released because it serves no useful purpose and can make an already difficult situation more difficult.
- We look intensively at the context of each biting incident for pattern, in an effort to prevent further biting behavior.
- We work with each biting child on resolving conflict or frustration in an appropriate manner.
- We try to adapt the environment and work with parents to reduce any child stress.
- We make special efforts to protect potential victims.

We try to make every effort to extinguish the behavior quickly and to balance our commitment to the family of the biting child to that of other families.

PARENT NOTIFICATION OF THE LICENSING NOTEBOOK

All Great Start Readiness Programs are considered child care centers under Michigan law and need to maintain a child care license from the Department of Human Services. All child care centers must maintain a licensing notebook which includes all licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports and all related corrective action plans (CAP). The notebook must include all reports issued and CAPs developed since May 28, 2010. The licensing notebook is available to parents during regular business hours. Licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports, corrective action plans from at least the past 3 years are available on the department's child care licensing website at

www.michigan.gov/michildcare. This Center maintains a licensing notebook of all licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports and all related corrective action plans.

HEALTH POLICY

A copy of your child's immunization record is required to be in the center before the start of school. This is to verify that all children have been immunized so they will have immunity to some harsh diseases. Parents of children that are not up-to-date on immunizations will be assisted by staff in developing a plan to bring their child up to date.

Children must have a physical completed by a physician within the first 30 days of enrollment. Physicals need to be done in accordance with the State of Michigan's Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) program and will reflect whether the child is up to date on a provided schedule of age-appropriate preventive and primary health care.

EXCLUSION POLICY FOR CHILD, STAFF, and VOLUNTEER ILLNESS

Note: Health Department guidelines regarding symptoms related to COVID-19 will replace/supersede this section.

No child, staff and volunteer will be allowed to attend school with any of the following symptoms:

1. Fever (100.4 degrees F or above) In order to return to school, the child needs to be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication; ie, Tylenol, Acetaminophen, Ibuprofen.
2. Persistent cough
4. Undiagnosed Rash
5. Vomiting
6. Diarrhea
*Diarrhea being described as 3 or 4 loose stools in 6-8 hours, not just one watery loose stool.
7. Eye discharge
8. Lice

Should your child or any staff or volunteer develop any of the above symptoms while at school, you will be contacted immediately. Arrangements will need to be made for you to pick-up your child promptly.

COVID-19

If a staff member or volunteer has TWO symptoms of COVID-19, they need to go home or to their primary care physician immediately. For a child, we will need to move them to the quarantine area immediately until they are able to be picked up. Signs of COVID-19 are:

- **Fever or chills**
- **Cough**
- **Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing**
- **Fatigue**
- **Muscle or body aches**
- **Headache**
- **New loss of taste or smell**
- **Sore throat**
- **Congestion or runny nose**

- **Nausea or vomiting**
- **Diarrhea**

Exposure to communicable disease (COVID-19, chicken pox, strep infection, etc.) should be reported to the Teacher/Director. We will inform you if your child has been exposed to a communicable disease while at the center.

If your child is unable to attend the center due to sickness, please remember to contact us.

MEDICATIONS

In order to dispense any medication to a child at school, we must receive prior written permission. A Permission to Administer Medication Form can be obtained from your child's teacher and must be filled out completely. New forms must be submitted for each month that medication is needed. All medications must be in the original container. Prescription medications must have the pharmacy label in place with the child's name listed. Dosage, instructions for administering the medicine and the physician's name must likewise be present. Topical non-prescription medication, including but not limited to diapering cream, triple antibiotic, sunscreen, and insect repellent, requires written parental authorization annually.

PARENT NOTIFICATION FOR ACCIDENTS, INCIDENTS & ILLNESS

If an accident occurs resulting in the injury of a child, staff shall complete an Incident Report. This report will include the name of the child, date of incident, type of injury, location of incident, treatment required, description of incident, witnesses, and medical professionals consulted when applicable. If other children are involved in the incident, they shall not be identified by name in the report. An Incident Report should also be filled out when a child exhibits an unusual behavior or unexplained change of behavior (such as change in napping habits, unusual crying or whimpering, and sudden changes in self-care, i.e. refusing to do previously learned developmental skills such as walking and self-toileting).

Examples of minor injuries (non-serious) include: cuts, scrapes, and bruises.

Examples of major incidents/injuries (serious-report immediately) include: serious injury/illness, head injury, asthma attack, allergic reaction, unconsciousness, vomiting, lost child, inappropriate contact with child on child or adult on child, and physical discipline by a staff or volunteer.

This report will be given to the Director to be kept in the Center files. A copy shall be placed in the child's file and one sent home with the parents/guardians. If the injury is not serious, staff will report the incident to the parents/guardians when the child is picked up at the end of the day. In case of serious injury, parents/guardians will be notified immediately by phone. If the parent/guardians do not answer, the emergency contact will be notified. In the case of an accident involving the need for emergency care, an Accident Requiring Medical Attention Report needs to be completed and returned to the Director.

SCREENING POLICY FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS AND PARENTS

Staff / Unsupervised Volunteers:

All staff will have a comprehensive background check which includes:

- A check of the licensing database for previous disciplinary action.
- FBI fingerprint check (checks all state and federal crimes).
- Michigan child abuse and neglect registry.
- National Sex Offender Registry.
 - Any individual registered on the PSOR is prohibited from having any contact with any child in care.
- Criminal history registry and child abuse/neglect registry for any states of residence in the past 5 years.
- If the person lived out of the country in the past five years:
 - Equivalent checks must be provided, if available.
 - If they cannot be provided, the person must sign a self-certifying statement that he/she is eligible to work in the child care center.

All staff will sign and date a self-certifying statement at the time of hire indicating that he/she:

- Is aware that abuse and neglect of children is against the law.
- Has been informed of the center's policies on child abuse and neglect.
- Knows that caregivers are required by law to immediately report suspected abuse and neglect to Children's Protective Services (CPS).

Supervised Volunteers/Parents:

- All volunteers/parents will have supervised interactions with children.
- All supervised volunteers shall receive a public sex offender registry (PSOR) clearance before having any contact with a child in care. A copy of this clearance must be kept on file at the center.
 - Any individual registered on the PSOR is prohibited from having any contact with any child in care.
- All volunteers will sign and date a self-certifying statement at the time of volunteering indicating that he/she:
 - Is aware that abuse and neglect of children is against the law.
 - Has been informed of the center's policies on child abuse and neglect.
 - Knows that caregivers are required by law to immediately report suspected abuse and neglect to children's protective services.

No individual registered on the public sex offender registry (PSOR) is prohibited from having contact with any child in care. (This is for staff, all volunteers, and parents of children in care.)

SUPERVISION OF PARENTS AND VOLUNTEERS

Any individual registered on the PSOR is prohibited from having any contact with any child in care. There shall be no unsupervised volunteers in GSRP with the exception of the Early Childhood Specialist (ECS). A staff member will supervise the volunteer/parent at all times. The staff member will be in the

same room with the volunteer. The staff member must be able to see the volunteer. For example, if the volunteer is sitting on the floor with a child behind a shelf, the staff member must move so they can see the interaction between the volunteer and the child. A volunteer will never be counted in the state licensed ratio of adults to children.

The volunteer/parent may not participate in any of the following activities while unattended by a staff member:

- Be alone with children in the classroom
- Take children to the restroom
- Take children outside
- Take children to the gym
- Spend time with one or multiple children outside the classroom

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

Our district offers transportation for children that live outside the city limits. If transportation is needed, we will obtain a parent's written permission for routine transportation. Our GSRP will often take field trips. Most field trips will be within walking distance from the school. If a riding field trip occurs, we will obtain a parent's written permission for any non-routine transportation before each trip. All signed transportation permissions will be kept in your child's file inside the classroom.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION/GRIEVANCE

The St. Joseph County Intermediate School District complies with all federal laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination and with all requirements and regulations of the U.S. Department of Education.

It is the policy of the SJCISD that no person on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, age, sex, marital status, handicap, or lack of English skills shall be discriminated against, excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity to which it is responsible to or for which it receives financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education.

If at any time you have a comment, complaint, or concern please contact your child's teacher who will work together with you to resolve the issue. If after contacting and discussing with your child's teacher you are still not satisfied please contact the Early Childhood Specialist.

TYPICAL DAILY ROUTINES

Here is a schedule of our daily activities. Schedule subject to change.

7:45 - 7:58 - Arrival

7:58 - 8:30 - Outside Time

8:30 - 8:50 - Greeting Time

8:50 - 9:20 - Breakfast Time

9:20 - 9:35 - Large Group Time

9:35 - 9:50 - Small Group Time
 9:50 - 9:55 Planning Time
 9:55 - 10:55 - Work Time
 10:55 - 11:05 - Clean Up
 11:05 - 11:15 - Recall Time
 11:15 - 11:30 - Read Aloud/Cots
 11:30 - 12:00 - Outside Time
 12:00 - 12:30 - Lunch Time
 12:30 - 1:30 - Rest Time
 1:50 - 2:15 - Plan/Work/Snack/Clean Up
 2:15 - 2:35 - Recall/Get Ready To Go Home/Goodbyes

PARENT INFORMATION SHEET FOR CACFP

Michigan Department of Education
 Child and Adult Care Food Program

Where Healthy Eating Becomes a Habit
 Parent Information Sheet

This child care center is a participant in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) program. The CACFP provides cash reimbursement to child care centers for nutritious meals and helps children develop healthy eating habits. The CACFP is administered by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE).

Through the Child and Adult Care Food Program you can be assured that your child is getting balanced, nutritious meals and developing healthy lifelong eating habits. Proper nutrition during the early years ensures fewer physical and educational problems later in life.

As a participant in the CACFP, your child care center receives reimbursement for serving nutritious meals and snacks. Meals and snacks must meet the USDA meal pattern requirements listed below.

Breakfast	Lunch and Supper	Snack (serve 2 from the 4 food groups below)
Milk Fruit, Vegetable, or Juice Grain/Bread	Milk 2 Fruit/Vegetable servings Grain/Bread Meat or Meat Alternate	Milk Fruit, Vegetable, or Juice Grain/Bread Meat or Meat Alternate

Children less than one year old: Foods in the infant meal pattern vary according to the infant's age. If your child is less than one year old, please request the infant meal pattern requirements from our center.

MDE is required to verify the enrollment, attendance and meals/snacks typically consumed by children while they are in care. MDE staff may contact you regarding your child's participation in our day care center.

If you have any questions about the Child and Adult Care Food Program, please contact:

Centreville GSRP
Child and Adult Care Food Program
190 Hogan St.
Centreville, MI 49032
269-467-5200

or Michigan Department of Education
P.O. Box 30008
Lansing, Michigan 48909
(517) 373-7391

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