

# Welcome to St. Lawrence Preschool

The goal of the preschool classroom is to provide a structured supportive setting where children can participate in a variety of activities that are appropriate to their level of development. The activities are planned to stimulate communication and language, to build social skills, to provide experience in fine and gross motor areas, to promote acquisition of general knowledge, to teach pre-academic skills and to foster creativity. We want children to experience success when they are at our school so they can gain self-confidence and develop a positive attitude toward school.

Acceptance into our program is based on the child's age. To attend the Monday-Wednesday-Friday class a student must be eligible to attend kindergarten the following year. He/she must be 4 as of September 1<sup>st</sup>. To attend the Tuesday-Thursday class it is advised that the student be 3 1/2 prior to September 1<sup>st</sup>. Younger children will be evaluated based on their maturity and readiness to attend school. **Preschool students must be toilet trained and demonstrate some independence.**

Our teachers are experienced educators. They participate in continuing education and studies for professional development in order to remain alert to the ever-changing needs of today's families and the findings of current research.

The school is open to all children, regardless of race, nationality, or creed, who may benefit from our type of program. All that we expect of the child is that they come to school, be themselves, and have respect for others. What we expect of the parents or guardians is that they read this handbook and any supplemental notes and newsletters we may send home; and that you feel free to be a part of the school, offering suggestions, comments, and constructive criticism.

The preschool program consists of the following class schedule:

M-W-F	8:15-10:45	four and five year olds
M-W-F	12:30-3:00	four and five year olds
T-Th	8:15-10:45	three and four year olds
T-Th	12:30-3:00	three and four year olds

Registration is held in February/March. Children three years of age and up to kindergarten age are eligible to enroll in the appropriate class. Due to state regulations, immunization records are required for all students. Current

preschoolers are given first consideration in the enrollment of the following year, followed by parish members and then the general public. If classes are filled when a parent calls, the child's name will be put on a waiting list and contacted if a vacancy occurs. At registration a \$40.00 registration fee is due to hold your position in the program and is non-refundable. This money will be used to purchase new materials for the school year.

Tuition is \$95.00 per month (MWF class) and \$80.00 (TTh class). It is important that tuition be paid on time. Unless you have made other arrangements with the teacher, tuition must be paid on or before the fifth of each month. It is the financial obligation of the parent or guardian to keep current with preschool tuition. Failure to do so could result in forfeiting the child's position in the preschool program. No credit is given the absences or scheduled holiday and vacation periods. An additional charge of 10% will be assessed on late payments.

St. Lawrence Preschool is designed to foster the child's total development as an individual and as a member of the group. Our program centers on play activities that foster growth in all areas of development: emotional, social, intellectual, linguistic, physical, and spiritual. Children learn best when allowed to see, hear, feel, taste, and smell. Becoming involved in preschool activities almost always means noise, much activity, and even getting messy. Our schedule encourages active involvement and balances free choice and structured activities in a warm, caring environment.

The social-emotional aspect of our day will be incorporated throughout the entire day. We will practice sharing, getting along with others, helping each other and working out problems.

Discipline/guidance is used in the classroom to help the child understand limits in the class, and to help the child learn how to set his/her own inner self-controls. Appropriate discipline/guidance allows children to respect themselves and others and to cultivate respect for each other and the environment within a classroom setting. Discipline/guidance begins even before the children arrive through thoughtful planning of appropriate environments and placement of materials within the classroom to prevent potential problems. When working with children, our approach to discipline and guidance will be characterized by:

- Consistency, and firmness
- Clear, consistent limitations that are gently enforced.
- Encouragement of internal, self-discipline.
- Modeling and teaching positive behaviors.
- Facilitating positive self-esteem by accepting children's feelings, and modeling problem-solving techniques.

We believe that positive reinforcement, encouragement, offering choices, redirection, and joint problem solving are the most effective tools for discipline. Children, when their bodies are out of control, may be directed to sit down with a teacher to take a break, calm their bodies down, and discuss appropriate choices or how to use calmer bodies while inside.

Both fine (small muscle) and gross (large muscle) motor activities will be taught. We use paint, colors, blocks, pencils, and fingers to develop fine motor coordination. This will help prepare the children for writing skills. Balancing, beanbags, hopping, and running are among many activities, both inside and outside that will help develop gross motor coordination.

Speaking correctly and being good listeners, as well as building our vocabularies will receive much attention. We will use our conversation times (snack time, circle time, and playtime) to talk to others and listen to our friends. We will explore many new and exciting things to foster our vocabularies.

As we prepare ourselves for reading and math; we will do a variety of pre-reading and pre-math activities. These cognitive activities will start on a concrete level and build individually for each child.

As we grow in independence we will achieve many self-care skills. These include buttoning, zipping, and getting ready to go home, lacing, toileting, and others. We will also spend time learning about nutrition and healthy bodies.

Our spiritual program will be sprinkled throughout the day. Daily prayers, spiritual discussions, biblical stories, and an appreciation for the general awareness of God's world will be a few of the concrete ways we will bring the spiritual emphasis into our classroom. In addition, we will structure time to cover topics on forgiveness, sharing, feelings, simple prayers, and others.

The teachers and other adults involved in our program are dedicated to providing a wide variety of learning experiences that develop that mind, body and spirit. We treat children as an individual and allow them to experience their own level of development and help them feel success without pressure.

Learning in preschool takes place through awareness and experiences. The following are some of the topics we may experience this year:

- Home and family life
- School helpers and safety
- Weather and seasonal facts
- Holidays

Good nutrition and dental habits

Farm and zoo animals

Planting and harvesting

Neighbors at home and in other countries

Our day at preschool is planned around the following schedule:

8:15-9:00 free time and exploration, or center activities. These change

12:30-1:15 frequently and may include art, language activities, block play, sensory table, etc.

9:00-9:15 Opening exercises: this includes calendar, weather, and attendance

1:15-1:30

9:15-10:00 lesson time: during this time a small lesson is presented and a related

1:30-2:15 activity is planned

10:00-10:20 Bathroom break and snack time

2:15-2:40

10:20 -10:45 Story time, outside play, and dismissal

2:40-3:00

This is typical schedule. Each day may vary somewhat, depending on the scheduled activities and interest of the children.

I ask that you leave your child's toys at home. If an item is brought to school, I cannot be responsible for it. We have many toys to choose from at school, and the preschoolers have a difficult time sharing their toys with other children. No guns, weapons, or toys that instill violence will be allowed at anytime. All pets must be Okayed in advanced.

Snack time is an important part of our day. We practice good manners. Conversation is encouraged, as well as listening during this time. To build strong bodies, to grow and develop, children need the right food. A well-nourished child has a better chance to learn. Parents are asked to provide a nutritious snack for each day of school. Snack ideas are: apple wedges, orange slices, raisins, crackers, dry cereal, and popcorn.

We celebrate birthdays during snack time. If you would like to provide a treat on your child's birthday you are welcome to do so. Treats need not be food. Other items might include birthday cups, napkins, trinkets, or anything your child chooses to make the day a special one. We will celebrate birthdays on the day nearest the actual day. Children who have summer birthdays will celebrate on a special day before the end of the school year with a class trip to the park.

Please take time to read the weekly calendars/notes that will be sent home. The weekly calendar will highlight the activities and dates to remember. I will personally put the weekly calendar, papers, and craft items in your child's backpack.

It also happens occasionally that a child mistakenly brings home an item that belongs at school or to another child. Please help out by checking your child's backpack each school day, and if by chance an item does not belong to your child please return it the following school day.

The main objective of parent involvement is to provide an avenue through which parents and teacher can learn more about each child. You as a parent can give insight to your child by observing him/her work with others and participating in activities. The teacher can learn more about the child through the parent and therefore more accurately meet the child's needs. Children enjoy having mom or dad come to school and have a sense of security in knowing mom or dad are involved in their school.

The parents of our children provide a valuable service to St. Lawrence Preschool. Your participation at school, providing materials and other ways has helped establish a well-rounded educational program with a family-like atmosphere. We are most grateful for the invaluable resource we have in you!

The preschool will be taking educational fieldtrips during the year. Volunteer drivers will be arranged if necessary.

A valuable part of our educational program at St. Lawrence Preschool is the resource people within our community. These individuals are invited to come and share their special hobby, job, culture, or talent. Through them we will learn more about the world around us.

#### Illness

If your child becomes ill at school, we will contact you immediately and remove your child from the classroom. If called, you are responsible for picking your child up immediately. Please carefully consider the well being of your child, other students and the teachers when deciding how soon after an illness your child should return to school. We expect that children will fully participate in the school day. ***If you prefer your child to not be outside due to illness, he or she is not ready to return to school.***

We suggest these guidelines when questioning if your child should stay home:

- Has a fever or has had one during the previous 24-hour period.
- Has just started taking an antibiotic. Ask your doctor when the child's condition will no longer be contagious (usually 24-48 hours).
- Has a heavy nasal discharge.
- Is fussy, cranky, and generally out of sorts.

- Is just tired. Rest at such times may prevent the development of serious illness.
- Has vomited or had loose stools more than once in the past 24 hours.
- Has an unexplained rash.
- Has a symptom of a possible communicable disease.

You are responsible for notifying the teacher of any and all medical conditions prior to the day of class. It is vitally important that you contact me by either calling the school or sending a note whenever your child will be absent from school. The school number is 432-5673.

In case of a medical emergency during a preschool session, the staff will administer first aid. The parent or authorized adult will be notified as quickly as possible. If medical attention is required the staff will call the child's physician.

St. Lawrence preschool is not responsible for transporting children to and from preschool. Children either walk or are driven to school by their parents or legal guardian. The Milbank Lion's Bus is available for transportation needs. Their number is 432-4866. No child will be released to a person not authorized by a parent. I must have a written note or personal verbal authorization for changes by the parent or legal guardian. The teacher must receive permission for another adult to pick up the child. You must send a note every time your child's routine changes. Children are dismissed at the main entrance on the south side of the school. Our main concern is the safety of the children. Please stress to your child not to run out into the parking lot to greet you, but to wait on the sidewalk for your assistance.

Vacations will coincide with St. Lawrence and the Milbank public schools. You will also be reminded of these dates through the weekly calendar. In case of severe weather, announcements concerning school closings will be giving through the Milbank School Messenger System and email. When school starts 1 hour late we will have preschool, when school starts 2 hours late there will be no morning preschool. When school dismisses before 2:00pm there will be no afternoon preschool.

Conferences will be scheduled on the same days as the Milbank Public Schools in February. Parents will be notified by letter of their conference time.

### **General Procedures**

1. The teacher will greet the children in the preschool room as they arrive. Parents are encouraged to bring their child by 8:15 or 12:30. Children are **NOT** to be in the room

before 8:00 or 12:15. Teacher preparation time is valuable. Children are to be picked up by 10:45 and 3:00.

2. Please send a backpack or schoolbag to school each day. Check for parent notes at the end of the day.
3. Think of your child's comfort and provide clothing that is free of complicated fastenings. Because of art materials and messy activities, provide clothing that is easily washable. Our playground activities require that your child's clothing be sturdy. Provide sweaters and jackets, even on the first sunny days of fall. It is easier to remove an unneeded item than to go without. Provide hats and mittens when appropriate for the weather. Please label all outer garments, including hats, boots, and snow pants.
4. If you need to visit with the teacher, please be courteous of the children and wait until school is over. If you need to talk with the teacher over the phone, the best time to call is after school. Please feel free to call the teacher over any concern you have no matter how small.
5. School supply list:
  - A backpack with your child's name on it – every day. Please do not buy the little backpacks, as it is difficult to fit many of the items that are sent home each day.
  - 1 package of **8 small diameter** Crayola Crayons
  - 1 8 oz. Bottle Elmer's glue – please stick with the Elmer's white school glues that have a regular tip. The other brands, tips, and gels; simply do not work very well.
  - Glue Sticks
  - 1 inch 3 ring white binder for your child's portfolio. The portfolio includes your child's assessment, and a collection of student work.