



## ***St. Francis of Assisi Early Childhood Program***

### ***A Special Place for Preschoolers at SFA***

One of the special hidden treasures of St. Francis of Assisi is our preschool. This comprehensive, Catholic, early childhood program is dedicated to providing children and parents with quality education and services.

We are pleased that you have enrolled your child here at SFA Preschool. We hope this information will enable you to know more about us and understand the policies and procedures that will affect you and your child. You can also visit us at [www.sfastl.org](http://www.sfastl.org).

If you have questions or concerns about our program, please do not hesitate to ask. Remember, no question or concern is ever too small or unimportant.

### **GOALS**

Our goals are achieved through these objectives:

- Each day begins with a prayer
- Circle times: learning academic skills in a large group.
- Interaction with others promotes team work, cooperation, patience, and acceptance.
- Small group activities encourage understanding and self-discipline.
- Students learn through play and hands on manipulations.
- Family participation builds the bond between home and school.



### **CLASS SESSIONS**

Our early childhood program offers flexibility as a response to the needs of working families. Families may choose 2 to 5 days and either a half day schedule of 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. or an extended day schedule of 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.



## OUR STUDENTS

We welcome children ages 3, 4, and 5. Children should be turning 3 no later than October 31<sup>st</sup> of the fall they start and completely toilet-independent. They also need to be ready to participate in a classroom setting. Toilet independent means able to use the restroom without assistance. The preschoolers are supervised, but we are not allowed to wipe, button, etc. The state considers assistance of that nature to be diapering and renders a different set of requirements we are not equipped to provide.



## ATTENDANCE

We offer a flexible arrival time between 7:10 and 7:45. Preschool children should be walked into school by a parent, guardian, or if arranged with the teacher, an older sibling. Punctuality and regularity are critically important for establishing comfortable routines for your child. Please be prompt in dropping off your child no later than 7:45 a.m. and in picking your child up at the appropriate dismissal time. Children become very anxious when such routines are not followed. Only authorized persons should bring and pick up your child. We ID anyone picking up your child that is unknown to us.



## BEFORE CARE

Before Care will be offered in the gym each morning at no additional cost. Students can arrive to Before Care beginning at 6:30 a.m. If your child attends Before Care, you will sign your child in at Before Care and the Supervisor will walk them to the preschool room at the appropriate time.



## UNIFORMS

Our preschool is part of our larger school. Our entire school wears uniforms. Of course, some adjustments in the uniform are made for Preschool students, such as pull-on pants and shorts versus buttons and zippers. In addition to the plaid jumper and skort, preschool girls will be offered a navy jersey style dress as a uniform option. This will offer a more affordable option for some families but will fit with the existing uniform. Appropriate colored athletic shoes or leather school shoes are to be worn. Uniforms can be obtained at Catholic Supply of St. Louis.



## CLOTHING

We ask that an extra set of clothing be kept at school for each child, and changed with the seasons.

It is difficult to assume responsibility for personal belongings that are brought to school. We ask that our parents LABEL EVERYTHING with their child's name. This includes coats, sweaters, jackets, and book bags.



## LUNCH

Preschoolers have the option of buying their lunch through our hot lunch program or bringing lunch from home. Lunches are purchased in advance.



## **CLASSES & CLASSROOMS**

The calendar is not often the best indicator of readiness. Human beings grow and mature at different rates. The following characteristics are indicators of readiness for a classroom setting in general and if so, which setting might be most appropriate for your child:

- Is the child gaining independence or completely independent?
- Is the child ready to be a part of a classroom or have they had past preschool experiences that have brought them to our classroom comfortable and ready to learn?
- Are they able to follow simple directions with more complex directions given in small group? Do they need directions given one-on-one, or are they able to follow complex directions within the group?
- Can they separate from parents with little or no resistance or are they comfortable to leave parents and engage with a friend?
- Are they growing in their ability to initiate conversations, verbalize needs, and answer questions or are they socially comfortable in these areas?
- Are they gaining experience with fine motor skills, number and letter recognition or are they already experienced with these?
- Are they more comfortable working one-on-one or do they do well as a part of a larger group?
- Do they move from task to task or are they able to commit to working on a task for a significant period of time?

While we maintain a one-to-ten adult to child ratio, the size of the class may be different in each preschool room, which plays a large factor in where we place students. Some children may benefit from getting to know fewer children initially. Some children may be resistant to working collaboratively with others and a small group may be less overwhelming to help them grow in this area. Readiness factors such as these, are much better at determining the best room for a child rather than where their birthday falls on a calendar.

Our goal, not only for preschool but throughout our K-8 program, is for each student to receive a rigorous but developmentally appropriate curriculum. It's hard sometimes to explain this to parents because school is different than it was when we were young. When we were in school, learning was content-focused. You learned certain skills and topics at certain grades. That is no longer the case. If you look at the hierarchy of skills in the diagram, you will see how types of thinking become more difficult and complex.

In early childhood classes, we focus on foundational learning of letters, numbers, shapes, calendar, color, science, social studies, religion, etc., as is true at every stage. We then take those skills to a deeper level with learning centers and hands-on activities appropriate to the developmental stage of the child. This allows learning in areas of socialization, verbalization, independence, motor skills, perseverance, creativity, self-control, and more as students are ready. They are better able to connect the learning to their world during a period in their life when they are absorbing such a great deal.





## DAILY SCHEDULE

20 minutes	Class meetings/discussion
Opening	Plan for Day, Helper Chart, Name Recognition Working with Data/attendance/lunch
1 hour	Creating with material (Art)
30 minutes	Exploration/Experimentation (Science/Sensory) Food Experience (Housekeeping), Group Games Pretend Play (Dramatic Play) & Writing
10 minutes	Clean up
30 minutes	Read Aloud/Songs/Finger Plays
15 minutes	Bathroom Break/Wash Hands
30 minutes	Snack/Independent Self- Help/Independent Reading/Clean up
30 minutes	Outdoor Play/Exercise/Group games Movement/Gross Motor/Exploration
15 minutes	Class meetings/discussion
Closing	Distribution - newsletters, papers, etc. Read aloud music and movement

This is a flexible schedule, but hopefully will give you some idea of what goes on during a class session.

### EXTENDED DAY

Our extended day is from 11:30 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. The schedule is as follows:

11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Lunch in our cafeteria. Teachers/aides are with the children

12:15 - 1:00 p.m. Bathroom break and recess

1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. Nap/Quiet Time (Mrs. Paeper's Class)

(Children nap on mats and each child is encouraged to bring a blanket and pillow for rest time. A small tote bag to hold these items is recommended.)

1:00 p.m. -2:30 p.m. Enrichment (Mrs. Della Croce & Mrs. Schmitz' class)

2:30 - 3:00 - End of day activities

3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Panther time until 6:00 p.m. daily!



## Preschool Curriculum

### Christian Life

- The Teacher will provide a loving, Christian example for the children to follow
- The Teacher will help children learn that God loves them and hears their prayers
- Children will learn the sign of the cross
- Children will pray during class and before eating
- Children will listen and retell Bible stories
- Children will recognize the importance of Holy Days in the Catholic Church
- A Montessori-based faith formation program called Catechesis of the Good Shepherd will allow our children to grow in relationship with Jesus and spend time with Him in their own sacred space called an "Atrium." Visit [www.cgsusa.org](http://www.cgsusa.org) for more information. Click on the link "We long for joy" halfway down the page for a short video.



### Literacy

- The Teacher will model and practice written language
- The Teacher will expose children to a variety of literature
- The Teacher will encourage comprehension skills
- The Teacher will expose children to rhyming words
  
- Children will begin to read environmental print
- Children will recognize, spell, write, and state own first and last name
- Children will answer basic questions: why, what, where, when
- Children will use a variety of tools for writing and drawing
- Children will demonstrate knowledge of letters and sound



## Math

- Children will recognize shapes
- Children will develop sorting and matching skills and graphing skills
- Children will rote count age appropriate numbers
- Children will use drawings to represent numbers
- Teacher will use concepts of more, less, bigger, smaller
- Children will use one to one correspondence when counting
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## Science & Community

- Children will collect, organize, and use new information
- The Teacher will model cause and effect
- The Teacher will provide numerous hands-on opportunities
- Children will explore characteristics of living things

## Life cycles, plants, animals

- Children will recognize a variety of community workers: police, firefighters, nurse, teacher, priest, etc.
- Children will recognize a variety of special days and holidays
- Children will begin to recognize places in their community
- The Teacher will explore the concept of family
- Children will investigate properties of weather
- Children will demonstrate an understanding of personal health & healthy living habits





## Technology

- The teacher will expose children to a variety of educational websites to promote learning.
- Children will open and close computer programs and/or Ipad applications
- Children will select and use various applications/software for an intended purpose
- Children will show responsible use of technology and equipment
- Children will demonstrate correct use of input devices (mouse, Ipad, and Smartboard touch screens)



## Art

- Children will recognize colors
- The Teacher will expose children to a variety of media
- The Teacher will encourage creativity through a variety of open ended art activities
- The Teacher will model cause and effect through various art activities
- Children will assign meaning to own drawings and projects
- Children will follow oral and visual picture directions



## **Music**

- The Teacher will expose children to different styles of music
- The Teacher will encourage listening skills and promote sound awareness
- The Teacher will encourage children to feel free and interact with music through singing and physical movement
- The Teacher will encourage enjoyment of and creativity through music and instruments



## **Social Skills**

- Children will demonstrate knowledge of manners
- The Teacher will encourage child to use adults as resources
- The Teacher will encourage child to express own ideas or feelings appropriately
- The Teacher will encourage child to create new friendships



## Fine Motor

- Children will develop and strengthen eye-hand coordination
- Children will develop scissors skills
- Children will manipulate a variety of writing tools and paint
- Children will write own name using upper and lower case letters



## Gross Motors

- Children will throw a ball in general direction desired
- Children will kick a large ball in general direction desired
- Children will catch a large ball from 3 feet
- Children will be exposed to skipping, galloping, and hopping
- Children will climb and descend stairs with alternating feet
- Children will balance on one foot.



## DISCIPLINE

Our program adheres to three basic guidelines:

1. All children will respect themselves and others at all times.
2. All children will respect school property.

Positive reinforcements and re-direction are used to help children behave appropriately. Time-out is used as a last resort and to help in calming an overly excited child. Children are encouraged to learn to solve their own problems.

For children who are overly aggressive or who have difficulty with the rules, a conference with the parent will be scheduled. We reserve the right to withdraw a student whose behaviors cannot be controlled with normal means.



## SNOW DAYS

St. Francis of Assisi School follows the Archdiocesan policy and will keep school open in inclement weather whenever possible. When it is necessary to close school, SFA families will receive a call from our Principal. The announcement will also be relayed on television stations KSDK, KMOV, KTVI and radio station KMOX.



## FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are an important part of our program. We feel that it is an opportunity for the children to enjoy new experiences outside the classroom. Parents will be asked to attend most field trips with their children. Parents are responsible for providing transportation and the cost of the field trip for themselves. The child's cost is included in the registration fees that are paid at the beginning of the year. Teachers meet the parents and children at the destination of the field trip.

You will need to let us know if you plan on attending by the specified date.



## FOOD

A healthy snack and juice or milk is provided daily. Parents may sign up with the teacher to bring treats for the children in the classroom for birthdays, holidays, or special days. We are making every attempt to keep the preschool a "Peanut/Tree Nut Free Zone". All treats must be pre-packaged and nut free! You may bring a drink if you wish.

Children who have a summer birthday can celebrate their "1/2 year" birthday.

Private party invitations will not be given out unless all children in the class are invited. Parents may use the class list to mail invitations.



## SFA TOTES

SFA Preschool will furnish a tote bag for each child.

It is a good idea for the parent to go through the child's bag after each class. We ask that any papers being returned to school are not left in the school bag. Any papers being returned to school should be placed in the trays on the sign in table.



## TOYS

Our classrooms are adequately equipped with toys, games, and materials of interest to young children. No personal toys should be brought to school.



# Health News...

## HEALTH

Our health policy has been formulated for the purpose of safeguarding the health and safety of all children and adults who participate in our school's activities. SFA Preschool follows health recommendations from the Archdiocese of St. Louis and the Missouri Department of Health regarding exclusion from school for specific illnesses.

## ILLNESS

Children who are ill or who have run a temperature, vomited or have had diarrhea in the previous 24 hours MUST NOT be brought to school. This is for the well being of all the children and will be strictly enforced. A parent who does not comply will be asked to withdraw their child from the program.

A child who becomes ill at school will be sent home. Calls will first be made to the home, work, or cell numbers and then emergency numbers.

Our parents are asked to notify the teachers if their child will miss more than two class days or if their child has a contagious disease. The

school will post notes concerning contagious diseases that children have been exposed to.

## DISEASE

## CHILD MAY RETURN

Strep Throat

24 hours after antibiotic treatment begins and fever free

Head Lice

24 hours after treatment begins - all nits must be removed. "NO NIT" Policy

Chickenpox

1 week after rash begins or when pox are scabbed over

Pink Eye

When there is no redness or secretions from the eye; usually 24-48 hours after the start of treatment

Diarrhea

24 hours after the last loose movement and has tolerated a normal diet.

**Undiagnosed Fever - 24 hours of normal temp. without administration of (99.5 or above) fever reducing medication**

**Vomiting 24 hours after the last vomitus and has tolerated a normal diet**

**Impetigo When all lesions are healed.**

**These are State Health Department guidelines and are strictly followed.**

## **MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS**

**A physical form signed by a physician is required for each child enrolled. A special examination is not required if your child's inoculations are up-to-date. Once a physical form is on file, another one is not needed but must be kept up-to-date.**



## **MEDICATIONS**

**Ideally, all medication should be given at home. However, some students are able to attend school because of the effectiveness of medication in the treatment of chronic illnesses or disabilities. If a student requires medication (over the counter or prescription) during the school day, the following must be in place:**

- 1. Direct order/consent of a licensed physician, licensed physician's assistant or nurse practitioner, signed and properly filed with the school. The current prescription label on the container may serve as a physician's order and physician's orders may also be faxed or mailed to the school.**
- 2. Written consent of the parent/guardian for school personnel to administer the medication must be received prior to administration of any medication.**
- 3. Medication must be in the original container with the production or pharmacy label in place**
- 4. Proper training of personnel on medication administration must be established prior to administration of medication.**

All medication sent to school must be secured in a locked area under the supervision of the administration. Students may not carry medication on their person, with the exception of life saving medication such as metered-dose inhalers or epi pens when properly registered with the school. Ideally, all school medications would be kept in a secure location within the health room. A parent may also come to school to dispense medications.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

Fire and emergency procedures are conducted throughout the year with the children. In the event of a critical emergency, the school will activate the emergency medical units and attempt to contact a parent as soon as possible. Please let us know immediately if your contact information changes.

## **SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES/CHALLENGES**

Parents are asked to notify the teachers if there is a change in a child's normal home routines: i.e. father traveling, death or other separation. At all times, the staff is available to help our parents work through problems that affect the child and his/her behavior.

It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school, in writing, of any changes of address, phone number, emergency numbers, child's diet, allergies, car pools, sitters, release, etc.

## **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

The law mandates teachers and centers to notify authorities of any suspected cases of child abuse and neglect.





## **PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Conferences are conducted whenever a parent or a teacher feels the need. Parents should never hesitate to ask for a conference if they have concerns or simply want to know what their child is doing. Formal conferences are scheduled for January.

## **SECURITY**

For the safety of the children, the school doors remain locked throughout the day! There is a doorbell at the Preschool entrance you will need to ring.



## **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

Teacher newsletters are sent home each week and are an important communication between home and school. The Weekly Newsletter from St. Francis of Assisi School as well as information about upcoming Preschool events and lessons will be sent home on Wednesday/Thursday electronically. Please notify the preschool office if email addresses change during the school year.



## **PARTIES**

Preschool has a variety of parties throughout the year. Parents are asked to sign up to help with at least one party. Due to the fact we have several life threatening food allergies, and in an effort to ensure safety and fun for ALL students, certain items will not be allowed at parties or in treat bags. Your teacher will give you this information and must be strictly followed. Instead of including food items in treat bags, consider providing items that would provide opportunities for fun and creative play for all students such as stickers, crayons, sidewalk chalk, activity books, small puzzles, bubbles, pencils, playdoh, etc. Many of these items are quite affordable. You can find such items at the Dollar Store or Oriental Trading and online.

Thank you for your help in giving all students in our class a fun, yet safe holiday experience!



**Website...[sfastl.org](http://sfastl.org)**

Our website is another way that we communicate with our parents. Please check often!

## **FRESH GRADE**

St. Francis of Assisi parents, teachers, and students have the opportunity to use the interactive Fresh Grade app. This student portfolio is a great way for students and teachers to communicate photos of learning with the parents. Learning progress, successes, and fun classroom activities sent to the parents, give them a glimpse into the classroom, where they have the opportunity to respond to their child's work.



## **STAFF**

**Mrs. Beth Bartolotta, Principal**  
**Mrs. Elaine Dyn, Secretary**  
**Mrs. Sarah Della Croce, Teacher**  
**Mrs. Emily Schmitz, Teacher**  
**Mrs. Flo Paeper, Teacher**  
**Mrs. Lisa Bockskopf, Aide**  
**Mrs. Becky Hohmeier, Aide**

## **ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM**

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