



SENT Prep Academy

PARENT HANDBOOK

 Open Monday - Friday / 7:00am - 6:00pm

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 @SENTtopeka

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WELCOME!

*STRENGTHENING AND EQUIPPING NEIGHBORHOODS
TOGETHER SINCE 2019*

Thank you for choosing the SENT Prep Academy for your child! We welcome you and look forward to working with you.

At the SENT Prep Academy children are offered a warm, secure place to explore, create, and discover life through creative play and exploration. SENT Prep Academy staff help nurture and encourage these opportunities while supporting your

child's growth and development every step of the way. We offer children a wide variety of learning experiences that pave the way for their success in school and throughout life. Our goal is to offer a high-quality educational experience for every child enrolled in our program. We want to partner with you and hope you will always feel comfortable discussing your child's needs.

SENT Prep Academy



WELCOME!

CONTINUED...

SENT Prep Academy operates under the umbrella of SENT, Inc., a nonprofit organization. SENT's mission is intentionally walking with neighbors, through loving relationships and strategic development. Education, cradle to career, is one of the foundational pillars of the organization and why the SENT Prep Academy was founded. You can read more about SENT's mission and strategies on pages 11-14 of this handbook. We strive to encourage strong, positive relationships between the teaching team and enrolled families, laying the foundation for collaborative and healthy interactions. We want to support both your child and your family, aligning with SENT's mission to intentionally walk beside families in their educational journey through loving relationships. We are committed to hiring and retaining a well-qualified staff as a primary strategy to offering high-quality care for children.

The SENT Prep Academy is supported by guardian tuition, the Kansas Department of Children and Families, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, grants, donations, and fundraising activities. Families are invited and encouraged to find a way to get involved and support our efforts! Again, thank you for choosing to enroll your child at the SENT Prep Academy. We look forward to working with you!

Nikki Ramirez-Jennings, Executive Director

Julie James, Center Director

Paige Roudybush, Assistant Center Director

SENT Prep Academy

CURRICULUM + LEARNING

Learning happens every day through daily routines, planned teacher-facilitated activities and child-directed play. SENT Prep Academy's choice of curriculum is **Creative Curriculum**. The Creative Curriculum is an early childhood curriculum that focuses on project-based investigations as a means for children to apply skills.

Nationally-known and highly respected, this curriculum addresses these areas of development and learning: social/emotional, physical, cognitive, language, literacy, math, science and technology, social studies, and the arts.

The Creative Curriculum provides a framework for guiding teachers in creating learning plans that support children's natural curiosity and stimulate their creativity appropriate for their age and stage of development, based on these principles:

- **Positive interactions and relationships with adults** provide a critical foundation for successful learning.
- **Social-emotional competence** is a significant factor in school success.
- **Constructive, purposeful play** supports essential learning.
- **The physical environment** affects the type and quality of learning interactions.
- **Teacher-family partnerships** promote development and learning.





CURRICULUM + LEARNING

The heart of SENT Prep Academy is to encourage self-control, self-esteem, and respect for all children and adults. For this reason, we train our staff to implement the principles of “**Conscious Discipline**” by Dr. Becky Bailey. This program takes a different approach to traditional classroom management. The program is designed to help teachers take everyday discipline issues and turn them into teachable moments that convey the importance of impulse control, anger management, and conflict resolution.

Conscious Discipline gives children the tools to understand that their emotions are not only important and deserving of attention, but they are also controllable and the power to control them lies within the child. We are striving to teach children how to progress from physical or verbal aggression to calm self-regulation, how to make better choices with cooperation and compassion, and the importance of respecting and empathizing with others.

Teachers post weekly lesson plans in their classroom. Guardians are encouraged to ask questions about the curriculum and what their child is learning each week.



DAILY SCHEDULE

7:00 am	Center Opens
7:00 - 8:30 am	Free Play (self-selected activities)
8:30 am	Breakfast (<i>Children arriving later than 8:30 will need to eat breakfast before arrival.</i>)
9:00 - 11:00 am	Classroom Activities and outside play
11:30 am	Lunch
12:45 pm	Quiet time / Nap time
3:00 pm	Snack
3:30–6:00 pm	Classroom Activities, outside and free play, departure

*At least one hour per day will be spent in supervised play outdoors unless severe, inclement weather exists.

We believe that routine and schedule is important for our staff and students to maximize learning and play. Please let your child's teacher or the center director know if your child will be absent from care for any reason. Please also let staff know if your child will be arriving later than 9am or if you need to pick your child up during scheduled quiet/nap time.

Schedules may be subject to change to accommodate special events.





FOOD + NUTRITION

The SENT Prep Academy participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). This program reimburses the center for some of the cost of meals and snacks, and following CACFP guidelines ensures healthy, nutritious food is served.

Breakfast is available to all children who arrive at the Center by 8:30 am. Lunch is served at 11:30, and an afternoon snack is served at 3:00 pm.

- Children may not bring food into the facility.
- Menus are posted on the guardian information board.

HOLIDAYS + CLOSURES

The SENT Prep Academy is closed these holidays:

New Year's Day
 Memorial Day
 Independence Day
 Labor Day
 Thanksgiving Day and the day after
 Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

An annual calendar is included in your enrollment packet. If a holiday falls on a weekend, the calendar will indicate when the facility will be closed.

In addition, SENT Prep Academy will be in compliance with child care licensing regulations at all times. Licensing requires that staff complete a minimum of 15 hours of in-service training annually. SENT Prep Academy will be closed for one professional development day each year, and families will be notified of closure a month in advance.

SPECIAL EVENTS + PARTIES

SENT Prep Academy will schedule parties on special occasions. We will celebrate most major holidays in some way. Guardians will be informed through monthly newsletter of plans for holiday parties and opportunities to participate. If your family has special traditions or celebrations that you and your child would like to share with the children in the center, please tell the center director.

On your child's birthday, please make arrangements with your child's teacher if you wish to provide any type of special "treat" to celebrate. If for any reason you do not want your child to celebrate or participate in these special celebrations or events, please discuss this with your child's teacher or the center director.

GUIDING BEHAVIOR

The implementation of **Conscious Discipline** techniques and strategies in the classroom helps to create positive, supportive environments for children and helps to alleviate many challenging behaviors. Positive behaviors are taught through modeling, discussion and implementation of Conscious Discipline techniques. If a child exhibits ongoing challenging behaviors, the classroom teacher, center director and the child's family will work together to create a "behavior action plan." By working together and applying consistent expectations, it is expected that the child will achieve success. No punishment will be used which is humiliating, frightening or physically harmful including any type of corporal punishment, verbal abuse, restricting movement or withholding food. If a child is a danger to himself, other children in care, or the staff, care will be discontinued.





TOYS + CLOTHING

Your child will need at least two (2) changes of clothes for school, at all times (infants and toddlers may need at least three (3) changes). A storage place is provided and is accessible, so you may check the clothing status from time to time. These clothes should fit the child and be appropriate for the season. Soiled clothes will be bagged and sent home for laundering. Clothing should be practical and washable (play clothes and sneakers are suggested). Closed toe shoes with back straps are required to ensure safety on our playgrounds. Clothing as well as outerwear should be marked with your child's name.

All children will be provided a blanket and sheet for naptime. These items will be washed every Friday by the facility. No other toys should be brought to the Center.

Diapers are to be provided by the guardians. Most children use about 20 diapers a week. You will be notified when more diapers are needed. When it's time for your child to begin potty training, your child's teacher will talk with you about how we can work together during this important transitional process.

All children need to bring a toothbrush. We will keep these clean and marked.

SAFETY + EMERGENCIES

Keeping children healthy and safe is a top priority of SENT Prep Academy. Please note the following:

- Children must be brought into the facility and escorted into their classroom by a responsible adult.
- Children will be released only to an adult, age 18 or older, that has been authorized to pick up the child in writing by the guardian. This information is kept on the enrollment form and in the emergency card file at the Center. Children may not be released to anyone who is not authorized without prior written notice from the child's guardian. Staff are required to ask for identification before releasing children.
- Children must be transported to and from the facility safely, including in an appropriate car seat. Staff have the right to refuse to release a child to anyone who appears to be intoxicated or under influence of drugs or alcohol, and will call another authorized adult to pick up the child.
- The Center's Emergency Plan is posted on the bulletin board near the entry door of each building. Fire drills are conducted monthly year-round. Tornado drills are conducted monthly during the months of April through October.
- The Center's basic safety rules are posted throughout the facility and practiced regularly with the children.
- Each child must have a current Health Assessment form completed and on file. SENT Prep Academy requires that Health Assessment forms be updated every two years.
- All children must have current immunizations. Immunization records must be updated each time the child receives a vaccination.
- Injuries requiring a guardian treatment decision will be reported immediately. Any accident or injury requiring treatment is reported by the teacher, via an "Ouch Report." The completed form is made available to the guardian by placing it in the child's cubby. Guardian should initial the form, with one copy is kept in the child's permanent file and one copy is given to the guardian. Children with serious injuries will be taken to the hospital and guardian will be notified to meet the child at the hospital.
- As professionals in contact with young children and their families, the staff of SENT Prep Academy are required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect. Thus, it is policy of SENT Prep Academy to report suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF). The Center will offer full cooperation of its staff during the investigation of any reported incident.





CLOSING DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER

The SENT Prep Academy inclement weather policy is intended to accommodate the needs and safety of both families and employees. SENT Prep Academy will follow Topeka Public Schools closures, unless Topeka Public Schools close due to temperature. The executive director may also make a decision about closing based on other factors.

Any announcements pertaining to winter weather will be made by 5:30am on the day affected and notices will be posted on KSNT, WIBW, Facebook, Instagram, www.senttopeka.com.

ILLNESS + EXCLUSION FROM CARE

There are **three** reasons to exclude a child from care:

1. The child has an infectious or contagious illness that could be spread to other children or adults,
2. The child is too ill to comfortably participate in the program's normal daily activities, and/or
3. The child's illness will take more care than the staff can manage and still provide care to the other children in the classroom.

Please follow these guidelines, and call first if there is any doubt about whether you should bring your child to the Center:

- Children should be kept home with any of the following symptoms: fever (temperature of 100 degrees or higher), diarrhea, vomiting, severe cough, flu, unexplained rash, or not well enough for outdoor play. Children must be excluded from care for any contagious diseases or illness according to the licensing exclusion policy or longer if your physician recommends. Guidelines for exclusion established by the Kansas Department of Health & Environment are included in your enrollment packet.
- If your child becomes ill during the day, you will be contacted and are expected to make arrangements for your child to be picked up within 30 minutes. If the guardian(s) cannot be reached, the authorized escorts listed on the enrollment form for emergencies will be contacted.
- Children must be fever free, without the use of medication, for 24 hours before returning to the center.
- Over-the-counter and prescription medication can be administered if provided in the original container and have granted signed permission on the appropriate authorization form.





COMMUNICATION + FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

The success of our program is heavily dependent on loving relationships, effective communication, and guardian support. Constant, open lines of communication are important. We welcome your questions, suggestions, and participation. We are honored that you have chosen SENT Prep Academy to care for your child(ren). Communication between SENT Prep Academy and our families is the foundation of your child's school success. We keep our families informed through daily communication and arrival and departure times, monthly newsletters, class calendars, guardian-teacher conferences and ongoing guardian workshops. Appointments are appreciated and helpful, but you are welcome to drop in anytime. Please call the Center Director to schedule time to meet.

Twice each year, you will have the opportunity to help us complete a screening to check in on your child's development. These screenings help us both know if there is a specific area where additional support may be needed. We also do children's skills assessments each quarter to measure progress. Guardian-teacher conferences are held twice each year and progress reports are given between guardian-teacher conferences for the ages of 3-5 years old. Other conferences can be scheduled as needed.

Guardians are a vital part of the SENT Prep Academy program and we encourage your involvement throughout your child's early learning experience. There are many ways for you to get involved. Your child and the staff will be excited to have you help! We want you and your child to have the optimal experience at SENT Prep Academy. Thank you for your interest in finding the best possible care for your child!



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

SENT depends heavily on the support of community volunteers in all aspects of our work. This includes the SENT Prep Academy. We will utilize volunteers to help us keep the building and grounds maintained and will schedule occasional volunteer work days on the weekend when children are not in care. Any volunteers used in classrooms will have training and a background check before they are around children and staff.

SENT Prep Academy is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, which develops policy guidelines for the agency. The staff is responsible for implementing the policies and guidelines. The success of our child care and learning program is due to the intentional relationships and efforts of guardians, staff, community members and the Board of Directors.

SENT Prep Academy services will have an impact on a large portion of our community. In addition to the facility's program plan for the children enrolled in the program, it is also essential to note that SENT will use this facility as a tool that can be used to help the early childhood workforce. SENT has agreed to host the planned Early Childhood Career Center that will be operated by Child Care Aware® of Eastern Kansas. This center will provide job-specific training for individuals in the community interested in a career in child care, helping them obtain all needed KDHE approved in-service classes required by the Kansas child care licensing system. Participants will then be qualified to accept employment in a licensed child care facility in the community, addressing a tremendous workforce shortage. This job-training program aligns perfectly with SENT's cradle-to-career education goals and demonstrates the strong collaborative partnership between SENT and Child Care Aware® of Eastern Kansas. If you know someone who might be interested in this new program, please request a flyer from the center director.





ENROLLMENT PROCESSES, PAYMENTS + FEES

These items are detailed in the contract that all guardians sign upon enrollment, which is included in your enrollment packet.



ABOUT SENT

MISSION, VISION, & VALUES

SENT TOPEKA

MISSION

Intentionally walking with neighbors through loving relationships and strategic development.

VISION

Holistic Transformation of Neighborhoods in Shawnee County.

SENT PREP

MISSION

Intentionally walking with families in their early childhood educational journey through loving relationships and strategic development.

VISION

Holistic transformation of early childhood opportunities in the neighborhoods of Shawnee county.

SENT Core Values

1

RELOCATION

Putting ourselves in a position to share in the sufferings and pain of our neighbors through gaining a better understanding of the real problems that they face as they seek to improve the spiritual, physical, social, and emotional quality of their lives.

REDISTRIBUTION

Seeking a just distribution of resources and working for justice in our neighborhood to help people help themselves.

2

3

RECONCILIATION

A commitment to connecting and living with all the people in our community.

LISTENING TO THE COMMUNITY

Believing that the people with the problem have the best solutions and opportunities to solve those problems and helping our neighbors focus on their strengths and abilities to make a difference in problem areas.

4

5

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Filling our community with strong leaders who love their neighbors and have the skills and abilities to lead our organizations and other institutions that bring sustainable health to our communities.

HOLISTIC APPROACH

Taking a holistic approach to community development that deals with the social, economic, political, cultural, emotional, physical, moral, judicial, educational, and familial issues of each person by building coalitions in our community that can work together to solve its problems.

6

7

EMPOWERMENT

Ensuring that people are able to help themselves after they have been helped by affirming their dignity, value, and worth.

SENT Prep Core Values

1

RELOCATION

Putting ourselves in a position to share in the sufferings and pain of our families neighbors through gaining a better understanding of the real problems that they face as they seek to improve the quality of education that is available to their children.

REDISTRIBUTION

Seeking a just distribution of educational resources and working for justice in our neighborhood to help people help families control the educational process of their children.

2

3

RECONCILIATION

A commitment to connecting and living with all the families with small children in our community.

LISTENING TO THE COMMUNITY

Believing that the families that we partner with have the best solutions and opportunities to solve problems that they face in their children's educational journey by helping them focus on their strengths and abilities to make a difference in their child's education.

4

5

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Filling our schools with strong leaders who love their neighbors and have the skills and abilities to lead our educational institutions in a way that brings sustainable health to our communities.

HOLISTIC APPROACH

Taking a holistic approach to early childhood education that deals with the social, economic, political, cultural, emotional, physical, moral, judicial, educational, and familial issues of each person by building coalitions in our community that can work together to provide high-quality early childhood education.

6

7

EMPOWERMENT

Ensuring that families are able to help themselves after they have been helped by affirming their dignity, value, and worth.



SENT STRATEGY

LOVING RELATIONSHIPS

At SENT Topeka, we walk side-by-side with our neighbors. Through loving relationships, we develop trust and cooperation among residents as well as between residents and local organizations such as churches, small businesses, and other nonprofit organizations. Trust and cooperation among neighbors helps to build resilient communities and strengthens social capital.

***How do we do this?** In every initiative, we build time, space, and strategies for loving relationships. For example, in our education programs, we have low adult-to-student ratios to foster authentic and meaningful connections.*

LIFE-GIVING RESOURCES

Resources make the world go around. No matter how under-resourced, every community has something to bring to the table. We recognize and elevate the resources our community already has. Then, we bring in life-giving resources to complement and grow our neighborhood's natural assets. Fusing outside resources with our neighborhood's existing resources and abilities helps our community develop dignity, pride, and ownership.

***How do we do this?** We operate with a strengths-based approach, continually identifying what we have and how we are growing. We recognize that key resources, like summer lunch programs and emotional resilience training, help bridge the gap between where we are and where we want to be.*

LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCES

"If you keep on doing what you've always done, you will keep on getting what you've always gotten." Community transformation requires individual change. We must see the world differently and act differently to achieve new and better results. That's why life-changing experiences are core to our work. New experiences help push the boundaries of what we think is possible, creating an opportunity to dream bigger and reach higher.

***How do we do this?** We challenge the status quo. From building a modern, unique home in the middle of Hi-Crest to bringing in an Apache Helicopter to our summer camp, we show that the extraordinary is obtainable.*



SENT PREP STRATEGY

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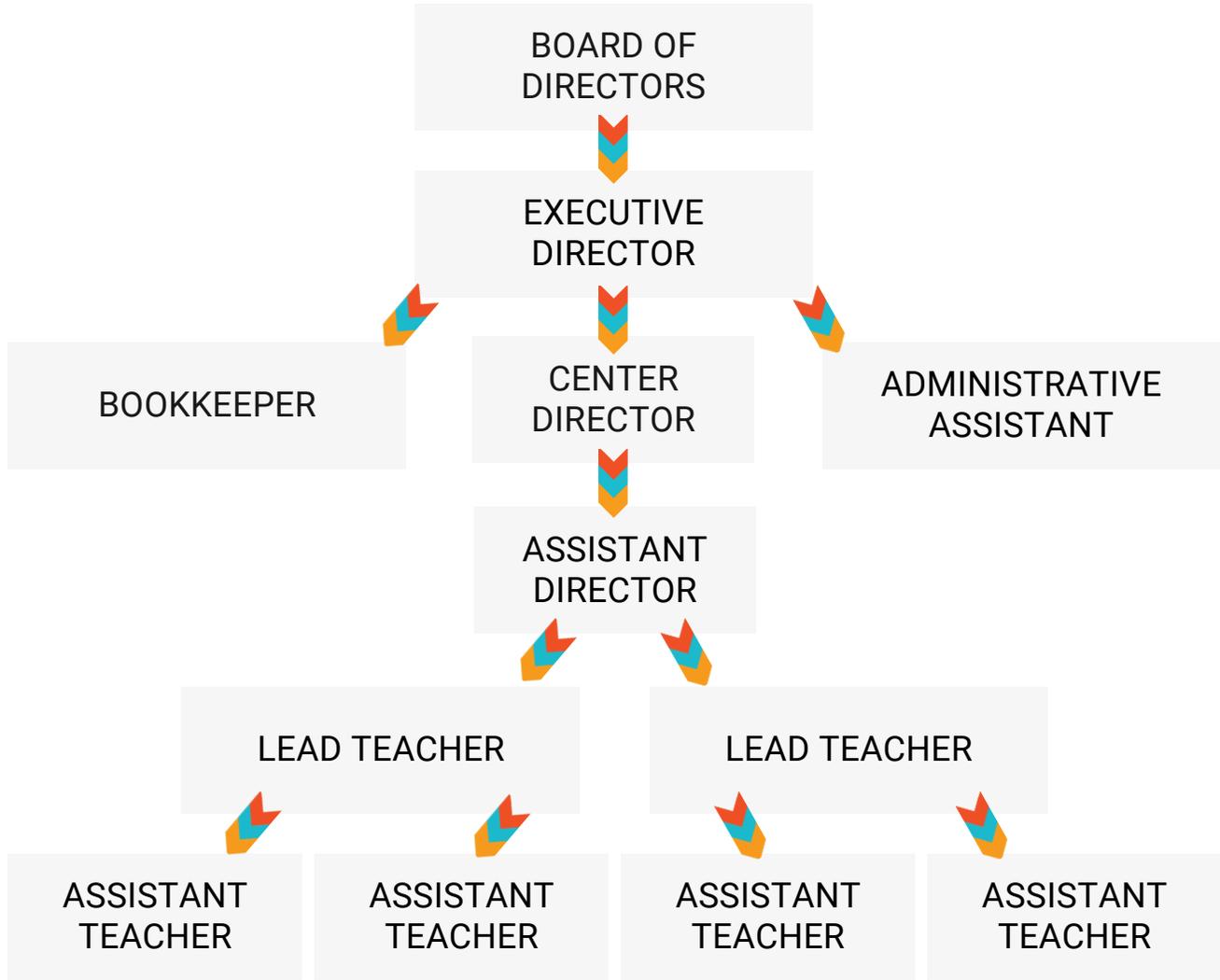


MORE ABOUT SENT PREP ACADEMY

SENT Prep Academy is operated under the supervision of an Executive Director who is responsible to the Board of Directors. The center director reports to the Executive Director. The center director is responsible for the unique program at the center, implementation and adherence to the policies of SENT Prep Academy, and compliance with all licensing regulations. Should the center director be off site, the assistant director assumes oversight responsibilities.

SENT Prep hires staff and enrolls children without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, gender, ancestry, disability, sexual orientation, or political affiliation. Because we feel the information in this handbook is important to you and your child we ask that you read it carefully and refer to it often.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART





SUPPORTING SENT

Did you know that you can be supporting SENT at no cost to you based on the shopping you do every day.

DILLONS COMMUNITY REWARDS

Once you link your Card to an organization, all you have to do is shop at Dillons and swipe your Shopper's Card.

Sign up here:

www.dillons.com/i/community/community-rewards

1. Create a digital account.
2. Link your Card to an organization.
3. SENT Earns!



AMAZON SMILE

1. Sign in to smile.amazon.com on your desktop or mobile phone browser.
2. From your desktop, go to Your Account from the navigation at the top of any page, and then select the option to Change your Charity listed under Shopping programs and rentals.
3. From your mobile browser, select Change your Charity from the options at the bottom of the page.
4. Select SENT Inc - Topeka, KS.

For more information about the AmazonSmile program, go to smile.amazon.com/about.