



# SENT Prep Academy

## PARENT HANDBOOK

2023-2024 School Year

**Hours of Operation: Monday-Friday, 7:00 am - 6:00 pm**  
**206 SE Lakewood Court Topeka, KS 66609**  
**(785) 783-2535**  
**[www.senttopeka.com](http://www.senttopeka.com)**

# SENT Prep Academy

## WELCOME!

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

At 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. We aim 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 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 page 1 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.

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!

*Jonathan Sublet, Interim Executive Director*

*Tabitha Ewing, Facility Lead*

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## ABOUT US

### *Philosophy*

Our dedicated staff is committed to providing a warm and secure environment where children can freely explore, create, and discover life through play and exploration. We understand the significance of positive adult interactions, the impact of a carefully designed physical environment, and the value of social-emotional competence. Moreover, we strongly believe in the power of teacher-family partnerships to ensure the best possible outcomes for every child. At SENT Prep Academy, we recognize the importance of education as the foundation for success. We offer a creative and stimulating curriculum that encourages curiosity, fosters creativity, and supports the overall growth and development of children aged two weeks to 6 years.

### *Mission*

As an integral part of the SENT Topeka organization, our mission goes beyond providing high-quality childcare and early childhood education. We are committed to intentionally walking beside our neighbors through loving relationships and strategic development, aiming to accomplish the holistic transformation of neighborhoods in Shawnee County. Our purpose is rooted in creating a positive impact not only on the lives of children but also on the entire community we serve.

### *Definition of Family*

In this handbook, we refer to “family” as a parent, legal guardian, sponsor, or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best interest, and responsibility of the child in our care.

### *Hours of Operation*

Childcare services are provided from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

### *Holidays*

We are closed for the following days:

- 9/1/23- SENT Prep Team Building- TBRI Training
- 9/4/23- Labor Day- Reopen September 5, 2023
- 10/27/23- Parent Teacher Conferences- Closing at 4 pm
- 11/23/23-11/24/23- Thanksgiving- Reopen November 27, 2023
- 12/25/2-12/26/23-Christmas- Reopen December 27, 2023
- 1/1/24- New Year's Day- Reopen January 2, 2024
- 1/15/24- Martin Luther King Jr Day- Reopen January 16, 2024
- 2/22/24- Parent Teacher Conferences- Closing at 4 pm
- 2/23/24- Professional Development- Reopen February 26, 2024
- 5/27/24- Memorial Day- Reopen May 28, 2024
- 5/31/24- SENT Prep Pre-K Graduation (Special Event-We are open)
- 7/4/24- Independence Day- Reopen July 5, 2024
- 8/2/24- Professional Development Day- Reopen August 5, 2024
- 9/2/24- Labor Day- Reopen September 3, 2024
- 11/28/24-11/29/24- Thanksgiving- Reopen December 2, 2024
- 12/24/24- 12/25/24- Christmas- Reopen December 26, 2024

An annual calendar is included in your enrollment packet.

## Admission & Enrollment

All admission and enrollment forms must be completed, and the enrollment fee and first tuition payment must be paid prior to your child's first day of attendance.

An enrollment fee of \$50 is due at the time of enrollment. This fee is non-refundable.

A one-week, non-refundable tuition deposit is required for each child enrolled. This deposit will be held without interest and will represent tuition payment for the last week of the child's enrollment.

Based on the availability and openings, our facility admits children from 2 weeks to 6 years of age.

Our process for introducing children to our program is a tour with the student's parents to their assigned classroom. Once enrolled, on their first day of enrollment, a team member will take the child and parent to the child's classroom to reintroduce them to their teacher and classmates.

Children are admitted without regard to race, culture, sex, religion, national origin, or disability. We do not discriminate on the basis of special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided.

## Inclusion

**SENT Prep Academy** believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance, and belonging in child care. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage all children's full and active participation in our program based on their individual capabilities and needs. The implementation of **Conscious Discipline** techniques and strategies in the classroom helps to create positive, supportive environments for children and helps 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 that is humiliating, frightening, or physically harmful will be used, 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.

If your child has an identified special need, we will work with providers such as TARC and USD 501, to implement behavior strategies for your child.

## Non-Discrimination

At **SENT Prep Academy**, equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. SENT Prep's programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

## Family Activities

Each family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, visit children's classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback

on the program. We offer a variety of ways in which families can participate in helping us establish and reach our program goals.

Please see the list of Family Activities at the end of this booklet.

### Confidentiality

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released, with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children in our program are confidential.

### Staff Qualifications

Our teachers are hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. Typical staff certifications are as follows:

Position Title	Education/Certification	Experience
Center Director	Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education	5 years
Facility Lead	Director Certified	3-5 years
Teacher Assistant/Aide	High School Diploma/G.E.D. Must be at least 16 years of age.	6 months

Caregivers participate in orientation and ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

We strongly discourage families from entering into employment arrangements with staff (i.e., babysitting). Any arrangement between families and our caregivers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected to or sanctioned by **SENT Prep Academy**.

### Child-to-Staff Ratios

Children are supervised at all times. All caregivers receive scheduled breaks which reduce fatigue and help to ensure alertness.

We maintain the following standards for child-to-staff ratios:

Age	Child to Staff	Maximum Group Size
≤ 12 months	3 to 1	6
13-35 months	4 to 1	8
3 year-olds	7 to 1	14
4 year-olds	8 to 1	16
5 year-olds	8 to 1	16
6 to 8 year-olds	10 to 1	20
9 to 12-year-olds	12 to 1	24

Source: National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education.

## **Communication & Family Partnership**

**Daily Communications.** Daily notes from center staff will keep you informed about your child's activities and experiences at the center. Notes will be placed into your child's cubby at the end of the day or in Procare.

**Bulletin Boards.** Located throughout the center, bulletin boards provide center news, upcoming events, faculty changes, holiday closing dates, announcements, etc.

**Newsletters.** **Monthly** newsletters provide center news, events, announcements, etc. These newsletters are available at the sign-in/sign-out desk for your taking or in Procare.

**Email.** We encourage you to provide an email address that you use regularly so that we may send you announcements, event invitations, newsletters and general updates.

**Family Visits.** Family participation is encouraged. Visit our classrooms, volunteer, come along on a field trip, or eat a meal with your child. Signing in is required for the safety and protection of our children. Each visitor must wear a visitor's badge while on premises and sign-out upon leaving.

**Family Night.** Family nights are scheduled on a regular basis. These nights include snacks, drinks and fun filled age-appropriate activities for families. Family Nights allow families and children time to share, learn, and have fun. Families have an opportunity to be a part of their child's learning experience and connect with other families.

**Conferences.** Family & teacher conferences occur twice a year. During these conferences, we will discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, and styles of learning. We will work together to set goals for your child's growth and development. You may request additional conferences regarding your child's progress at any time. We encourage you to communicate any concerns.

## **Open Door Policy**

We are delighted to have family members participate in our program. Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit the program any time during regular program hours. The infant room welcomes parents/guardians to nurse or feed their infants.

Open Door Policy does not mean the doors will be unlocked. For the safety and protection of the children, external doors will be kept locked at all times.

Our team will always do their best to speak with parents/guardians. Since staff days are devoted to caring for children, it is usually not feasible to have a long discussion during regular program hours. If a situation requires a longer discussion, kindly arrange for an appointment.

## **Publicity**

Occasionally, photos will be taken of the children at the center for use within the center or on our website. Written permission will be obtained prior to use of photographs.

Unless the family indicates that they want their child to participate, we will not use pictures and names of children for publicity.



## CURRICULA & LEARNING

### *Learning Environment*

We provide a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We have a flexible day routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. We encourage openness to that which is different from us, and the ability to work and play with others.

### *Curricula & Assessment*

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 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.

For information about your child's day, please see copies of daily schedules and lessons plans posted in each classroom.

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 and Routines**

### **Building 1 Classroom Schedule(Infants & Toddlers):**

7:00-8:15 am- Arrival- Structured table sensory activity  
8:15-8:30 am- Clean Up/ Wash Hands  
8:30-9:00 am- Breakfast  
9:00-9:20 am - Diaper Changes  
9:20-10:00 am- Outside Recess  
10:00-10:15 am- Wash hands/ Check Diapers  
10:15-10:30 am- Group Activity- Story and Songs  
10:30-11:00 am- Art / Center activities  
11:00-11:15 am- Clean up/ Check Diapers  
11:15-11:30 am- Wash Hands/ Sit down at the table  
11:30-12:00 pm- Lunch/Diaper Changes/Brush Teeth  
12:00-3:00 pm - Rest time  
3:00-3:30 pm- Snack/Diaper Changes  
3:30-4:00 pm- Outside (Weather Permitting) or Inside- Structure Indoor Movement Activity  
4:00-6:00 pm- Free Play/Dismissal

### **Preschool 1 & 2 Classroom Schedule:**

7:00-8:15 am- Arrival- Structured table sensory activity  
8:15-8:30 am- Clean Up/ Wash Hands  
8:30-9:00 am- Breakfast  
9:00-9:30 am- Outside Recess  
9:20-9:40 am- Circle Time (abc's, weather, colors, days of the week, months of the year, letter of the week, read a book and question of the day)  
9:40-10:00 am- Bathroom break/ Check Diapers  
10:00-10:30 am- Group Activity-Language Arts and Math  
10:30-11:00 am- Art / Center activities  
11:00-11:15 am- Clean up  
11:15-11:30 am- Wash Hands/ Sit down at the table  
11:30-12:00 pm- Lunch/Diaper Changes if needed/Brush Teeth  
12:00-3:00 pm - Rest time  
3:00-3:30 pm- Snack/Diaper Changes if needed  
3:30-4:00 pm- Outside (Weather Permitting) or Inside- Structure Indoor Movement Activity  
4:00-6:00 pm- Free Play/Dismissal

### **Pre-K 1 and 2 Classroom Schedule:**

7:00-8:15 am- Arrival- Structured table sensory activity  
8:15-8:30 am- Clean Up/ Wash Hands  
8:30-9:00 am- Breakfast  
9:00-9:30 am- Circle Time (abc's, weather, colors, days of the week, months of the year, letter of the week, read a book and question of the day)  
9:30-10:00 am- Outside Recess  
9:40-10:00 am- Bathroom break/ Wash Hands  
10:00-10:30 am- Group Activity-Language Arts and Math  
10:30-11:00 am- Art / Center activities  
11:00-11:15 am- Clean up  
11:15-11:30 am- Wash Hands/ Sit down at the table  
11:30-12:00 pm- Lunch/Brush Teeth  
12:00-3:00 pm - Rest time  
3:00-3:30 pm- Snack/Bathroom Break  
3:30-4:00 pm- Outside (Weather Permitting) or Inside- Structure Indoor Movement Activity  
4:00-6:00 pm- Free Play/Dismissal

### **Developmental Screening**

As part of the Creative Curriculum, we gather information about each child's developmental abilities and evaluate progress so we can modify and adjust what we are doing in our classroom to deliver the best individualized instruction for each child. This evaluation is communicated to families periodically during the school year using various formal and informal tools, forms, and resources.

To coincide with curriculum-based assessment(s), we monitor each child's achievement of developmental milestones, share observations with parents/guardians, and provide resource information as needed for further screenings, evaluations, and early intervention and treatment. The developmental screening process is a collaborative one, involving parents/guardians and done in conjunction with the child's primary care provider and health, education, and early intervention consultants. Developmental screening is conducted with written consent from the child's parent/guardian(s).

### **Outings and Field Trips**

Weather permitting; we conduct thirty minutes of supervised outdoor play and/or walking trips around the neighborhood two times a day for all children. Children are accounted for at all times. A permission statement for participation in walking trips is included in the enrollment package.

From time to time, there will be supervised field trips, and we encourage you to join your child on the trip. *Permission Slips* for each trip must be signed by the child's family.

For field trips, please dress your child appropriately for the season. Walking shoes are a must. Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for walking and make it difficult for your child.

The safety of children and staff will be guarded in all activities of child care programs. Proper restraint systems (seat belts) and the correct use of them are critically important during travel to/from the child care program as well as during field trips.

## ***Transitions***

Your child's transition in child care should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced.

### ***Transition from home to center***

Prior to your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the center, meet with your child's peers and teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns. At this time please share the best communication methods that the teacher may use to reach you.

### ***Transition between learning programs***

Children are transitioned to the next program based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. During the transition, current and future teachers will meet with you to propose a plan to introduce your child into the new program.

### ***Transition to elementary school***

Transition activities such as a field trip to a local elementary school, creating a mural of special friends and special times at our center will be part of your child's education at our center. We will provide you with information on local schools, what to expect, and ideas on how to talk to your child about going to elementary school.

### ***Transition for before/after school care***

Children who are of school age may continue with before/after school care at our center. The center will provide staff to ensure that your child arrives at the bus stop for pick up (before school) and drop off (after school) in a timely manner. The Supplemental Enrollment Form must be completed and on file with the center in order to be eligible for this service.

## ***Electronic Media***

Our normal daily routine does not include electronic media (television/TV, video, DVD) viewing and computer use but from time-to-time, we may use a television show without advertisements as a teaching aid and discussion stimulator. All Electronic Media will be screened prior to use and will consist of non-violent and high-quality educational material. Our focus is to provide your child a positive experience with increased understanding of the world. Electronic Media will be offered only as a free choice, used to meet a developmental goal, and limited to no more than minutes per week per child.

Kansas rules prohibit any screen time for children under two. This includes TV, videos and computers.

## ***Multiculturalism***

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it.

## ***Celebrations***

Our holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff and community.

Here at SENT Prep Academy, we love to celebrate birthdays and fun holidays! We do teach and promote a healthy lifestyle and would prefer that any treats be healthy. However, we do allow special treats to be brought in. Parents of children who have a food allergy will be asked to provide a “safe” treat for their child. All staff should know all known allergies at all times, as well as have it posted in classrooms for their children.

### **Rest Time**

Infants sleep according to their own schedule and are put to sleep on their backs. Caregivers/teachers directly observe infants by sight and sound at all times and check on sleeping infants every 15 minutes.

After lunch, all children will participate in a quiet rest time. Children are not required to sleep and may be given quiet activities.

School age children, although not required, shall be provided an opportunity for a regular rest period if the child desires. For children who do not want to rest, a space and time for quiet play will be made available.

will practice Infant Safe Sleep within our program and all staff working with infants and toddlers will go through SIDS training once per calendar year. We follow the mandatory Safe Sleep Practices required by KDHE and recommended by the American Association of Pediatrics. We will implement this policy by maintaining that:

- All childcare staff working in the infant room will receive training on the Safe Sleep Policy and SIDS risk reduction.
- Unless an infant has a sleep position waiver signed by their physician specifying otherwise, infants shall be placed in a supine (back) position for sleeping to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome. A notice will be posted near the infant’s crib for those infants.
- The infant’s head shall remain uncovered during sleep.
- Room temperature will not exceed 75° F.
- Only one infant in a crib at a time.
- No smoking in the childcare facility or in vehicles when transporting infants. Employees must wash their hands before returning to the infant room after smoking.
- Infants will be provided appropriate “tummy time” when awake.
- Caregivers will visually check on infants every 15 minutes while the infant is sleeping.
- No additional items such as pillows, blankets or toys will be allowed in the infant’s crib.
- When infants can easily turn over from the supine (back) to the prone (stomach) position, they will be placed to sleep on their back but allowed to adopt whatever position they prefer for sleep. **NOTE:** All parents/guardians of infants cared for in this facility will receive a written copy of this facility’s Infant Safe Sleep Policy and SIDS risk reduction information before enrollment.

### **Toilet Training**

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The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

## **GUIDANCE**

### **General Procedure**

**SENT Prep Academy** is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

### **Discipline Policy**

We have created a discipline policy that reflects our philosophy of positive guidance with children. A copy of the discipline policy is included in your enrollment package for you to review and sign.

### **Challenging Behavior**

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self control and kindness.

Each student at **SENT Prep Academy** has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child. We maintain a zero tolerance to bullying. If you have any concerns about this at any time, please report it to the Director of the Center.

### **Physical Restraint**

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's safety or that of others and we may restrain a child by gently holding her or him only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation.

### **Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families**

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

## **TUITION AND FEES**

### **Important Notice**

All payment and fee processing will be completed by our facility leads or center director. He/she will be in charge of collecting tuition and other fees and contacting families regarding payment issues. If you have a question or concern regarding a payment or fee, please contact our facility leads or center director.

### **Tuition Rates (weekly)**

- **Infants (\$220):** At our center, we provide nurturing care for infants aged 2 weeks to 12 months and walking. We understand that every child is unique, and we consider each child's developmental stage individually. If a child is older than 12 months and not yet walking due to medical reasons, we can evaluate their specific needs and, in some cases, work towards transitioning them to the Toddler room. To initiate this process, please submit the necessary paperwork to KDHE for an exception.
- **Toddlers (\$185):** Our Toddler program is designed for children aged 12 months and walking up to 2 ½ years old. Here, we emphasize hands-on learning experiences to prepare them for our Preschool classrooms. Through engaging activities and the use of Creative Curriculum, toddlers will explore basic concepts such as numbers, shapes, and colors. Additionally, we gently introduce potty training to support their growth and development.
- **Preschoolers (\$165):** Our Preschool program is tailored for children aged 2.5 to 4 years old. This engaging class serves as a crucial stepping stone to prepare children for the Pre-K classroom. In Preschool, children will embark on a journey of learning that includes early letter recognition, basic letter sounds, fine motor skills development, and a wealth of hands-on educational activities driven by the Creative Curriculum. Potty training support continues in this nurturing environment.
- **Pre-K (\$165):** Our Pre-K class is designed for children aged 4 to 6 years old, aligning with their readiness for Kindergarten. Building upon the foundations laid in the Preschool room, this program ensures that children are fully prepared for the challenges of

Kindergarten. We maintain our commitment to the Creative Curriculum, offering a rich and stimulating educational experience that fosters growth, development, and a love for learning.

Families contract for a specific weekly schedule as indicated on the *Enrollment Agreement* Form. Payment for this contracted schedule is required every week year-round whether or not your child attends; this enables us to pay teachers a stable salary every week all year. No credits are given for sick or vacation days, holidays, staff training closure or closure due to inclement weather.

### **Tuition Deposit**

A Tuition Deposit equal to one week of care is required at the time registration is confirmed. This deposit is applied to the last week of care provided a two-week written notice is given. If a two-week written notice is not given when a child has withdrawn from the program, the family will be billed for two weeks of care, which may come out of their deposit.

### **Payment**

Payment is always due in advance with no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. Payment is due Friday by 5 PM, as outlined in the *Enrollment Agreement*.

A non-refundable registration fee of is due annually on this fee be pro-rated.

### **Methods of Payment**

Several methods of payment are available for families' convenience. Families can pay by cash, check, money order, or in Procure. To set up automatic, reoccurring payments, please contact our facility leads or center director.

### **Late Payment Charges**

Late payments can pose serious problems for our programs and as a result, the business does not have the latitude to allow families to accrue a balance. **Late payments will result in the imposition of late payment fees. Failure to pay child care payments will result in child care services being terminated.**

If payment is not received on Monday at 7am, a late fee of \$10 will be added to your account each day until full payment is made. Repeated late payments will result in your family being required to set up automatic payments or credit card payments.

Any payments made will be applied to the oldest charges and late fees may still apply if the account is not paid in full by the next tuition due date.

If payment is more than 10 business days past due, we may attempt to recover payment in small claims court and/or your account may be sent to a 3<sup>rd</sup> party collections agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including all court and attorney fees.

### **Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges**



All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged a fee of \$50. This charge may be collected electronically. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on “cash only” status.

### Late Pick-up Fees

Late pick-up is not a normal program option and will only be considered as an exceptional occurrence. Late fees of \$5 per minute will be assessed beginning at 6 PM and will be due upon arrival. **Repeated late pick up may result in child care services being terminated.**

### Other Fees

- From time-to-time there will be additional fees associated with special activities or field trips. These fees are due prior to the event, activity or trip.
- A non-refundable enrollment/ registration fee of \$50 is due annually on September 1.

### Credits & No Credits

- **Families contract for a specific weekly schedule** as completed on the *Enrollment Agreement* Form. Payment for this contracted schedule is required every week year-round whether or not your child attends; this enables us to pay teachers a stable salary every week all year. No credits are given for sick or vacation days, holidays, staff training closure or closure due to inclement weather, infectious disease (except as noted below), or weather-related or environmental issues.
- **Weather-related or Environmental Disaster or Pandemic** – in the event of a serious crisis during which we are prohibited from operating, families shall continue to pay. Payment of your Tuition allows us to retain staff, pay operating expenses, and hold open your child’s spot for when we are safely able to reopen.
- **Credit may be given for Serious Illness/Injury** – In the unfortunate event of extenuating circumstances such as your child is hospitalized, absent due to a serious contagious disease or serious illness or injury, credit may be issued. A written doctor’s note is required to receive a credit.

## ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL

### Absence

If your child is going to be absent or arrive after 9AM, please call us at (785)783-2535. We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you. If your child is not in care by 11 am then they can not arrive without a doctor’s note. This helps us plan adequately with staffing for the day.

### Vacation

While we recognize the value of family vacations, the center does not provide credit for vacation days.

### Withdrawal

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A written notice, 2 weeks in advance, is required by the center when a child is being withdrawn. Failure to notify will result in you being charged for 2 weeks of care.

### **Transfer of Records**

Whether transitioning to the next program setting or to a new classroom, your child's records will be transferred internally.

If your child is transitioning to a new school, a written request from you with instructions to where the records should be sent is required.

### **Closing Due to Extreme Weather**

The **SENT Prep Academy** inclement weather policy is intended to accommodate the needs and safety of both families and employees. The Center Director will notify parents of closures. The executive director may also make a decision about closing based on other factors.

Any announcements pertaining to winter weather will be made by 5:30 am on the day affected and notices will be posted on Facebook and in ProCare.

If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child's early pick-up is your responsibility to arrange.

## **DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP**

### **General Procedure**

We open at 7:00 AM. Please do not drop-off your child prior to the opening. Parents/legal guardians/adult family members are expected to accompany their children and sign them in.

We close at 6:00 PM. Please allow enough time to arrive, sign your child out, and leave by closing time.

### **Cell Phone Usage**

The times you spend in the center dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of time we have to communicate with you about your child. In order to make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child and other children, we ask that you NOT use your cell phone at any time while visiting the center.

### **Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up**

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

In order to safeguard your child we will need copies of any court-ordered custody agreements. Without a custody agreement, we are not able to prevent the release of your child to a parent.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible, but if, after 6:00 PM, we

have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

### **Right to Refuse Child Release**

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

## **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

### **What to Bring**

- **Infants:** enough clean bottles for a day's use, at least 6 diapers per day, and at least 2 changes of clothes per day. All bottles must be labeled and dated.
- **Toddlers:** enough clean bottles for a day's use (if applicable), six diapers and at least two changes of clothes per day. All bottles must be labeled and dated.
- **Older Toddlers:** at least two changes of clothes or more per day if going through the toilet training program.
- **Preschoolers:** at least one change of clothes, socks and shoes.
- **Pre-K:** at least one change of clothes, socks and shoes.

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name (i.e., clothes, bottles, diapers, pacifiers, crib sheet, blanket, etc.) to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items. Sheets and soiled clothing will be sent home on an as-needed basis for laundering and return to the center.

### **Cubbies**

Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a "cubby." Cubbies are labeled with your child's name. Please check your child's cubby on a daily basis for items that need to be taken home.

### **Lost & Found**

You can look for lost items and bring found items to the Lost-and-found Box located at the . Please note that we are not responsible for lost personal property.

### **Toys from Home**

We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the center unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity.

## **NUTRITION**

### **Foods Brought from Home**

We request that you do not bring food from home into our center.

### **Food Prepared for or at the Center**

Food prepared for or at the center will be properly planned, prepared and portioned according to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/>) and the state requirements for food service.

### **Food Allergies**

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing so that we can make appropriate substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually.

Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician.

### **Meal Time**

At meal time the dining table is set with disposable plates and flatware, and the food is placed in small bowls from which the children can help themselves. Everyone sits at the same table. Children are encouraged to serve themselves from food passed around each table. Good table manners are modeled and encouraged. Weekly menus are posted for viewing by parents/caregivers.

A caregiver who is trained in first-aid for choking is present at all meals.

### **Infant Feedings**

Infant feedings follow these procedures:

- Infants will be held for bottle-feeding until able to hold his or her own bottle. Bottles will never be propped.
- Infants are fed "on cue" to the extent possible (at least every 4 hours and usually not more than hourly) and by a consistent caregiver/teacher.
- Breastfeeding is supported by providing a place for nursing mothers to feed their babies. Expressed breast milk may be brought from home if frozen or kept cold during transit. All breast milk and formula shall be returned to the child's home or discarded at the end of each day. Previously frozen, thawed breast milk must be used within 24 hours. Bottles must be clearly labeled with the child's name and the date the milk was expressed. Frozen breast milk must be dated and may be kept in the freezer for up to days.
- Breast milk and formula brought from home must be dated and labeled with the child's name.
- Labels on all milk/formula containers should be resistant to loss of the name and date/time when washing and handling.
- Solid foods will only be introduced after a consultation with the child's family.

### **Children 24 Months and Older**

- No child shall go more than 4 hours without a meal or snack being provided.
- Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods.
- Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children less than 4 years of age are not permitted. These foods include: hot dogs, whole grapes, peanuts, popcorn, thickly spread peanut butter and hard candy.

## HEALTH

### *Immunizations*

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org). Every , we check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule. Our state regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons are followed. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

All caregivers, teachers, and staff are required to be current with all immunizations routinely recommended for adults by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

### *Physicals*

Routine physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org). A copy of your child's physical should be received before but must be received no later than days after your child begins the program. Families are responsible for assuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is given to the program.

### *Illness*

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children; you may not bring a sick child to the center. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.
- Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide.
- Illness that poses a risk of spread of harmful diseases to others.
- Fever (100°F or higher under the arm, 101°F or higher in the mouth, 102°F or higher in the ear) accompanied by other symptoms.
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting – green or bloody, and/or more than 2 times during the previous 24 hours.
- Mouth sores caused by drooling.
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough), until 5 days of antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.
- Tuberculosis, until a health professional indicates the child is not infectious.

- Rubella, until 6 days after the rash appears.
- Mumps, until 5 days after onset of parotid gland swelling.
- Measles, until 4 days after onset of rash.
- Has a physician or other health professionals written order that child be separated from other children.

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
  - The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and;
  - The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.

### Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us a letter detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments and care. A list of the children's allergies will be posted in the main area and kitchen. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

### Medications

All medications should be handed to a staff member with specific written instructions for administration. Medications should never be left in the child's cubby or with the child to administer on their own. Our staff will ensure that the medication is recorded along with the directions and proceed to dispense the medication as directed.

- **Prescription medications** require a note signed by the family or a written order from the child's physician. The label on the medication meets this requirement. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. All medications must be in the original container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles). Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication. All medications will be kept in a locked cabinet, and refrigerated medications will be kept in the office refrigerator. **Medication will only be administered by the Director or Facility Lead and any staff who are approved by management and have taken medication administration training.**
- **Non-prescription medications** require written permission and instructions signed by the child's primary care physician. The written permission must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and all medications must be in the original container. Non-prescription medication should not be administered for more than a 3-day period unless a written order by the physician is received.

- **Non-prescription topical ointments** (e.g., diaper cream or teething gel), sunscreen and insect repellent require a note signed by the guardian, specifying frequency and dosage to be administered as well as the length of time the authorization is valid which cannot exceed 12 months.

### **Communicable Diseases**

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We will take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments.

Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

- Bacterial Meningitis
- Botulism
- Chicken Pox
- COVID-19
- Diphtheria
- Haemophilus Influenza (invasive)
- Measles (including suspect)
- Meningococcal Infection (invasive)
- Poliomyelitis (including suspect)
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)
- Tetanus (including suspect)
- H1N1 Virus
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness
- Tuberculosis

## **SAFETY**

### **Clothing**

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including: painting, outdoor play, sand, water, and other sensory activities. Our playground is used as an extension of the center, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment that could lead to choking or other serious harm. All drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed as a precaution.

Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for center play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities.

### **Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play**

Outdoor play will not occur if the outside temperature is greater than 90 °F or less than 30 °F degrees.

### **Communal Water-Play**

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Communal, unsupervised water play is prohibited. Supervised children are permitted to engage in water-play. Precautions are taken to ensure that communal water-play does not spread communicable infectious disease.

### ***Injuries***

Safety is a major concern in child care and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we will try to contact you or an emergency contact.

### ***Biting***

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting.

Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

### ***Respectful Behavior***

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.



### **Smoking**

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor center environment and vehicles used by the center are non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.

### **Prohibited Substances**

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

### **Dangerous Weapons**

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

### **Child Custody**

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

### **Suspected Child Abuse**

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

## **EMERGENCIES**

### **Lost or Missing Child**

In the unlikely even that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within minutes, the family and the police will be notified.

### **Fire Safety**

Our center is fully equipped with fire extinguishers and a sprinkler system. Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children and staff on a monthly basis.

### **Emergency Transportation**

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

## **CENTER POLICIES**

Our center policies not included in this handbook are reviewed and updated as needed. They are available for review upon request to the center director or facility lead.

## **FAMILY ACTIVITIES**

We offer a variety of ways for families to participate in the growth and improvement of our program. We encourage families to take an active role.

**Family Events:** We have several events throughout the year that bring our entire community together. Watch for the announcements!

**Classroom Activities:** Enjoy and help your child's class. Reach out to your child's teacher for opportunities.

**Family/Parent Workshops:** Our menu of family workshops changes annually. See the monthly calendar for scheduled topics. We welcome requests for workshop topics.

## FAMILY HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center prior to enrollment.

This handbook may be updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are implemented.

Thank you for your acknowledging the policies and procedures we have established for the safety and welfare of all children in our care. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received the **SENT Prep Academy Family Handbook**, and I have reviewed the family handbook with a member of the **SENT Prep Academy** staff. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself the Family Handbook and to ask center management for clarification of any policy, procedure or information contained in the **SENT Prep Academy Family Handbook** that I do not understand.

Recipient Signature		Date
Center Staff Signature		Date