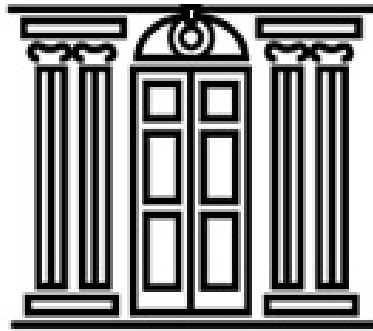


EARLY CHILDHOOD HANDBOOK
OF
THE COLORADO SPRINGS SCHOOL

2011-2012



LAST UPDATED: JULY 10, 2011

MISSION

Through superior academics and mentoring,
The Colorado Springs School
prepares students to think independently
and to meet the needs of a dynamic world
with leadership, ingenuity,
problem-solving skills,
and personal integrity.

(Adopted by the Board of Trustees May 15, 2006.)

The Colorado Springs School
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Colorado Springs, CO 80906
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Welcome to the Early Childhood Program!

This handbook is designed for parents, teachers and children as a general outline of PreKindergarten procedures and expectations. We hope it will be helpful in acquainting you with those procedures which are most important to the functioning of the Early Childhood Program.

Our expectations are the same as Children's School, and they are based on two important beliefs: one must act with full consideration of others, both students and teachers; and all members of this school community should take care of their responsibilities and obligations as dependably and thoughtfully as possible.

You will notice that some of the expectations for PreKindergarten are different than Children's School. This is because we are licensed by the State of Colorado, and we are required to follow the policies and procedures set forth by the Colorado Department of Health and Human Services. Please feel free to inquire about specific questions you may have at any time.

We are excited to join with you and celebrate active, joyful learning with our youngest CSS students in a warm, safe and challenging environment.

With warmth and appreciation,

Karen Lawson

Karen Lawson
Early Childhood Director

Philosophy

The Early Childhood Program consists of a PreKindergarten class that serves children, ages three-to-five. In order to maintain a high quality program, we provide a low student-to-teacher ratio of 8:1 in PreKindergarten. Our goal is to offer a program that meets the needs of the whole child. Therefore, our curriculum is designed to challenge and strengthen the social/emotional, physical, language, and cognitive skills of each student.

Our safe, nurturing environment, coupled with a balance of child-initiated and teacher-directed activities, provide a setting conducive to successful learning. As active participants, young children learn best when they experience the world around them through a hands-on approach. It is our belief that children will confidently explore, take risks, and acquire problem-solving skills if given the opportunity to learn at their own pace. For this reason, individual interests and needs are incorporated into the overall lesson plan for the students.

Parents are their child's first teachers, and we form a partnership with parents to provide consistency between home and school. As professionals, we work with families to help the children develop life-long learning skills, a positive self-image and acceptance for others. This partnership fosters a sense of belonging, not only to a family, but to a community.

GENERAL POLICY INFORMATION

School Hours

PreKindergarten

Monday, Wednesday, Friday – 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon (half day)

Monday, Wednesday, Friday – 8:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. (full day)

Monday thru Friday – 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon (half day)

Monday thru Friday – 8:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. (full day)

Grades K-5

8:00 a.m.-3:15 p.m.

Children may arrive ten minutes before their classes begin; however, children who arrive earlier will be placed in Extended Care until 7:50 a.m. when they may enter their classrooms. Parents are asked to pick up their children promptly at 3:15 p.m.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures for PreK

A parent or other designated adult must park in the designated parking areas, walk their PreKindergartner to class and sign the child in. An identical procedure is necessary to sign the child out at dismissal. These forms are checked at the end of the day to ensure all children have been picked up. Fire Lanes (in front of the Early Childhood Center) must be kept available for emergency vehicles to pass through, if necessary.

Parking: Please park in designated areas only. The driveway in front of the Early Childhood Center is a no parking zone due to Fire Department Regulations. You may park in the PreK only parking lot on Hunters Lane, along Broadmoor Ave., or in the parking lot on the east side of the Children's Academic Center. Display your parking permit. Although it is tempting to park in the driveway if you arrive late, you are required to park in designated areas only.

Dress Code: Please dress your child in comfortable clothing that can get dirty. We paint, play in the sandbox and do many activities that involve messy materials. We use smocks when necessary, however, there are still times that clothing becomes soiled. It is very important that children wear appropriate shoes to school. All PreKindergarten students must wear closed shoes. No sandals, clogs, flip-flops, Crocs, or shoes that will allow sand, wood chips, or rocks to easily enter them.

Conference Request Form: In the PreK classroom, you will find a clipboard on the wall with Conference Request forms attached. If you need to speak to a teacher for more than a few minutes, we ask that you complete a request form and give it to the teacher. We will call you to discuss your question or set up a time for a meeting. There are two formal parent/teacher conferences per year. The dates for these conferences are listed on the main school calendar.

Communications: A class calendar and Early Childhood Newsletter are sent home each month, and the Children's School *Courier* (newsletter) is sent electronically monthly. Please read them carefully.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures: It is required by law that a parent or guardian come to the PreKindergarten classroom and sign the students in or out. It is imperative that a teacher sees you

and your child during this process so we can assume or relinquish responsibility for your child. Safety is a top priority for us, and we need your help in the process. PLEASE DO NOT OPEN THE DOOR AND SCOOT YOUR CHILD INTO THE ROOM. He/she may turn and follow you out of the room, and we would not know that he/she was in our care.

Snack: Throughout the Children's School, we have a "no sugar" snack policy. We want children to develop respect for themselves and the desire to keep themselves as healthy and alert as possible. Only nutritious snacks will be served. Cookies, cakes and high sugar items will be returned to parents and not served to children. PreKindergarten parents are asked to provide a healthy snack, on a rotating basis, for the children and teachers in the class, to be served in the morning. All snacks are required to be store bought. The main reasons for this requirement is having the label of ingredients so we can check for items to which children are allergic. We must also meet the daily nutritional needs of the children. Therefore, we ask that snacks include a grain and one of the following: fruit, vegetable, 100 % juice or dairy product. Full-day students will bring a nutritious individual snack to eat in the afternoon. *We ask that you please do not send peanut butter or nuts, as many of our students have severe allergies to nuts, and we cannot serve carrots, pretzels, hot dogs, popcorn, raw peas, or whole grapes.*

Snack Suggestions

Dried fruit and bagel chips
Ritz crackers, cheese and cucumber slices
Croissants and kiwi
Cheerios, milk and strawberries
Mini bread, lunch meat and apples
Yogurt and graham crackers

We will wash and cut all fruits and vegetables at school. When you are selecting fruits or vegetables, please keep in mind that we slice them and do not need one fruit per child. For example, 6 apples or 7 bananas are enough for a class.

Lunch: All students must bring a lunch from home. Children and teachers eat family style in the PreK classroom. We promote healthy eating habits and encourage children to try a variety of foods. As each family has different values concerning food and eating, we do not struggle with children over what they eat or in what order things are eaten. Since any item may be the only one that is eaten, please select healthy foods for lunches. Sending chocolate or candy is strongly discouraged.

According to the county regulations, lunches from home must provide 1/3 of the child's daily nutritional needs. The teachers are required to check each child's lunch to ensure that these needs are met.

Food Components for Children 3-5 Years of Age

Breakfast

Milk, fluid			¾ cup
Juice (full strength) or fruit or vegetable			½ cup
Bread and/or cereal			
Bread			½ slice
Cereal (cold/dry)	1/3 cup	Hot/Cooked	¼ cup

Lunch / Dinner

Milk, fluid	¾ cup
Lean Meat*	1 ½ ounce
or meat alternative (cheese, egg, beans or peas, or seeds)	
Fruit and/or Vegetable	½ cup
Bread (grain)	½ slice or ½ cup

Snack

Milk, fluid	½ cup
Lean Meat* or alternate or yogurt	½ ounce or ¼ cup
Juice (full strength) or fruit or vegetable	½ cup
Bread or Cereal	
Bread	½ slice
Cereal (cold/dry) 1/3 cup Hot/Cooked	¼ cup

*Lean Meat is beef, pork, or turkey without visible fat. Luncheon meats and frankfurters are high in fat and are not considered meat.

Rest Time: Full-day students will have a rest period after our busy morning. For rest time, parents provide a crib sheet and a small blanket, which should be stored in a pillowcase, labeled with your child's name. Due to limited storage space, we ask that only these items be sent in the pillowcase. We will send them home on Friday to be laundered. CSS provides and sanitizes a 2-inch thick mat for rest time. If your child has a small stuffed animal that he/she likes to sleep with, it may come to school, too.

How To Volunteer: On the Parent Project Board in the classroom, we post a volunteer sign-up sheet where the teachers will list volunteer opportunities. In addition to completing the posted project, parents are welcome to volunteer in the classroom, share theme or non-theme related interests, have lunch with us, or complete posted projects at home. We enjoy sharing our day with parents. We ask that volunteers begin in October. The first month of school is centered around learning routines, schedules, specialists, and classroom guidelines.

Birthdays: The Children's School will acknowledge every child's birthday during the school year. Private celebration of the birthday needs to happen away from school, including the distribution of invitations and thank-you notes (unless one is sent to every student). On your child's birthday, he/she is responsible for snack. Snack must follow the regular snack policy. We will sing Happy Birthday before snack as an acknowledgment. One way you might choose to celebrate or recognize your child's birthday is the long-running CSS tradition of a book donation to the classroom. A bookplate with your child's name and date is placed in the book to show our appreciation.

PreKindergarten Field Trip Safety & Procedures:

The safety of our students is top priority on and off campus. Listed here are field trip procedures, safety requirements and information.

Procedures & Requirements:

1. All students are given a CSS T-shirt to wear over their clothing so our group is very obvious.
2. A discussion about safety is held before departure.
3. All students remain with their group-time teacher and parent volunteer during the

entire trip. We select 4-6 parent volunteers to join us on the field trip, and we maintain a maximum 8:1 ratio at all times.

4. We follow all transportation procedures outlined by the State of Colorado 7.702.69.

Safety Rules to Discuss with Children Before the Field Trip:

1. Stay with your group at all times.
2. Seat belts must be worn in the vans until a teacher says it is safe to unbuckle or a teacher unbuckles you.
3. While on the field trip, if you want to speak to an adult who you do not know, ask a teacher first.
4. Be polite to your friends and the people we are visiting.

Colorado Child Passenger Safety Law

“The law requires that children who weigh over 40 pounds **or** who are between the ages of 4 and 6 be properly restrained in a child booster seat or with a child safety belt-positioning device, unless they are 55 inches tall.”

Due to this law, we must require that every student have at least a booster seat for the field trip. On the day of the field trip, the vans will be parked outside of the Early Childhood Center. We ask that all parents install the carseats so they are secure and properly adjusted. Closer to the event, we will send home a list letting you know on which van to place your child’s carseat.

Carseat Question for Field Trips:

In order to reserve the proper number of vans for our field trip, we need to know what type of carseat your child uses. Each van has 8 shoulder straps and 5 lap belts. Typically, we would take 2 vans, but if every child’s carseat is the type that needs a shoulder strap, we need to reserve 3 vans and budget for the extra gas. If you have a choice of carseats, it would be helpful to use the lap belt through the back type that has the 5-point harness for the field trip. Please let us know if your child’s carseat type changes so we can make the necessary van arrangements.

Commonly asked questions:

When the school calendar says noon dismissal, does PreK end at 12:00? Yes, our day will end at noon.

If there is a two-hour snow delay, can my child come to school? Yes, all PreK students may arrive at 9:50 a.m. when there is a snow delay. Dismissal times will remain the same at 12:00 noon or 3:15 p.m.

The following is a Statement of Policies and Procedures required by the State of Colorado:

7.702.4 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES – A written statement of the center’s policies and procedures must be made available to parents and guardians and to staff and must include the following:

A. The center’s purpose and its philosophy.

This information can be found in this handbook.

B. The ages of the children accepted.

We accept children ages three, four, and five. As a general rule, children must be three years old by September 15th.

C. Services offered for special needs children in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The parent of a child with diagnosed special needs will be required to complete a “Special Care Plan” in conjunction with the child’s physician and a designated staff member. No child will be excluded because of disability or special needs unless the program is unable to comply with the recommendations of the child’s “Special Care Plan.”

We will provide reasonable accommodations for a child diagnosed with a disability who has special needs, and integrate the child with other children in the class.

D. The hours the center is open, specific hours during which special programs are offered, holidays when the center is closed.

This information can be found in this handbook, the CSS calendar and website.

E. The policy regarding inclement and excessively hot weather.

Teachers will make sure the children are appropriately dressed for the weather. Extra gloves, hats and jackets are available. If it is extremely cold, gross motor activities can be conducted in the classroom. The Children’s School Handbook provides information for snow day/delay procedures.

F. The procedure concerning admission and registration of children.

1. The parents request a pre-admission interview and complete an application for admission. The family is given a tour of the campus and spends time observing classroom activities.

2. A date is set for screening the child and meeting with the parents.

3. After a decision is made to admit the child, the appropriate information is sent to the family for completion.

This information can also be found on the CSS website and in the Admissions Packet.

No child will be excluded because of disability or special needs unless the program is unable to comply with the recommendations of the child’s “Special Care Plan.”

G. An itemized fee schedule.

This information can be found on the CSS website and in the Enrollment Packet.

H. The procedure for identifying where children are at all times.

All children are under the direct supervision of a responsible adult at all times.

Teachers count the children in the group every time a transition is made and frequently during the day.

I. The policy on discipline.

We provide a positive environment, supervision and developmental appropriateness of activities provided, and we model appropriate behaviors for children. We use only positive guidance, redirection and the setting of clear-cut limits that foster the child's own ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, respect property and assume personal responsibility, as well as responsibility for others. Discipline involves teaching character and self-control. We guide children to develop self-control and orderly conduct in relationship to peers and adults. Aggressive physical behavior toward teachers or children is unacceptable. We will intervene immediately when a child becomes physically aggressive to protect all of the children and encourage more acceptable behavior. We show children positive alternatives and strategies, and we encourage proper behavior.

Further information can be found in the Children's School Handbook.

J. The procedure, including notification of parents or guardians, for handling children's illnesses, accidents and injuries.

Information regarding children's illness can be found in the Children's School Handbook. In addition, if a PreK child is ill, the school nurse may be called to come over and make an assessment. The child can be isolated in the office until the parents arrive, if necessary. Children are not taken to the nurse's office and left because of their age and insecurity in new places. We make the child as comfortable as possible until the parent arrives.

K. Procedures for responding to emergencies, such as lost children, tornadoes and fires.

Fire drills are held monthly, and an evacuation plan is posted in the classroom. An emergency bag that contains student emergency information accompanies the class. A tornado protection plan is posted in the Early Childhood Center. A lock-down drill is held once a year.

It is our strict policy that no child is ever left alone. Teachers monitor children carefully. If a child does become lost, administrators, faculty, our facilities manager, and his team will conduct a campus wide search.

L. The procedure for transporting children.

The PreKindergarten class can take field trips using the CSS vans. Parents are required to sign a blanket permission form, which is found in the Enrollment Packet. Before the field trip, we take the following steps:

1. Notify parents of the date, time and location (address) and complete an itinerary with this information to leave with the Children's School secretary.

2. Collect field trip backpack with student emergency information.

3. Conduct a pre-trip safety inspection of the CSS vans.

4. Leave a list of students, teachers and parents who are on the field trip with the Children's School secretary.

M. The written policy and procedure governing field trips, television and video viewing, and special activities, including the staff's responsibility for the supervision of children.

Information regarding field trips is found in the Admission Packet and in this handbook under General Information.

While on a field trip, teachers supervise children at all times.

Our policy on television and video viewing follows NAEYC Standards. The use of passive media, such as television, films and videos, is limited to developmentally appropriate programming that has been previewed by adults prior to use; another option for activity is always available; no child is required to view the program; teachers discuss what is viewed with the children to develop critical viewing skills. These passive media are used as infrequent events.

N. The policy on children's safety related to riding in a vehicle, seating, supervision, and emergency procedures on the road.

This information is found in this handbook.

O. The procedure for releasing children from the center only to persons for whom the center has written authorization.

This information is found in the Children's School Handbook and in the Enrollment Packet.

P. The procedures followed when a child is picked up from the center after the center is closed or not picked up at all, and to ensure that all children are picked up before the teachers leave for the day.

If a child has not been picked up by 3:30 p.m., and a parent has not called, a teacher will remain with the child while attempting to contact parents/guardians at all available numbers. Other persons authorized to pick up the child will also be called, and the Head of Children's School will be notified.

Teachers check the sign-in/out sheet each day before leaving to make sure all children have been picked up by the appropriate person. The classroom and playground are checked to be sure no children remain after school is dismissed.

Further information regarding late fees is found in the Children's School Handbook.

Q. The procedure for caring for children who arrive late to the center and their class/group is away from the center on a field trip or excursion.

Parents are responsible for their children until the class returns to school.

R. The procedure for storing and administering children's medicines and delegation of medication administration in compliance with Section 12-38-132, C.R.S., of the "Nurse Practice Act."

This information is found in the Children's School Handbook.

S. The procedure concerning children's personal belongings and money.

CSS is not responsible for personal belongings. Children are asked to leave toys and items of value at home. Each child has an assigned cubby in the classroom where items that are needed on a daily basis can be stored.

T. The policy concerning meals and snacks.

This information is found in the Children's School Handbook and this handbook.

U. The policy on diapering and toilet training

1. Children must be fully toilet trained in order to attend The Colorado Springs School Early Childhood Program.

2. *Children must wear underwear; diapers or pull-ups are not allowed.*
3. *All children must be able to communicate to a teacher his/her need to go to the bathroom.*
4. *All children must be able to use toileting facilities independently.*

V. The policy regarding visitors.

All unaccompanied visitors to the Children's School must check in at the reception desk in the Trianon and record their name, date, and time they arrived and departed in our Guest Book. Personal identification must be presented if requested. Visitors will receive a badge for identification on campus. In addition, a teacher will sign in visitors to the PreK classroom to the Early Childhood Center.

W. The policy on parent and teacher conferences to inform the parents or guardians of the child's behavior, progress, and social and physical needs.

There are two formal parent/teacher conferences per year. The dates for these conferences are listed on the main CSS calendar. In addition, if you need to speak to a teacher about your child, we ask that you complete a Conference Request form, located on the Parent Information Board in the classroom, and give it to a teacher. We strive to have ongoing two-way communication regarding your child's progress and behavior through face-to-face conversations, email and phone calls.

X. The procedure for filing a complaint about child care.

The Early Childhood Program is licensed by the Colorado Department of Human Services. We are obligated to meet the minimum requirements set forth by the state of Colorado. If you have any questions about the licensing requirements, please see Karen Lawson.

To report a complaint regarding non-compliance with a licensing regulation, contact:

Colorado Department of Human Services

Child-Care Licensing

1575 Sherman Street

Denver, CO 80203

303-866-5948 or 1-800-799-5776

or

El Paso County Department of Social Services

150 North Spruce

Colorado Springs, CO 80901

719-444-5700

Y. The policy regarding the reporting of child abuse.

1. We require each staff member of the facility to read and sign a statement clearly defining child abuse and neglect pursuant to state law and outlining the staff member's personal responsibility to report all incidents of child abuse or neglect according to state law.

2. Any staff member in a child care facility who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect or who has observed the child being subjected to circumstances or conditions that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect must immediately report, or cause a report to be made, of such fact to the county department of social services or local law enforcement agency.

3. If a teacher suspects abuse or neglect, the Director and Head of Children's School must be informed immediately.

Z. The policy regarding notification when child care service is withdrawn and when parents or guardians withdraw their children from the center.

This information is found in The Colorado Springs School Enrollment Contract.

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