

St. Joseph  
Early  
Childhood  
Program  
Handbook

2021-2022

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# **Introduction to St. Joseph Early Childhood Program**

## **Organization**

The St. Joseph Early Childhood Program is a nonprofit organization that is governed by the school board of education in cooperation with the school principal and the preschool director. The Early Childhood Program consists of separate preschool and day care programs.

## **Goal**

The goal of the St. Joseph Early Childhood Program is to provide an educational experience within a Christian atmosphere that will contribute to spiritual, emotional, intellectual, physical and social development.

## **Objectives**

We attain our goal by providing the students with the following opportunities to:

- interact and play within a program of learning activities
- use and explore materials freely and constructively
- enhance creativity, independence and skill development
- develop fine and large motor skills
- develop language and social skills through self expression in music, art, literature and by example
- introduce basic and developmentally appropriate religious concepts

## **Curriculum**

### **Religion**

We focus on the New Testament Bible stories in the Five Day Classroom. We focus on the Old Testament Bible stories in the Three and Two Day Classrooms. The church calendar and seasons are integrated throughout the year.

### **Social/Emotional**

Your child will feel safe within the classroom to explore and share ideas. Also, your child will learn to respect self, the environment, and others through Positive Behavioral and Intervention and Supports. (PBIS). PBIS is explained under discipline.

### **Intellectual**

Our program offers early reading experiences through a variety of materials (songs, finger plays, books, poems, and recognizing the alphabet letters). Also, we offer early writing experiences by providing writing tools and using an art center.

### **Physical**

We focus on fine and large motor development, as well as, being healthy and safe with our bodies.

## License

The State of Iowa and the Department of Human Services license the St. Joseph Early Childhood Program. The requirements regarding space, equipment, staff, professional and educational development, safety and health policies have been met. The State of Iowa and the Marion Fire Department do inspection of St. Joseph Catholic School annually.

As part of our certification requirements, all staff is certified in CPR and First Aid. Staff participates in continuing education focused on the whole child throughout the year.

## Fees

### **Registration Fee**

At the time of registration a \$75.00 fee is required.

### **Preschool Yearly Tuition**

Three Day Class:	\$2,069
Two Day Class:	\$1,382
Five Day AM Class:	\$2,958
Five Day PM Class:	\$2,687

Tuition can be paid in any of the following payment plans:

- Payment in full (September)
- Two semester payments (September and January)
- Four equal payments (September, November, January, April)
- Nine equal payments (September –May)
- Ten equal payments (September- June)
- Twelve equal payments (September-August)

### **Preschool Milk Fee**

Children are required to have a carton of milk offered to them during snack time. This milk is purchased from the school and will be the following amounts:

Two Day Class: \$18.00 for the year  
Three Day Class: \$27.00 for the year  
Five Day Class: \$45.00 for the year

### **Day Care Fees:**

Hourly Rate: \$4.40\*

\*Milk and snack are included in the hourly daycare rate.

\*\*Late Fee: Late pick-up fees will be assessed at \$5.00 per minute past 6:00pm.

## **Admission Policy**

The Archdiocesan educational system maintains a policy of open enrollment in all educational programs. Following an application, parents/guardians may be interviewed. Responses to these questions may be used to determine if it is in the best interest of the student to be granted or denied enrollment. (Policy 5111)

### **Equal Opportunity/Multicultural Assurances**

St. Joseph Early Childhood Program is an equal opportunity educational institution. It does not discriminate on the basis of color, race, ethnic origin, or religion. No person at St. Joseph Early Childhood Program shall on the grounds of race, color, gender, national origin or physical disability be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the program. No one shall be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity sponsored by this program.

### **HIV/AIDS**

The decision to allow a child with HIV/AIDS to attend the program will be considered separately and individually to the child and the setting. A team of the child's parents, school administration, the child's doctor, a public health official, and the infection control officer will make the decision. If a child with HIV/AIDS has a change in clinical condition, the attending physician will sign a release for attendance at the program. If questions arise, an infection control officer will be contacted.

## **Dismissal/Withdrawal Policy**

### **Dismissal**

Though we as a staff at St. Joseph Early Childhood Program will go to great lengths to assure your child has a wonderful and positive experience, there are those rare occasions when a child is not emotionally ready for the separation or independence of preschool and/or daycare. We will always handle these situations with great care and sensitivity for the child and parent in coming to a conclusion that will best suit your child's needs. A conference will be scheduled with the director and/or principal. They will work closely with you to see if the problems can be resolved. If the child's behavior continues, we reserve the right to ask you to withdraw the child from our program. A child will not be allowed to maintain attendance if there are continual incidences of doing harm to other children or to the teachers in the program. A child will not be allowed to continue with our program if the proper registration requirements or payment agreement has not been met.

### **Conditions of Withdrawal**

If you find it necessary to withdraw your child from our program for any reason, we ask that you give us two week's notice in writing. When such notice is given, we can offer your child's space to a child on the waiting list.

# **Enrollment Requirements**

## **Preschool Age Requirements**

Three and Two Day Preschool Program – Students must be at least three years old by September 15<sup>th</sup> of the year of entry

Five Day Preschool Program – Students must be at least four years old by September 15<sup>th</sup> of the year of entry

Day Care Program – Students must be at least three years old. Children cannot be older than six years of age. Children attending Kindergarten are not eligible for this program.

## **Records**

To enroll a child, the following must be completed prior to admission:

1. Current (within past 12 months) physical exam form completed and signed by health care provider.
2. Iowa Immunization Card
3. Registration Form
4. Preschool/Daycare Intake Form

\*Required Immunizations:

Diphtheria/Tetanus/Pertussis (DTaP)—at least 4 doses

Polio—3 doses

*Haemophilus influenzae* type B (Hib)—3 doses with the final dose in the series  $\geq$  12 months of age; or 1 dose on or after 15 months

Measles/Rubella (MMR)—1 dose after 12 months of age or demonstrates a positive antibody test for measles and rubella

Varicella (VZV) (chickenpox vaccine)—1 dose after 12 months of age

## **Hours of Operation for St. Joseph Early Childhood Program**

### **Day Care:**

Monday through Friday: 6:30 am – 6:00 pm

### **Preschool:**

Five Day AM Preschool Class: Monday through Friday: 8:05 -11:20 am

Five Day PM Preschool Class: Monday through Friday: 12:15 – 3:00 pm

Three Day Preschool Class: Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 8:05-11:20 am

Two Day Preschool Class: Tuesday, Thursday; 8:05-11:20 am

## **Arrival/Departure of St. Joseph Early Childhood Program**

### **Day Care Arrival and Pick-up:**

Please park outside the daycare entrance in the school/church parking lot. Parents must escort children in and out of the building for arrival and pick-up. Please sign in and out when dropping off or picking up your child.

### **Preschool Arrival and Pick-up:**

Please park on 14<sup>th</sup> street near the playground or in the school/church parking lot. Parents must escort their children in and out of the building for arrival and pick-up. Parents and children can enter the school through the playground door by the preschool classrooms.

Preschool begins at 8:05 AM (12:15 PM). Parents are responsible for bringing their child to the Preschool Door. There, the teacher(s) will greet each child and adult. This is a busy time, so please try to help us by making eye contact with the teachers and saying good-bye before leaving. Do not leave your child unattended outside the Preschool Door or in the hallway outside the Preschool Room. Children should arrive at school no earlier than 10 minutes before class begins—7:55 AM (PM- arrive at 12:05). If you have notes that need to be given to the teacher, please place them in your child's folder.

The children will be dismissed at 11:20 AM (3:00 PM). Please pick up your child by the playground doors. All children are required to stay with the teacher until the designated person arrives to pick them up. Only persons listed on the permission form in the registration packet will

be allowed to pick up your child. All car-pooling arrangements and changes must be written in an email or note to the teacher. You may leave the note in your child's folder.

## **Field Trips**

Field trips may be a part of the preschool curriculum and are offered at the center. Transportation is provided via bus. Due to Archdiocesan policy, only children enrolled in the preschool class taking the field trip will participate in the field trip. A first-aid kit, cell phone and your child's emergency information are taken on all trips.

### **Liturgies/Prayer Services**

We will be going to school liturgies and prayer services regularly. We will have middle school buddies sit with us.

## **Dress/Clothing**

There is no dress code required for the St. Joseph Early Childhood Program. We ask that you dress your child in comfortable clothing so that he/she will feel free to participate in all activities. We will be playing outside often as the weather permits (20 degrees F – 90 degrees F). Please send your child in weather appropriate clothing. Tennis/Athletic shoes are required.

If an accident occurs and the child needs a change of clothes, please remember to send new clothes as soon as possible.



# Discipline

St. Joseph Early Childhood Program uses a positive approach to discipline. We begin by establishing clear behavioral expectations based on age appropriateness and designed to ensure the safety of all children in the classroom, as well as respect for other students throughout the building.

To encourage this, the staff will:

- Treat all children with respect
- Model polite behavior among others
- Carefully explain to children what they could have said or done when they are hurtful
- Avoid using critical language

*Rules of the classroom:*

1. *Treat others how you would like to be treated*
2. *Wait your turn patiently, ask to borrow/use something*
3. *Use indoor voices*
4. *Clean up materials*
5. *Keep hands and feet safe at all times*

The consequences of not following the rules are:

- The correct behavior will be explained and modeled by the teachers
- Limit the activity for the child, and have the child do it at another time
- Remove child from group, child rejoins when ready
- Structured thinking time, time away from group until behavior is controlled

Positive Behavioral and Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

PBIS stands for Positive Behavioral and Interventions and Supports. PBIS helps to improve student academic and behavior outcomes and ensure all students have access to the most effective and accurately implemented instructional and behavioral practices and interventions possible. PBIS provides an operational framework for achieving these outcomes.

Our overall theme for St. Joseph Catholic School is Live the Gospel. Next, we break it down into three main categories, and they are: self, environment, and others. We follow guidelines to take care of each category and we introduce and discuss them in the classroom.

Also, as part of the 'positive', the children receive awards and cheers for following the procedures of PBIS.

## Biting Policy

For safety and health concerns, we take biting seriously. When it happens, it's very scary, frustrating, and stressful for children, parents, and teachers. It is also not something to blame on children, parents, or teachers, and there are no quick and easy solutions to it. Children bite for a variety of reasons: simple sensory exploration, panic, crowding, seeking to be noticed, or intense desire for a toy. Repeated biting becomes a pattern of learned behavior that is often hard to extinguish because it does achieve results: the desired toy, excitement, and attention. Knowing that the effect of their biting will hurt another person is not yet a part of a child of this ages' mindset, so the "cause-effect" relationship is not internalized. The teacher will plan activities and supervise carefully in order for biting not to happen. There are times, however, when a teacher cannot be within immediate reach to prevent a bite. We try to make every effort to extinguish the behavior quickly and to balance our commitment to the family of the biting child to that of other families.

When a child is bitten:

For the biter:

1. The biter is immediately removed with no emotion, using words such as "biting is not okay – it hurts." Avoid any immediate response that reinforces the biting or calls attention to the biter.
2. The caring attention is focused on the victim.
3. The biter is not allowed to return to the play and is talked to on a level that the child can understand. "I can see that you want that truck, but I can't let you hurt him. We don't put our teeth on people."
4. Redirect the child to other play.
5. Write an accident report and notify the parents of the biter.

For the victim:

1. Separate the victim from the biter.
2. Comfort the child.
3. Administer first aid.
4. Write an accident report and notify parents of the victim (in writing).

## Health

### **Absences/Sickness**

If your child will not be attending class for any reason, we ask that you inform us as much in advance as possible. No refunds or credit will be given for absences. In the event of a long-term absence due to illness, possible adjustments to your tuition can be discussed with the director and principal.

### **If your child has an illness listed below, we ask that they do not attend preschool.**

**Cold** – If in respiratory distress or if the child has a temperature elevation the child should not be brought to the school.

**Diarrhea or Vomiting** – If there is any diarrhea or vomiting, the child may not be brought to school. If the child vomits at the school, he/she will be sent home. The child may return to the school when he/she has been free from diarrhea or vomiting for 24 hours.

**Eye Infection** – If your child has eyes that are draining or matting, the child shall not be brought to the school. The child may return after taking antibiotic ointment for 24 hours or eyes have shown marked improvements.

**Ear Infection** – If pungent drainage, the child should not be at school. (Exceptions if the child has tubes or has been on antibiotic for 24 hours) A child with a diagnosed ear infection with no drainage must be on medication or a release must be obtained from a physician stating that the child is free of communicable disease.

**Sore Throat** – A child with a sore throat may be restricted from the school.

**Fever** – A parent will be called when a child has a temperature and exhibits any of the above conditions. A child with a temperature of 100 degrees F or higher will be sent home immediately. The child may return when they are fever free for 24 hours.

\*\*Should your child become sick at school, your child will be isolated from the group in a quiet supervised area while you are notified to pick up the child. The parent or authorized adult will be expected to pick up the child from the school within one hour.

### **Medications**

Dispensing of prescription drugs will be administered by a designated party with training and with the written consent of parent(s). Prescription Drugs must be provided to the school in the original container and be accompanied by a physician's signed, dated authorization including the name of the medication, and dosage/frequency to be given. A record of each dose of medication administered will be documented in the pupil's health record. Dispensing of non-prescription drugs may occur, provided the parents have signed and dated an authorization identifying medication, dosage, and time interval to be administered.

# Safety

## **Mandatory Reporting**

As outlined in the Iowa Code, all providers will report any suspected cases of sexual abuse, physical abuse, or neglect. Iowa law states that the preschool and daycare personnel may take, at the public expense, photographs of the injured area. Any person participating in the making of or in the investigation of a report shall have immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be imposed.

## **Fire and Tornado Drills**

Emergency plans for fire and tornado are posted at the preschool and daycare exits. Fire and tornado drills are practiced monthly so that the children become familiar with the procedures.

## **Violent Intruder Drills**

Violent intruder drills will take place throughout the school year. Students will be educated and prepared before these occur. Students will be taught the appropriate response to different situations and scenarios.

## **Accident/Emergencies**

When medical and/or dental accidents result in an injury to a child, a staff person who observed the accident shall include a general description of the incident and of the action taken and will prepare a written accident report. If there is a serious medical and/or dental injury, appropriate action, such as contacting parents and/or 911, will be taken.

## **Emergency Closings/Inclement Weather**

In the event of a school closing due to inclement weather, the preschool will follow the St. Joseph School closings. Please listen to the area T.V. stations for announcements. Also, parents may sign up for a text message letting them know of delays/cancellations. If there is a school delay in the morning, there will not be preschool for the day. Daycare will be held at regular times unless the weather is extreme. If daycare is to be cancelled or postponed it will be announced as stated above.

## **Lead in Drinking Water**

In 1991, all schools of the Archdiocese were tested for lead in the drinking water. The test results indicated that levels were below the established safety levels. Based on these results and the rules of the Iowa Department of Public Health no additional testing for lead needs to be done at this time.

## **Asbestos**

Federal law regulations and Archdiocesan Board of Education policy 7113, requires us to inform you that there is asbestos in the building. A certified asbestos inspector has inspected the building and all the asbestos found has been sealed and encapsulated.

## **Chemicals**

The chemical Right to Know Law requires that all schools in the nation prepare a list of chemicals that are known to be present in the building and to maintain safety data sheets (MSDS) on them. The law further states that all chemicals are to be appropriately labeled, storage areas are to be posted for the hazardous chemicals and employees that work with the chemicals are trained in the safe handling of these chemicals. The school is also to acquaint the local fire department with the

location of hazardous chemicals in the school. If you want to know what chemicals are used in the building, and where they are stored, please contact the principal.

## **Communication**

Communication between school and home is important to us. We want you to know how your child is progressing during their school experience. We will report information to you through newsletters, emails, classroom visits, and conferences. The school website is also a good source of information. We also encourage you to contact us with any questions or concerns.

### **Newsletters**

Newsletters will be sent home by e-mail every Friday. Please let me know if you need a paper copy. Information will include: projects we have completed, letters we have studied, books we have read, homework assignments, upcoming events, suggestions to use with your child, and any other pertinent information.

### **Preschool Progress Reports**

Throughout the school year, we evaluate student development many times to map the student's progress. We will report these results to you at the scheduled school conference dates.

### **Preschool Conferences**

Preschool conferences will be held in the fall and in the spring. If you would like to meet with the teacher at another time, please contact the teacher.

### **Parental Participation**

*Unlimited access.* Parents shall be afforded unlimited access to their children and to the provider caring for their children during the preschool and daycare's hours of operation or whenever their children are in the care of a provider, unless parental contact is prohibited by court order. The provider shall inform parents of this policy in writing at the time the child is admitted to the center.

### **Supervision and Access Policy**

"Unrestricted access," means that a person has contact with a child alone or are directly responsible for childcare. Therefore, only staff members, substitutes, or volunteers that have had a background check will be allowed to have "unrestricted access".

A person(s) that have not been cleared for involvement with children will be supervised and monitored while children are present. Supervision will require one or more staff members to remain with the person at all times and monitoring will entail watching what the person is doing and controlling their access to the area where the children are present. The director or assistant director will be responsible for the supervising and monitoring unless another staff member is requested by the director or principal to fulfill this responsibility. If there is a conflict of interest the director or principal will fulfill this responsibility.

### **Visiting**

Parents are welcomed and encouraged to visit. Please contact the director or teacher to arrange a time. All visitors must use the front school doors and sign in at the office. A visitor must wear a visitor's badge at all times.

### **Take Home Folders**

Each child will have a take home folder. This folder is for correspondence between home and school. Please store the folder in the large pocket of your child's backpack. We will check the folders every morning after the students arrive and are settled. Please also remember to check this folder each evening for pertinent information.

# Snack

## **Snack Calendar**

You will receive a calendar for each month that indicates your child's snack day(s). Snacks are an important part of your child's diet. Therefore, we ask that the snacks be as nutritious as possible. Please refer to the list below to help you decide upon a nutritious snack. Please provide the name of your snack the week prior to your child's snack day.

## **Birthdays**

Birthdays and holidays are celebrated at school. These are the only times that sugar treats are allowed. Your child's favorite snack is a good option. We will assign your child's snack day as close to their actual birthday as possible for us to help them celebrate. If your child's birthday falls on a summer month, we will choose a day at the end of the year to celebrate their birthday and allow them to bring their special snack.

## **Snack Guide\***

The Child Care Food Program Regulations require that two of the following four food groups must be served. Milk will be served at every snack and counts as one. The other can be any of the following from this list.

1. Breads, Cereal, Grains
2. Fruit
3. Vegetables
4. Dairy/Protein – Please note that if you choose a dairy there has to be something else with it. (Example: cheese and crackers, meat and cheese)

Examples from each group:

### **Breads, Cereal, Grains**

Bagels, bread sticks, dry cereal  
English muffins, pretzels, tortillas  
Bread: corn, carrot, raisin, banana,  
date, or zucchini  
Dry cereal/Cereal mixtures (low sugar)  
Granola/Granola bars  
Fig bars, pita bread, popcorn

### **Dairy/Protein**

Egg wedges or slices, peanut butter  
Chicken or meats (sliced/cubed)  
Yogurt  
Ham or turkey (deli)  
Nuts and seed mixes

### **Fruit**

Fresh fruit—sliced/sectioned  
apples, bananas, mandarin oranges, oranges, melon balls, peaches, pineapple, plums,  
raisins, seedless grapes, strawberries, tangerines  
Canned fruit cups (in juice) or dried fruit (ex: apricots, bananas, pineapples)

### **Vegetables**

Fresh vegetables—sliced/sectioned  
carrots, green or red peppers, cucumbers, broccoli, cherry tomatoes, celery

**\*Reminder: Snack and milk are provided for the day care program**

# Potty Training Policy

## 1.1 Purpose

The St. Joseph Catholic School Childcare/Preschool Program is dedicated to providing a safe and developmentally appropriate environment for its children. It is essential to the health and safety standards that all children attending the Program are Potty Trained. The purpose of this policy is to clearly define the Potty Training requirements and the actions taken if a student is not Potty Trained according to this policy. St. Joseph Catholic School, sometimes referred to as SJCS, encourages all families to have open communication with school administration regarding any concerns relating to the Potty Trained status of their child(ren).

## 1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all families enrolled in the childcare/preschool program at St. Joseph Catholic School.

## 1.3 Definitions

*Potty Trained:* A child is considered Potty Trained when the following conditions are met:

1. The child is able to tell the teacher he or she needs to use the restroom.
2. The child is able to use the restroom (either urination or bowel movement) on his or her own. This includes removing appropriate clothing, sitting on the toilet, properly wiping him or herself, properly putting clothing back on, flushing the toilet and washing/drying his or her hands.
3. The child is aware of the need to use the restroom without reminders from staff (although teachers do make requests of children at various times to use the restroom, e.g. before/after meals, before breaks).
4. The child does not wear diapers or pull-ups at any time during care. He or she must wear regular undergarments.
5. The child is able to postpone going if the restroom is not readily available, e.g. if they must wait for someone who is currently using the restroom or if they are away from the classroom.
6. The child is able to awaken during nap time should they need to use the restroom.

## 1.4 Policy

It is the policy of the St. Joseph Catholic School Childcare/Preschool Program that all children in attendance be Potty Trained.

SJCS staff is aware that occasional accidents may happen and requires an appropriate change of clothing to be kept at the school.

If your child frequently has accidents while they are attending the Childcare/Preschool program, your child will not be considered Potty Trained. Parents will be notified if their child has an accident while attending the Program.

A child that does not meet the Potty Trained requirements may not be enrolled to the Child Care/Preschool Program.

If a child currently enrolled in the Childcare/Preschool Program is not able to demonstrate that they are Potty Trained, at the discretion of the Principal, he or she may not be allowed to return to the Child Care/Preschool Program until such time that Potty Trained requirements are met. Continual violation of this policy may result in the withdrawal of the child from the Childcare/Preschool Program.

I (we) have read and understand the Potty Training Policy of the St. Joseph Childcare/Preschool Program. I (we) will comply with all requirements as outlined in this Policy. I (we) understand that if at any time my enrolled child(ren) no longer meet the Potty Training requirements, my child(ren) may, at the discretion of the Principal, be withdrawn from the Program.