

Shining Stars Parent Handbook

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Shining Stars Preschool (SSP) is designed to meet the need for quality preschool programming, through inclusive education for preschool students with special needs and their typically developing peers. We provide bilingual education opportunities, early literacy intervention and social services for families in the RRPS District. Shining Stars Preschool uses the New Mexico Public Education Department Standards and Benchmarks for 3 & 4 year olds as a guide for our program.

Children who do not meet special education eligibility must be 4 years of age before September 1st. Children with special education needs are between two to five years of age. Two year olds must turn three during the school year to qualify. The children must meet New Mexico eligibility requirements for special education and must reside in the Rio Rancho Public Schools boundaries.

Children who have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) which designate speech therapy, occupational therapy, social work, and/or physical therapy will receive these therapies either in the classroom environment and or on a pull-out basis during the school day. The classroom teacher also implements strategies and techniques recommended by these therapists.

SCHOOL CALENDAR/CLASS DAYS

Preschool classes meet four half-days per week: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Children attend school either in the morning or afternoon - AM class 8:05 – 11:00 and PM class 12:20 – 3:15. Wednesdays are used for lesson planning, parent meetings, staff trainings and meetings, home visits, and individual student testing.

Shining Stars Preschool follows the RRPS school year calendar.

EARLY DISMISSAL/EMERGENCY CLOSING/WEATHER CONDITIONS

The Shining Stars Preschool follows the district's plan for inclement weather. On delayed days the morning class will not attend school and the PM class will follow the regular schedule. Please listen to your radio for any notification regarding early dismissal. A decision to close schools will be made between 5:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. If there is no announcement, parents should assume that school will be open. KOB-AM (770) and KOB-FM (93.3) are some of the radio stations that report schools closing. KOB - Channel 4, KOAT - Channel 7, and KRQE - Channel 13 are the three major TV stations that report school's closings. AM classes are cancelled on "delayed" days.

ABSENCES

For your child's safety, you MUST call to report all absences or tardies by calling 892-7735 Press 1. Please follow the instructions.

CURRICULUM

Shining Stars Preschool uses the New Mexico Performance Standards and Benchmarks as a guide. Curriculum describes how and what your child will have the opportunity to learn while at school. Young children learn by doing. They use their bodies to touch, smell, move, listen and learn about the world in which they live. They like to play; this is called "child's work." Play is

very important and tells us how well children are getting along with others. Through observation we know how and what the children are learning.

Children like to make their own choices. They need time to be involved in many different activities and with a variety of materials. They love to practice at school what adults do at home, such as making dinner, building objects, and driving cars.

Children this age learn about letters and numbers through games and real life experiences, such as cooking, building, reading/sharing stories, books and songs. In this way children learn more than memorizing; they learn about language and writing through their own experiences. All preschool classes have music and movement built into the daily routine.

All children are unique. They are special to those who love them at home and to those who care for them at school. Every child in the classroom has something special to contribute. The teachers will provide many different activities, toys and materials so each child will feel successful and challenged in learning.

FEES

There is a supply fee of \$30 and a monthly snack fee of \$10. If this presents a financial hardship, please contact your child's teacher to make arrangements. Parents must also supply diapers, gloves and wipes for their child on an as needed basis (teachers will let you know when supplies are needed).

TRANSPORTATION

Bus

Transportation is available to those children enrolled at the SSP Program. If your child rides the bus, please follow these rules to keep the bus running on schedule:

1. Have your child ready and waiting.
2. Each child must be met by an adult at the drop-off time. If no adult is present, the child will be returned to the SSP. After repeated attempts to reach the parent, the Department of Public Safety will be contacted.
3. Please no food, drinks or gum on the bus.
4. For their safety, children are to remain seated with their seat belt on or in their car seat.
5. **Please call Durham School Services (891-8966) if your child will be absent or will not be riding the bus for any other reason.**
6. If there is a change in your normal bus routine, please call the bus company and notify your child's teacher in writing.

Parent Walk-In/Pick-Up

Parents who drive their children to school are required to park in the front lot and walk their child to their class. Follow the reverse procedure for picking up your child. Parents who will be driving their child to school each day will be issued an identification badge. This is a safety measure. Staff will check to see badges. Badges must be prominently displayed on your person. You will also need this badge to enter the campus at dismissal time. Please register for your badge at the front office. **Parents who do not have a badge or are checking their child in school late or out of school early must sign in at the office. No child will be released to any adult not listed on the registration card.** Thank you for assisting us with this process. It is for

your child's safety. **PARKING IN THE FIRE LANE IS NOT PERMITTED AT ANY TIME.** If you and your child arrive after 8:10am or 12:10pm, please sign your child in at the office.

WHAT TO WEAR

Clothing: Children should be dressed in clothes that can be worn for active and sometimes messy play. We request all students bring a change of clothing to keep in the classroom. The children play outdoors every day, weather permitting. Please think about the changing New Mexico weather and dress your child ready for the day. **Put your child's name on all outer clothing (mittens, hats, boots, and coats).** If your child has toileting accidents or is not yet toilet trained, please send diapers. If your child is currently learning to use the toilet, please dress them in clothes that are easy to pull up and down.

Personal Belongings: Your child may want to bring special toys or other items from home. Only send toys when we have requested this so that your child can share on that "special" day!! Sometimes during active play at preschool, small toys are put in pockets and then forgotten about for the rest of the day. Children at this age do not "steal" toys but occasionally may bring one home. If you find a toy at your home that does not belong to your child, we would appreciate its return.

NEWSLETTERS

The principal sends out a monthly newsletter, "The Shining Stars News" with school information. Classroom teachers send out a monthly newsletter with classroom information. These newsletters may be accessed through the [Shining Stars Preschool Website](#), (if you're on the district site – www.rrps.net – mouse-over "Our Schools" at the top of the left menu, then mouse-over "RR Shining Stars Preschool", then click "School Website").

PARENT AND FAMILY PARTICIPATION

The family is the most important part of a young child's life. We believe that all parents want what is best for their child. We also believe that every family is unique, just like every child is unique. Together we can help your child succeed and celebrate those successes!

Research and many years of experience tell us that the more familiar and involved a family is with their child's program – the more the child improves. Involvement means the family members take part in program activities. Some involvement is required; however we feel that there are many levels of involvement. The level you choose will depend on your time, your interests and your energy.

Required Involvement

1. Register your child
2. Participate in beginning of school year home visit
3. Attend annual IEP's
4. Attend Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parents are always welcome at school. You are actively involved when you:

- ❖ Feed, clothe and prepare your child for school.
- ❖ Talk with teachers about activities you would like to do that relate to your child.

- ❖ Let the teacher know when important events happen that affect your child.
- ❖ Come to parent meetings or other family activities.
- ❖ Volunteer in the classroom.
- ❖ Serve on preschool committees or help on field trips.

Parents are always welcome at school.

FAMILY LITERACY CENTER

The Family Literacy Center offers a variety of materials and programs for parents and families.

Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00am- 3:00pm

- Parent Resources - Parents can check out books and find information and resources to support them in the demanding job of being a parent.
- Play to Learn Children's Corner- Children's Corner is a safe place for parents to bring babies and young children, ages 0-5, to play, explore and grow together.
- Library- Classrooms visit the library once a week for story time and to check out books. Books must be returned every week in the book bag.
- Parents are responsible for lost or damaged books, a fee will be assessed. Lost book bags will be replaced for \$1.00 each.

VISITOR GUIDELINES

1. Report to the school office to sign in as a visitor.
2. Please respect the confidentiality requirement of Rio Rancho Public Schools Preschool Program. Don't expect teachers to share information with others about your child; please don't ask confidential information about other children.
3. Observers are asked to sit in the chairs or on the floor. Children are more easily distracted by standing adults.
4. Jot down questions to ask teachers after class. Asking questions of teachers with children present can be difficult for the teacher and the children; and you cannot be assured of a good, thoughtful response.
5. When entering into children's interactions or play, follow the teacher's directions.
6. Please let the teachers handle crisis. Intervene in an emergency situation at the direction of the teacher.

PARENT CONFERENCES

There are at least two parent-teacher conferences held each year. In addition, either the parent or teacher may request a conference. Talk to your child's teacher to find a day and time that works for everyone involved.

PROBLEM SOLVING

We encourage parents to seek answers to their questions. If you have concerns or problems about the program or your child, please talk with your child's teacher or therapist. If you are still concerned or need more information, please talk with the SSP Principal, Suzanne Harper (892-7735). Problems are easier to solve when they are small, or when they first arise. If something needs to be changed, we encourage you to get an early start and talk to the right person.

HEALTH

- **Information and Immunizations**

Before your child comes to school, we must receive a copy of an up-to-date Certificate of Immunizations signed by a licensed physician, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner or nurse employed by a public health agency. You may access state immunization requirements at <http://www.health.state.nm.us/immunize/forms.html>

If a parent does not want his child to be immunized, he must complete a state form (conscientious objector form) giving the reason why the child is not immunized. This form must be obtained from the state and can be found at <http://www.vaclib.org/exempt/newmexico.htm>.

It must be notarized and resubmitted on an annual basis. Information is reported to the State Department of Health. All parents should know that there may be some children in preschool who are not immunized for health or religious reasons.

- **Allergies/Health History**

Please notify your child's teacher and the school nurse of any food or other allergies and any health risks (asthma, seizures, etc.). It is important that you let the teacher and school nurse know of any changes in your child's health. Please note that Shining Stars Preschool is a **nut free school**.

- **Medications**

For your child's safety, please do not send any over-the-counter medications (i.e. aspirin, cough drops) to school. If at all possible, it is encouraged to arrange medication to be administered at home.

Prescription Drugs: Prescription drugs will not be administered by school staff without a written request signed by the parent or guardian and the physician. This must be on file in the school office. The container of prescription medication kept in the school must be the current, original pharmacy labeled container. The labeled container must be brought to the school by a parent or other responsible adult, and delivered to the safe keeping of the health office. The parent must submit a Medication Authorization Form to the school nurse. This form requires physician and parent signatures.

- **Sick Child Policy**

Regular school attendance is important, but a sick child needs to be at home getting well. We ask that all parents follow the "GOLDEN HEALTH RULE". Place yourself in the role of other parents...would you want your child exposed? Remember, a child not feeling well is not able to benefit from the type of experience gained at preschool. If a child gets sick at school, parents will be called immediately. **Your child must be fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication before they can return to school.**

It is advised that children be kept at home if the following symptoms are present:

1. Skin rash or sores
2. Stomach ache or nausea
3. Vomiting
4. Flushed face
5. Inflamed eyes
6. Sore throat
7. Diarrhea
8. Chills
9. Earache
10. Coughing
11. Fever
12. Have been taking an antibiotic for less than 24 hours
13. Heavy, nasal discharge

Remember: Please call the attendance line (892-7735 Press 1) if your child will not be attending school.

Please be sure your telephone numbers, address and emergency contact information on file in the school are kept up to date. If there is a change, please contact the school office with the new information immediately.

SCREENING AND EVALUATION

Children entering the Preschool Program are required to complete a brief screening. Screening helps to discover a child's strengths and to determine if there are areas of concern that may need further evaluations. Through this evaluation, parents working together with qualified professionals will look at all areas of development. This process is called Child Find. It is available throughout the year at no cost to families.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special Education is a state and federally funded program to serve children with identified disabilities. Parents and qualified professionals work together to identify the child's educationally related program needs and strengths. All eligible children have a right to a free and appropriate public education.

SUPPORT STAFF IN THE CLASSROOM

In order to help children with special needs, Rio Rancho Public Schools SSP employs speech and language, occupational and physical therapists as well as a social worker. Their presence in the classroom provides a natural environment in which all the children can learn new skills in the way they use their bodies to move and the way they use language to communicate their wants and needs. Children with special needs may also be seen on a pull out basis outside of the preschool classroom. These professionals meet regularly with your child's classroom teacher to plan classroom activities. Ask your child's teacher to introduce you to the people who regularly spend time in your child's classroom.

CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT - REPORTING

New Mexico law requires that teachers and administrators report all cases of suspected child abuse to the County Department of Human Services (DHS) immediately. The school social worker or teacher's job is only to report, not to investigate. Criminal penalties can and have been applied when school staff do not follow this law by reporting suspected cases of abuse.

CONFIDENTIAL STUDENT RECORDS

Records pertaining to children's education programs are considered confidential and are maintained in a locked file for each child. The confidential file contains information obtained or used in the process of referral, evaluation and placement of students, as well as all official correspondence with the child's parents, all forms signed by the parents, other agency reports, or other personal or sensitive information. Parents have the right to inspect any records related to their child.