



# **WILSON PRESCHOOL**

**Where children and parents have  
learned together since 1981**

## **PARENT HANDBOOK**

**Santa Clara Unified School District  
Parent Education Preschool  
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## PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

At Wilson Preschool, we believe that parents are their children's first and foremost teachers. By offering a quality parent education preschool, we are helping build stronger families and, ultimately, stronger communities.

We believe in providing a hands-on, developmentally-appropriate curriculum based on current knowledge of early childhood education where children can learn through their play, grow at their own pace, and feel that school is a good place to be. We believe in providing a physically and emotionally safe, nurturing environment that respects family diversity and fosters self-esteem and personal growth for children, parents and staff.

We encourage children to ask questions, share ideas, develop social skills and explore their world through the medium of their play. We provide activities and opportunities that emphasize discovery through first-hand experiences. Our developmental curriculum includes time for cooking, art, science, outdoor activities, stories, music, movement, free choice and small group interactions, all with the goal of fostering and reinforcing the children's positive self-image.

In the classroom, we encourage parents to observe and actively participate in the classroom's activities. This participation includes attending a parent education discussion time with the teacher and other parents while the children take part in activities supervised by a teacher's aide and designated parents.

We believe in providing a support network for parents that will not only increase their confidence in child-rearing techniques, but also help them develop a closer, more understanding relationship with their children through this shared experience. We respect and support parents in their task of nurturing children and we encourage parents to join us in being advocates for children in our schools and in society.

## **CHILDREN'S HEALTH RECORD REQUIREMENTS**

All children are required to have a Wilson Preschool Physician's Report on file each year before starting school. This report must include your child's immunization record and both your and the doctor's signatures. In order for children to attend Wilson Preschool, they must have up-to-date immunizations. This is a SCUSD policy to ensure that all children in our program are well and fit to attend school. Talk to your doctor to find out what immunizations are necessary.

## **PARENTS' TB REQUIREMENT**

Santa Clara Unified School District requires that all adults participating in our program have a completed clear tuberculosis risk assessment questionnaire, an intradermal (Mantoux) tuberculosis test or a chest x-ray every 4 years. Written test results, signed by a nurse or physician, must be submitted before you participate in the classroom. TB assessments must have been completed by a physician within the last six months.

Assessments may be performed by your physician or the County TB clinic. Parents who received BCG vaccinations as children are not excluded from TB testing. Current verification is required from a physician stating the parent is free of TB and related symptoms. Parents unable to have an intradermal test because of special health circumstances should check with their teacher before starting class.

## **CHILD AND PARENT WELLNESS POLICY**

Parents are responsible for checking their children for wellness before coming to preschool. Do not send your child if there are signs of a cold, sore throat, fever or stomach flu. Your child may return to school if they are free of symptoms and fever for twenty-four hours without medication. Notify the teacher if your child contracts a communicable disease. Make sure all allergies are listed on the child's information form. Teachers have the authority to send home a child who is ill.

If you or your child are ill and have any of the following symptoms, you should not come to class. Do not come when you or your child have:

1. A fever
2. Vomiting or persistent diarrhea
3. A diagnosed communicable disease
4. Been on antibiotics for less than 48 hours
5. A rash that has not been identified as not communicable
6. Nasal discharge with color to it that has not been treated or diagnosed as allergies

## **HANDWASHING GUIDELINES**

In order to prevent the spread of illness and keep adults and children healthy please:

1. Wash your child's and your own hands when arriving and before leaving school.
2. Wash your hands following diapering, nose wiping and before handling food.
3. Have children wash their hands before snack.

## **CHANGING TABLE PROCEDURES**

The diaper changing table is in the children's bathroom. Please follow changing table health procedures carefully:

1. After diapering, disinfect the changing table with the disinfectant spray.
2. Put the diaper in plastic bag and throw it away in outside waste baskets.
3. Wash your child's as well as your own hands after diapering.

## **STUDENTS' SPECIAL NEEDS**

In an ongoing effort to accommodate our students with special needs, we welcome input from parents in order to make our school more accessible for all. Wilson Preschool works with SCUSD Student Services to assess student needs and provide recommended services.

## **MATERNITY LEAVE**

Mothers who need to take maternity leave should provide a substitute during their absence. This can be a spouse, relative or another parent from within the class. Consistency and continuation of school routine is important for the preschool child. If you use other parents from the class as a substitute, you will need to make arrangements with that parent to either trade days or reimburse them for their time. Reimbursement is recommended to be \$40 per day. Please make arrangements before the new baby arrives. If there are problems or unusual circumstances, please contact your teacher who can suggest alternative ways to make up your leave. Infants up to six months old may come to school on their parent's participation day.

## **SIBLINGS IN THE CLASSROOM**

Siblings are welcome to join our classes for opening and closing circle times only. Siblings should not be on campus, either in the classroom or in the yard, at any other time. When a class is going on a field trip to a public place (a park or pumpkin patch, for example), siblings may attend at the teacher's discretion.

## **CELL PHONE USE**

Cell phones should not be used during class time. They disrupt class and can distract adults from supervising the children. Parents may always give the classroom phone number to their babysitters, family, etc. so that they can be reached in emergencies.

## **NUTRITION POLICY**

Preparing and sharing a meal with our school friends, adults and children is an important and enjoyable social experience. It is also an opportunity to teach and model good nutritional practices.

We follow Ellyn Satter's Division of Responsibility in feeding.

The division of responsibility for toddlers and preschool age children:

- The parent is responsible for what, when, and where the child eats.
- The child is responsible for how much and whether they eat.

Parents' feeding jobs include: choose and prepare food, provide regular meals and snacks, make eating times pleasant, and show children what they have to learn about food and mealtime behavior. Children's eating jobs include the amount that they eat.

### **Cooking at School**

In our cooking projects at school, we emphasize nutritious foods. We encourage food experiences using all four food groups, especially fresh fruits and vegetables in season. Please avoid all sweets and junk food with empty calories, too much salt, etc.

We believe there is much value in a cooking program at school. Besides being a nurturing and sharing time, it is also a math experience as children sort, count and measure ingredients. It helps children develop their sensory awareness and fine motor skills. It also gives children a great opportunity to share their thoughts and questions. Here are some questions and thoughts students have shared: Where does food come from? How does it grow? Does it taste different after it's cooked? People like different foods. It's fun to cook. I can do it myself!

At school, families can share their favorite recipes reflecting their diverse heritage and traditions. Children learn from each other as much as, or more than, they learn from adults. Encourage the children to help each other, compare, copy and imitate.

When cooking with preschoolers, it is important to remember that the process which is offered to them must be one which they can reasonably accomplish without undue frustration or adult intervention. Remember that what they experience with the food is important. The process of preparation should not be so complicated that it detracts from their seeing, feeling, smelling, tasting and, sometimes, hearing the food. Cooking is a choice at school. If a child chooses other activities, the cooking parent or

the other children prepare enough food so that every child has a snack at snack time.

If you are unable to attend on your snack day, please arrange for someone else to bring your snack or trade days with you. Please talk with your teacher if you have any questions.

## **ALLERGIES AND DIETARY RESTRICTIONS**

Parents are responsible for notifying the teacher of their child's dietary restrictions or food allergies. These will be posted in the cooking area of each classroom. Parents and teachers will work together to provide choices so all children can participate in the cooking projects and snacks.

Due to the potentially life threatening allergies associated with peanuts or other kinds of nuts and our desire to be a safe, supportive environment for allergic children and their parents, **we are a nut-free zone.**

Please do not bring anything with peanuts, peanut butter or other nuts for children's snack. Your teacher will advise you if there are any other foods to avoid due to allergies or other dietary restrictions.

## **HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS AND BIRTHDAYS**

In keeping with our nutrition policy, please do not bring cupcakes or other sweets for birthdays or holidays. We want to teach the children that we can celebrate without eating food that is not healthy for us. If you choose to sign up for a cooking project on your child's birthday, please bring a nutritious food your child is particularly fond of to prepare as a cooking experience.

Each teacher celebrates birthdays at school with a special ritual. Please do not bring any treats or prizes from home.

## **PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Preschool teachers talk with parents each week when they attend class with their children. Conferences are held informally, on an as-needed basis, throughout the school year. Teachers make themselves available to address individual concerns before, during and after class. If more time is needed, teachers and parents arrange for additional meeting time by phone or email. Teachers in the four classes offer formal parent teacher conferences once a year.

## **NEGOTIATING DIFFERENCES/ DIFFICULTIES**

If you have questions or concerns about your class:

1. Talk to your teacher. You can give her a note or schedule a time when you can have a phone conference or individual meeting to discuss concerns. Your teacher wants you and your child to feel comfortable in her class and will want to know if you have concerns. Communication is the first step in problem solving.
2. If you or your teacher want more support in negotiating and resolving differences, the preschool program coordinator will be glad to assist. Phone conversations, written communication, individual meetings or a special conference are all techniques that can be employed to address concerns and work toward solutions.
3. If necessary, the program administrator might also assist in explaining policy and facilitating conflict resolution.
4. Santa Clara Unified School District's Uniform Complaint Policy is posted in every classroom.

## **PHILOSOPHY OF DISCIPLINE**

We view discipline as part of the process of socialization. Children try different behaviors to learn what is acceptable and appropriate in a variety of situations.

The foundation for our philosophy of discipline is based on fostering empathy, developing self-discipline and problem-solving skills and building positive self-esteem for each child. We want all children to feel safe and successful at school.

Staff and parents communicate respect for the child by stating clearly and simply how we expect them to behave. These expectations need to be repeated - we can't expect a young child to learn the first time. Adults need to be aware of children's developmental differences in behavior and abilities.

We use positive discipline whenever possible. We want children to learn what they are doing right. When conflicts arise, we strive to help the children find the solution themselves. When consequences are needed, we should clearly inform the children ahead of time what those consequences are so they make the choice of controlling that behavior themselves. Redirecting children to other activities is another discipline technique. (See other techniques on following page.)

It is important for us to help the children in a positive manner to understand the effects of their behavior on themselves, on others and on the total environment. Corporal punishment by teachers or parents is not acceptable.

If parents have questions about discipline in the preschool, they are encouraged to talk to



their teacher either by phone or in an individual meeting that has been pre-arranged before or after class. Parents, teachers and the program coordinator can also schedule a special conference where we can meet together and effectively negotiate difficulties or differences that might arise.

If a child's behavior is aggressive with a frequency and/or severity that are beyond typical developmental norms, Wilson Preschool will develop an action plan that will include some, and possibly all, of the following steps:

1. Teacher and program coordinator will observe and document behavior. They will communicate frequently with the child's parents to formulate and carry out a positive discipline plan to help their child feel more successful at school, extinguish hurtful behavior and encourage appropriate behavior at school and at home.
2. Depending on the severity and frequency of the child's inappropriate behavior, a parent might be asked to stay and support his/her child every school day until the child has developed more social skills and is demonstrating more appropriate behavior.
3. With the parents' permission, Wilson Preschool may bring in specialists to act as resources for additional support for the child.
4. If aggressive behavior continues and parents refuse to cooperate with Wilson Preschool's efforts to help their child, Wilson reserves the right to ask any family to leave.

## **BASIC TECHNIQUES FOR BUILDING POSITIVE BEHAVIOR**

1. Get to know each child; build a positive and nurturing relationship.
2. Redirect a child to another area or offer other alternatives if things are not going well. Change the activity; be flexible.
3. State consequences for particular behavior ahead of time.
4. Be positive--state what can be done rather than what can not.
5. Get a solution from a child.
6. Use language --describe the situation in words.
7. Step in to extend children's play; add a new dimension.
8. Help children enter into play; give them a "role".
9. Use non-verbal communication.
10. Stand back and observe before intervening in situations.

11. Practice active listening; use “I messages”.
12. Give the child the reason behind rules.
13. Clearly state rules/expectations.
14. Approach at child’s level; kneel down.
15. Use clear, simple speech.
16. Build upon positive behavior.
17. Remove the child from hurting situations.
18. If language is offensive, say “We don’t use those words at school.” Give alternatives (“I feel angry” etc.). Inform the teacher who will talk to the parents if this language continues.
19. Active large muscle play should be channeled outside.
20. Use humor, games, and songs.
21. Focus on behavior, not the character of the child.
22. Handle problems with behavior immediately - do not wait!
23. Hurting behavior needs to be stopped. Comfort hurt child first (model empathy). Explain that school has to be a safe place for all children. Help children problem solve. Remove aggressor to another activity if necessary.

## **HIGHSOPE GUIDELINES FOR RESOLVING CONFLICT**

1. Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions
  - Place yourself between the children, on their level
  - Use a calm voice and gentle touch
  - Remain neutral rather than take sides
  - Set limits if necessary
  - Let children know you need to hold any object in question
2. Acknowledge children’s feelings
  - “You look really upset”
  - Describe their actions
3. Gather information
  - Ask for information from each child and listen carefully
4. Restate the problem

- “So the problem is...”

5. Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together

- “What can we do to solve this problem?”
- Encourage children to think of a solution
- Help clarify the details

6. Be prepared to give follow-up support

- Describe how they solved the problem
- Give acknowledgment - “You solved the problem!”
- Stay near the children

## **CLASSROOM GUIDELINES**

We have just a few rules to ensure the physical and emotional safety of children and adults and take good care of our classrooms. In carrying out these rules, we need to remember the developmental level of the children. It is important to state rules clearly and consistently and make sure everyone understands the rationale. Please ask your teacher or instructional aide if you have questions.

### **RULES FOR CHILDREN**

#### Kindness:

Our most important rule is that adults and children practice kindness. We work to take care of ourselves and others at school.

#### Blocks:

- Build blocks no higher than your chin.
- It is not safe to knock down the large wood blocks – they are too heavy.
- Small block structures may be knocked over by builders only.

#### Active Play:

- Running and chasing are outside activities.
- Climbing is for the playstructure outside, not on classroom furniture in the room.
- Save loud voices for outside.

#### Play Weapons:

- No weapon play at school (toy guns or otherwise).

#### Use of Materials:

- Equipment should be used with care and respect by children and adults.
- Children and adults work together at clean-up time.

#### Circle:

- If a child is not comfortable staying at circle time, an adult can help him/her find a

quiet activity that will not distract the group.

Materials used in designated areas:

- Playdough/ messy art materials should stay in designated areas during work-time.
- Carpentry tools must stay at the workbench. Carpentry requires adult supervision.

## **RULES FOR ADULTS:**

As members of Santa Clara Adult Education, we follow the Adult School Student Behavior Policy which states: Adult students are expected to conduct themselves toward all staff and other students (adult and children) in a respectful manner. The use of alcohol, tobacco and/or illegal drugs will not be tolerated. Adult students whose behavior is not appropriate will be dropped from school.

In addition, we have some rules for Wilson Preschool:

1. Our first and most important rule at Wilson Preschool is that adults and children practice kindness. We work to take care of ourselves and others at school.
2. Enjoy your time with your children at school. Take time to observe and have fun.
3. Speak gently to children. Walk across the room to speak to a child. Do not shout to a child across the room.
4. Remember that adult conversation during circle time is distracting and inappropriate. If you are not assisting at circle and need to talk with an adult at this time, go outside or in the central area.
5. It is the adults' responsibility to work together to clean up the classroom. Adults encourage the children's help and notify the teacher of broken toys or equipment.
6. Adults need to supervise children wearing dress-up props outside for safety. Make sure items are returned to classroom at clean-up time.
7. During circle time, disruptive children need an adult to sit close by to calm them. If behavior persists, you can help the child go to a quiet area or outside where he/she can calm down. If a child leaves circle, an adult should go accompany him/her.
8. Never try to force a child to participate at circle time. Remember, observation is a form of participation.
9. Adults assigned to outside supervision must go outside when children are ready.
10. Make a waiting list for an item if it is very popular. Call child when equipment becomes available.
11. Adults in the play yard need to watch their assigned area. Adults should move around the yard as needed, interacting with the children as well as supervising.
12. Outside time is not a time for adults to congregate in one area and talk. The children's safety depends on your supervision.
13. Cell phones are to be put away during school time.
14. Adults use adult restroom only. Children use restroom in preschool.
15. Adults need to supervise the children's restroom when it is being used by children.

## PLAYGROUND GUIDELINES

1. Children must be supervised by an adult at all times.
2. Remember to close and latch all gates you walk through.
3. The role of parents and staff outside is to provide interactive experiences with children as well as supervisory. Enjoy being outside with them!
4. Be aware of active play interactions that could lead to potentially dangerous consequences, especially on the large play structures (i.e. Superhero, good-guy/bad guy play can escalate).
5. Redirect before play becomes too rough and someone gets hurt.
6. Consult with instructional aide or teacher to find out what new and interesting activities/materials might be available.
7. Move in and stop an ongoing activity if it is harmful to children or equipment.
8. Feel free to ask the instructional aide, the teacher or another parent for assistance.
9. Adults should not put a child on a piece of equipment that the child would not choose to go on independently.
10. The walkways in front of classrooms are off limits to riding toys.
11. Outside playhouses are for dramatic play - no jumping out of windows.
12. Help children learn how to enjoy and be safe playing outside - crashing bikes or playing with sticks or sharp objects is unsafe and should be stopped.
13. If a child gets off a bike, it is available to other children.
14. Shovels are for digging.

## ART STATEMENT

Art is essential to our curriculum. We offer materials to children so that every time children come to school they can create all on their own. Teachers and parents in our classrooms use art to help children develop their conversation skills and vocabulary, express concepts and discoveries, and solve problems. Art touches all areas of our curriculum, from careful observation of the world around us to the scientific experimentation of color mixing. The creative arts are an important part of our children's learning, discovery, developing coordination skills, and expressing feelings. To engage in creativity is to build self-confidence and gain self-image because everything a child does in art is successful. There is no right or wrong art and parents and teachers need to be mindful of judging children's art.

- Emphasis on process art vs. product art. It should be child-selected and child-initiated vs. adult-imposed.
- Experiential art: let children experience the materials in a variety of ways, without limiting the materials or expecting that materials should be used in only one way.
- Talk to children about the materials they are using--colors, textures, shapes, etc.
- Avoid asking, "What are you making?" Rather, ask children to talk to you about what they are doing.
- Child-selected and initiated art empowers children. It gives them control over the environment.
- Art materials should be available for children to experience every day. A mixture of new items, recycled items and items found in nature should be available.

## VISITORS

**Adult visitors:** Because we are a parent participation preschool, one parent (or grandparent) must attend each week with your child.

Other adult family members are always welcome to visit school with teacher permission prior to the visit.

### **Child visitors:**

1. Infants up to 6 months old may come to school on their parent's participation day. Once the infant reaches six months old, outside childcare arrangements must be made.
2. Older siblings (preschool and school age) may not attend class. Outside childcare must be arranged. Please anticipate school vacation conflicts and arrange childcare early. Check with other adults in class who would be willing to trade sitting for such occasions.

## **PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Wilson Preschool is part of Santa Clara Adult Education, the parent is the enrolled student. The preschool serves as a laboratory for the parent/student to learn more about working with young children. The preschool lab and the parent discussions are the two primary components of Parent Education. As in any class, the student has a number of responsibilities.

1. Parents must attend the fall orientation meeting held the week before preschool starts.
2. All forms and tuition must be submitted by August 1st. These include: physician's report, child information sheet, parent participation agreement, adult tuberculosis risk assessment questionnaire and tuition.
3. The parent/student is required to participate in his/her child's class once per week. The success and safety of the classroom depend on parent participation.
4. All parents are required to assume all assigned work responsibilities in the classroom.
5. Parents are required to arrive and leave class within the scheduled time.
6. During class time, each parent is responsible for all the children as well as his/her child. This applies to both inside and outside activities. (This is critical for the safety of the children.)
7. If the parent finds it necessary to be absent on his/her workday, it becomes his/her responsibility
  - a. to inform the teacher if he/she cannot attend.
  - b. to find a substitute\* (3's and 4's class only)
  - c. to make up the absence by attending another class day (3's and 4's class only)
  - d. arrange a special make up with your teacher (3's and 4's class only)
8. Parents are responsible for class cooking projects (purchasing ingredients and appropriate supplies, organizing and implementing the project in class).
9. Parents are required to attend parent discussion. Failure to attend this component of the program will necessitate a makeup.
10. Parents are required to turn in class fees by the sixth week of the preceding term.
11. Parents are required to work one Saturday workday (three hours) per year.
12. Parents are responsible for one term project per term.

13. Parents are required to adhere to our no treats at school birthday policy.
14. Parents are required to participate in our Giraffe Fundraiser.
15. Parents are required to follow the guidelines provided in the Parent Handbook.
16. Parents are required to conduct themselves toward all staff, other parents and children in a respectful manner.