Simon Kenton Preschool
Parent Handbook
2025-2026

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook is intended to provide parents, preschool teachers, and school administrators with relevant information regarding important aspects of the preschool program. Our program is licensed through the Ohio Department of Children and Youth requiring us to meet all requirements outlined in Ohio Administrative Code Chapter 5180-37 in addition to rules related to Ohio Operating Standards for the Education of Children with Disabilities, Step up To Quality and Early Childhood Education Grant.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Vision and Mission

Through collaboration with families, districts, and preschool staff, we develop an educational environment that supports and promotes the development of the whole child through developmentally appropriate practices.

In our program, we work as a collaborative team on all issues facing the classroom. This team includes teachers, parents, community partners and most of all children. We respect each other as individuals, encourage ideas, and support from all. When everyone in the team works together, the children benefit the most from our program.

Preschool Program Philosophy

Every child is unique with an individual pattern of growth and development. The Preschool Program curriculum, materials utilized, and staff shall be responsive to the individual abilities and interests of children. Differing levels of ability and development are expected, accepted, and used to design appropriate learning activities.

We believe the image of the child is one of potential, curiosity, and interest in constructing their learning. Teachers are partners in your children's learning. They listen to children's ideas and provide occasions within the environment for discovery and learning. Children's explorations through project work provide opportunities for the development of higher-level thinking skills as well as basic and new skills. The documentation of children's activities makes children aware that what they say and do is valued. Documentation traces the history of the classroom and provides opportunities for children, teachers, and families to revisit children's work. Parents and families are valued and play an active role in their child's learning experiences. Family involvement and communication is essential.

Goals

1. To implement a developmentally appropriate curriculum supported by appropriate resources and monitored through an evaluation system.
2. To establish staff development practices that ensure staff at all levels have the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary in working with children three, four, and five years of age and their families.
3. To establish a program evaluation process that will regularly assess the performances of the program, staff, and students, as a basis for expanding successes and making improvements.
4. To establish a process for regular sustained communication between home and school.
5. To develop and implement a plan for collaboration with other child-centered agencies and organizations to expand the resources available for providing comprehensive preschool programs.

TEACHERS AND STAFF

Nondiscrimination

The Governing Board does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation and transgender identity), disability, age, religion, military status, ancestry, genetic information (collectively, "Protected Classes"), or any other legally protected category, in its programs and activities, including employment opportunities.

The Board of DD Compliance Officers shall handle inquiries regarding the Board's nondiscrimination policies and address any complaint of discrimination

Professional Development

All preschool staff are trained regularly in CPR, First Aid, Child Abuse, Communicable Diseases, Recognition of and Reporting of Homeless (McKinney-Veto Homeless Assistance Act), Child Development, Assessments and Screeners, and the selected curriculum. Staff meet all professional development requirements (hours and topics) set forth by the licensing agent (15 hours of Ohio Approved training annually).

Director and Staff Recruitment

The program director and all staff meet requirements set forth by ODE Preschool Licensing Regulations. References, background, and educational experiences are checked upon hiring. Each staff member signs a non-guilty conviction statement and discipline policy annually. Physicals are completed upon hire and at the recommendation of the Superintendent. In addition, each staff member holds valid teaching certificates.

Hardin County Board of DD Administrative Guidelines, Bylaws and Policies are available online through the website.

PROGRAM

Curriculum and Assessment

The Hardin County Board of DD Preschool Program follows a curriculum map that aligns our curriculum (Creative Curriculum) and DCY Early Learning Standards. Staff are trained on the curriculum through web-based training from the curriculum program.

A developmental sequence will be used with all children which begins instruction at the point of the child's proficiency and proceeds sequentially, motivated by the child's interest and strengths. Instructional strategies to support development in the areas of adaptive, cognitive, fine motor, gross motor, social-emotional/behavioral, and communication will be implemented.

Every child is evaluated using multiple methods in preschool. The current assessment tools used in our programs include but are not limited to:

- Ages and Stages Questionnaire-Third Addition (1 time per year)
- Early Learning Assessment (ongoing assessing; reported two times per year)
- Early Childhood Outcomes (for children with specialized education needs)

Results of our evaluations will be shared with parents who are encouraged to share results with their child's pediatrician. Parents will receive progress reports at least two times per year. If the results of the screening indicate concerns, those concerns will be shared with parents with referrals completed within 30 days.

Daily Schedule

Each classroom has their daily schedule posted inside the classroom. It is understood that special events and unforeseen circumstances will arise which require deviation from the schedule. Furthermore, special needs and interests of the students may occasionally dictate necessary changes in scheduling.

Age Group Staff Member/Child Ratio Maximum per ODE Licensing Rules

Per state licensing and Step Up To Quality, the maximum group size and child to adult ratio is determined based on the youngest child in the classroom.

Per state licensing, for a group that includes a three-year-old, the maximum group size is 24 children and one adult for each 12 children. For a group that has only four- and five-year-olds, the maximum group size is 28 children and one adult for 14 children.

Per SUTQ requirements, for children 36 months to 47 months the adult to child ratio is 1:11 or 2:22. For children 48 months to school age, the ratio is 1:13 or 2:26.

Within our classrooms, we maintain the lowest adult to child ratios at all times.

Snack Time

Daily snacks will be provided to children during their preschool day. Current menus are posted in the classroom. Any substitutes to the posted menu shall be from the same basic food group and recorded. Modifications to support medical needs will be provided on a case-by-case basis.

Guidelines

- Snacks will include selections from two food groups (meat/meat equivalent, bread, milk/dairy, fruit/vegetable)
- A food source of Vitamin C will be served daily, and a source of Vitamin A will be served three times per week.
- Fluid milk shall be Vitamin D fortified

Transportation / Field Trips (*Please see Transportation Handbook for additional information)*

Preschool children will be incorporated into the local busing routes. If any child is to deviate from the regular schedule, the parent must notify the teacher in writing in advance. In the case of an emergency, a phone call from the parent is acceptable, per district approval. Changes in pick up and drop off locations require a three day minimum notification window to allow for adjustments in routes as needed. All required transportation paperwork must be completed and approved by the Bardin County Board of DD prior to transporting a child.

Late Pickup

There will be an additional charge if the parent fails to pick up their child up at the scheduled dismissal time. After the first 5 minutes there will be a $15 charge and an additional charge of $15.00 for every 10 minutes past pick up time. The teacher or aide is the only individual authorized to make exceptions if the reason is warranted. Any fees assessed must be paid within 7 days. Repeated late pick-ups will result in dismissal of children from the preschool classroom.

School Delays/Closings

There will be days that our preschool program needs to close due to unforeseen circumstances. In the event of a delay, emergency closing, or inclement weather, parents will be informed through radio (WKTN) and television (WLIO). You may also participate in the HCBDD's all call system.

Continued Improvement

The preschool program continues to strive for refinement of practices. Annually, the program and each individual classroom develop goals based on input from families, community partners, staff input, and experiences. Progress towards these goals are documented throughout the year.

PRESCHOOL FEES

The monthly tuition for preschool is based on a sliding fee scale. The calculation for fee is based on family size, yearly income, and the current poverty guidelines. To qualify for reduced/free tuition, you must provide formal documentation

of your current income. Those children who are foster or kinship placed will attend preschool at no cost regardless of income levels. Documentation of placement will be required.

Once preschool staff calculate income, if found eligible for reduced rates, families will need to apply for "Early Childhood Education Grant" funding through Ohio Benefits. Assistance will be provided to families in completing this process.

Preschool tuition rates may be adjusted at the discretion of the Preschool Director and/or Superintendent based on a situation similar to response to intervention/monitoring due to developmental needs or family hardships (temporary loss of employment, medical emergencies). Tuition adjustments related to family hardships will require an interview process to determine eligibility.

- Tuition rates based on household income
    - Income greater than 200% FPL
        - First child: $145 per month; Sibling Discount: $80 per month
    - Income between 151%- 200% FPL:
        - First child: $85.00 per month; Sibling Discount: $50.00 per month
    - Income between 101%-125% FPL:
        - First child: $80.00 per month; Sibling Discount: $45.00 per month
    - Free Tuition for children on IEPs, Court Placed or below 100% FPL

*** Sibling discount is only available to those families that have siblings enrolled in the same year when payment is required for both children.*

The first payment is due on the first day of attendance in September with all other payments due the first of each month. A tuition fee schedule will be sent to parents at the beginning of the school year.

If payment is not received by the 15th of the month, a reminder will be sent. If payment is still not received by the 25th of the month, the student will be removed from the roster and will not be eligible to attend until the following year.

If a parent wishes to pay by the week, special arrangements can be made. No rebates will be given for absences or school cancellations.

CHILD INFORMATION / CUMULATIVE RECORDS

Preschool staff are responsible for ensuring a child's cumulative and health records are in compliance. All files are considered confidential. Preschool staff will comply with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Records may be released, at the request of parents, after written consent is obtained.

Prior to enrollment, the following is required:

- Developmental screening (within first 60 days)
- Birth Certificate
- Immunization Record or Waiver
- Physical (within 30 days of start of school; good for 12 months)
  including lead and hematocrit upon initial entrance into preschool
- Dental (within 30 days of the start of school)
- Preschool Enrollment Packet
- Emergency Medical Form

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Parent involvement will be encouraged and expected. Preschool staff and parents will communicate frequently to support appropriate development of the child. Parents will be invited into the classroom and parent in-services will be held.

Roster

At least once annually, the teacher shall furnish for each parent/guardian a roster of the name and telephone number of each child and child's parents. The teacher must secure from each parent a signed statement indicating whether they wish to be included in the roster.

Conferences

Families will be offered a one-on-one meeting time prior to the start of school so that children and families can explore the classroom. This is also an opportunity to review personal information with preschool staff.

Additional conferences will be held two times per year (late fall and spring). Additional conferences will be held at the parents' request.

Open Door

The preschool programs exist to support and uphold the family unit, not to replace it or separate children from their parent's love or guidance.

1. Preschool classrooms are always open to parents. Parents are encouraged to participate through class visitations and planned parent/child partner activities in the classroom.
    - Visitors must sign an annual Non-Guilty Conviction Statement
2. Parent gatherings will be scheduled at various times throughout the school year at times, which facilitate the greatest percentage of parent attendance. Gatherings will include child participation and/or parent education.
3. Teachers will utilize flexible scheduling to serve the needs of the parents. Any form of communication with parents will be recorded on the child's parent communication form.
4. Monthly newsletters will be prepared and distributed to parents on a regular basis.
5. Parents will be advised on how to obtain copies of state inspection reports.
    - Reports are posted in the classrooms. Additional reports available upon request.

Family Needs Survey

Annually, parents will be asked to complete a family needs survey. The survey be used to identify areas of need in areas such as developmental or educational needs, health needs or resources. The preschool team will provide contact information, referrals, and follow-up support to families based off the surveys and preferences of the family.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Procedures

Medical and dental emergency procedures are posted in each classroom by the telephone. These plans are updated at least annually. Health and developmental screenings will be conducted within 60 days of enrollment to include review of physical, vision and hearing screenings with referrals to medical professionals as needed.

Drills

Each classroom participates in and logs routinely held drills as follows:

- Fire Drills are held monthly
- Tornado Drills are held at least 4 times each year
- Lock-Down Drills are held at least two times per year

Child Abuse

All preschool staff members are trained in child abuse and neglect. Any staff member who has reason to believe a child has been abused or neglected is required by state law to immediately report such information to the Early Childhood Director and public children services agency. A serious incident form is completed and submitted to the department of education within 24 hours.

Child Illness/ Communicable Diseases Policy

A child with any or the following signs or symptoms of illness shall be immediately isolated from the other children and parents notified. Children may not attend after onset of symptoms and must be symptom free for 72 hours without the use of medications before they may return.

Rule 3301-37-11 | Management of communicable disease

(2) A child with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness shall be immediately isolated and discharged to his parent or guardian:

(a) Diarrhea (three or more abnormally loose stools within a twenty-four-hour period);
(b) Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound;
(c) Difficult or rapid breathing;
(d) Yellowish skin or eyes;
(e) Redness of the eye or eyelid, thick and purulent (pus) eye discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching or eye pain;
(f) Temperature of one hundred degrees Fahrenheit taken by the auxiliary method when in combination with other signs of illness;
(g) Untreated infected skin patch(es);
(h) Unusually dark urine and/or grey or white stool;
(i) Stiff neck with an elevated temperature;
(j) Evidence of untreated lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestation;
(k) Sore throat or difficulty swallowing; or
(l) Vomiting more than one time or when accompanied by any other sign or symptom of illness.

Our program follows the Ohio Department of Health "Child Day Care Communicable Disease Chart" www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms for appropriate management of suspected illness. A child isolated due to suspected communicable disease shall be made comfortable and cared for in a room or portion of a room not being used in the preschool program. A cot or a place to lie down will be made available to the child. If linens and blankets are used by the ill child, they will be laundered before being used by another child. All equipment used will be disinfected with an appropriate germicidal agent. The child will be within sight and hearing of an adult at all times and will never be left alone or unsupervised. Decisions regarding whether the child should be discharged immediately or at some other time during the day is determined by the teacher and/or parent.

Parents are requested to notify the teacher if their child has been exposed to any contagious disease outside the school. You will be notified in writing if your child has been exposed to a communicable disease.

A physician's release form may be required for re-admittance to school, depending upon the illness of the child.

If the preschool recognizes that a child has nits or lice, the parent/guardian will be notified, and the child will be sent home. The parent will be required to treat the child with an over the counter or prescription lice kit. The child will be

permitted to return to school once the parent provides proof of treatment and the child is rechecked by an early childhood staff member. A receipt of purchase or the actual box in which the treatment came in can be presented as proof. A child with live lice or nits will not be permitted to attend the preschool setting. It is recommended that the parents refer to the CDC's website at: http://www.cdc.gov/lice/head/ for fact sheets, treatment recommendations, and cleaning/sanitizing the home environment to reduce re-infestation.

The school can admit and care for a "mildly" ill child (such as minor cold symptoms) as long as the child does not exhibit any symptoms specified in the paragraphs above on communicable diseases. If any of the symptoms do occur during careful observation, the child will be isolated and discharged from the school. In the case of an emergency situation, one teacher will be left with the child while the other teacher follows our "Emergency Medical" procedure.

Any time a staff member becomes ill, he/she is sent home and replaced with a substitute staff member.

Medication

In order to administer any type of medication or topical products or ointments to your child, parent permission and a "Medical Authorization Form" must be completed by your child's physician. A detailed prescription and directions for administration must be provided to preschool staff. Each time the medication is administered, a written record or log including dosage, date, and time will be made. That record or log will be kept on file for one year. Only employees who are health professionals or who have completed a drug administration training may administer medication pursuant to licensing guidelines. Medication will be stored in a designated locked storage place, except drugs requiring refrigeration will be kept in a refrigerator not accessible to children.

Parents/Guardians are required to transport the medication and form to and from school. The medication must be in its original container.

Diapering

All peer models are required to be potty trained.

All children are required to have a change of clothes to be kept at the center in case of restroom accidents or spills. Please send in pants, shirt, underwear, and socks in a labeled gallon Ziploc bag. If your child becomes soiled and does not have a change of clothes, the family will be called to bring in a change of clothes.

For those children not potty trained, the parent must provide all diapering materials (wipes, diapers).

Hand Washing

Proper hand washing is the single most important factor in controlling cross-infection. Employees and children should wash hands with soap and running water after diaper changes, toileting, cleaning, before preparing food or eating, and when hands have been in contact with nasal or mucous secretions.

Injury

In the event that your child is injured while at preschool, you will be notified via phone call and teacher meeting with you directly. The teachers will complete an incident form, and ask you to sign it upon picking up your child. You will be provided a copy of the form and the original will be placed in your child's cumulative file. A "Serious Incident Form" will be submitted to the Department of Education as required. Each classroom will keep a log of all injuries and incidences.

ENROLLMENT/WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Enrollment Policy

To ensure fair and equal access to our preschool program, we follow our enrollment policy that outlines steps for offering openings to families. This policy is reviewed annually.

Enrollment into the program will be based on the following priorities:

1. Children enrolled in the preschool program the previous school year that indicated their return on the Spring survey
2. Children whose legal guardian or immediate family work for Simon Kenton School or Hardin County Board of DD
3. Children residing in Hardin County who have attended a developmental screening with the Hardin County Board of DD, placed oldest to youngest based on openings within age based classrooms.
4. Children residing in Hardin County who have not attended a developmental screening with the Hardin County Board of DD, placed oldest to youngest based on openings within age based classrooms.

A letter will be mailed, or a phone call made to parent stating if their child has been accepted or put on the waiting list due to enrollment limitations. Names will remain on file to be notified if slots become available during the school year. Children's names will be removed from the waiting list once the child becomes age eligible for kindergarten.

Withdrawal Policy

If a parent/guardian decides to withdraw a child enrolled in the preschool program, he/she must provide a written request indicating his/her understanding that their child's slot will be filled with the first child on the waiting list for the remainder of the year.

Due to the increasing number of children on the waiting list, attendance is critical. Therefore, any child in the program that has excessive absenteeism (50% of a 3-week period) and no medical excuse, the parent/guardian will receive written notification that the child is removed from the program and the slot will be filled with the first child on the waiting list for the remainder of the year.

In the above instances, to re-enroll the child after the child's slot has been filled, the parent/guardian must contact the director/program assistant to be added to the waiting list. We will forward the child's educational file to another address upon request from parent/guardian.

The above outlined Withdrawal Policy does not apply to children with disabilities.

CHILD GUIDANCE AND BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Preschool Discipline Policy for Families and Children

We believe the best way to handle problems is to prevent them from occurring. Therefore, we have designed our preschool classroom environments to deter problem behaviors. The rooms are arranged in centers to encourage socialization and independence.

We respectfully use positive methods of discipline. All staff are trained in positive behavior intervention strategies. We strive to promote self-control, self-esteem and cooperation among our students. Children are taught how to control emotions and communicate their feelings and needs. Staff show students how to resolve conflicts and create solutions that are acceptable to all parties.

The following developmentally appropriate guidance techniques are used:

- Positive Reinforcement: Children are encouraged when they are demonstrating acceptable behaviors.
- Redirection: Children are redirected to other activities and given an opportunity to try again at another time.
- Co and Self-Regulation: Children will be taught that they are in charge of their learning through choices. The "Zones of Regulation" are taught and implemented in the classrooms to help children recognize

their feelings and understand what behaviors or responses are appropriate or inappropriate. Children will be taught self-regulation strategies through co-regulation.

- Time Out: The child is separated from the group for a child-regulated period of time. This technique is ONLY used when a child is exhibiting temper tantrum type behaviors or hurting self, others, or equipment. When a child shows that he/she is ready to demonstrate acceptable behavior, they are encouraged to join the rest of the group and try again.
- Behavior Plan: When a child's behavior is continually upsetting or dangerous to others, a meeting will be called with the parents to determine the cause of the behavior as well as possible interventions.

Preschool Discipline Policy for Staff, Substitutes, and Volunteers

All adults must adhere to this policy when in contact with the preschool students.

- Please notify the classroom teacher, educational assistant, director of early childhood, or the ESC superintendent if a discipline concern arises.
- The classroom teacher, educational assistant, director of early childhood, or the ESC superintendent will follow the guidelines in the preschool licensing rules as well as implement the following policy.

The center's actual methods of discipline shall apply to all persons on the premises and shall be restricted as follows:

- There shall be no cruel, harsh, corporal punishment or any unusual punishments such as, but not limited to, punching, pinching, shaking, spanking, or biting.
- No discipline shall be delegated to any other child.
- No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, so the child may regain control. This may only be used if the child is in danger of harming themselves or others and there is no logical alternative.
- No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, a box, or a similar cubicle.
- No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks, about himself or his family, or other verbal abuse.
- Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep, or for toileting accidents.
- Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame, or frighten a child.
- Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest, or toilet use.
- Separation, when used as discipline shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability, and the child shall be within sight and hearing of a preschool staff member in a safe, lighted, and well-ventilated space.
- The center shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the preschool program.

IF YOU EXPERIENCE PROBLEMS

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to schedule conferences with the classroom teacher whenever they are experiencing child/classroom related problems. We will make every effort to resolve the problem, or when indicated, make appropriate referrals to other helping agencies within the community. If the teacher cannot adequately assist in a satisfactory resolution or you have concerns regarding health and safety conditions, the number of children, care of the children, please contact Lori Berger, Director of Early Childhood, at (567) 674-5447.

If questions or concerns cannot be addressed through the preschool department, please contact the Child Care Policy Help Desk at 877-302-2347 option 4 or email childcarepolicy@childrenandyouth.ohio.gov.

CHILDREN WITH AN IEP

If your child has an IEP and you have concerns regarding your parental rights or your child's program, please contact Lori Berger, Director of Early Childhood, at (567) 674-5447.

A referral for a special education evaluation may be completed by contacting Lori Berger, Director of Early Childhood. A developmental screening and review of educational records will be completed to determine evaluation needs. If a child is found eligible for special education services, those services will be provided in the child's least restrictive environment. Determining placement for children with special educational needs is a team decision.

If you have additional concerns, please call Preschool Special Education at 1-844-234-5437.

ARC

The Hardin County ARC is a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization. We have established By-laws and Constitutions. Our members are closely affiliated with the Hardin County Board of Developmental Disabilities. Most of our members are staff members and parents of students or adult clients. The officers of the Hardin County ARC are elected by the Membership. Our income is generated by a variety of fundraising activities including the following:

Annual auction of donated items
Annual Knights of Columbus- Measure Up Campaign
Miscellaneous donations

The ARC purchases supplies and equipment used at Simon Kenton and adult day service sites attended by adults with disabilities in Hardin County. The ARC helps fund field trips and other special events for the students at Simon Kenton School and adults eligible for services from the Hardin County Board of DD. Each year the ARC contributes $1000.00 to the Special Needs fund to help families who have a child with disability with unusual expenses that occur due to the child's disability.

PRESCHOOL LICENSING

All classrooms are inspected by the Ohio Department of Children and Youth annually. Inspection reports are posted in each classroom and are available to families upon request.

A printout of the Preschool Program licensing rule is available upon request. You may also view the full report at https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-administrative-code/chapter-5180-37.

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Board Approved: