

# **SDOC Preschool Program**



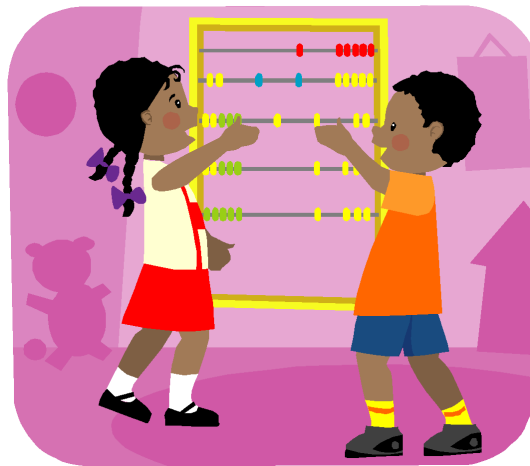
## **Parent Handbook**

## Table of Contents

Program Philosophy	Page 3
Program Curriculum	Page 4 & 5
Elements of Daily Routine	Page 6
Parent Involvement	Page 7
Program Reminders and What Your Child Will Need For School	Page 8
Program Hours, Student Absence Procedures, and School Cancellation Procedures	Page 9
Inclement Weather, Building Entrance Procedures, Delivery And Pick-Up	Page 10
School Food Allergy Alert	Page 11

## Chatham Preschool Philosophy

The Chatham Preschool Program has been designed to provide a learning environment that allows children to feel safe, comfortable, and part of a community of learners. This safe, nurturing, and rich environment promotes active exploration in all areas of development. Learning is facilitated by giving children the opportunity to make choices about which activities and materials they will use which allows children to establish independence, self-esteem, and confidence. The program utilizes a curriculum based on the premise that young children learn best through active engagement and by learning at a child's own pace.



## Chatham Preschool Program Curriculum

The Preschool Program's Curriculum has been designed and developed according to the guidelines and expectations outlined in the New Jersey Department of Education's 2014 Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards. The aim of these standards is to maximize young children's learning and development, providing each child with a foundation for current and future school success.

The School District of the Chathams has adopted *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool*, which is a scientifically based and research-tested model for early childhood programs serving children ages 3 – 5. *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool* focuses on how children develop and learn in terms of the four major areas of child development – social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and language, as well as the characteristics and experiences that make each child unique. The curriculum specifies content to be taught in the following areas, all according to New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Expectations:

-Literacy: vocabulary and language, phonological awareness, letters, words, print, comprehension, and books and other texts as sources of enjoyment

-Mathematics: numbers, patterns, and relationships, geometry, and spatial awareness, measurement, and data collection, organization, and representation

-Science: physical science, life science, earth and the environment

-Social Studies: spaces and geography, people and how they live, people and the environment, and people and the past

-The Arts: dance, music, drama, and the visual arts

-Technology: awareness of technology, basic operations and concepts, technological tools, and people and technology

The Preschool Program provides the children with an environment that is nurturing and stimulating. The physical classroom is divided into interest areas that allow the children to explore, create, experiment, and pursue their own interests. Children can choose quiet activity areas such as: the library, writing area, art, or toys and games or areas for active engagement such as: dramatic play, block building and music and movement.

The program gives the children opportunities to investigate the world around them and learn through purposeful play. The children are able to learn new concepts and skills and practice what they have learned everyday. Children learn best when they are self-motivated, so teachers create extensive opportunities to make discoveries and initiate learning through a combination of child-directed and teacher-directed learning, as well as teacher interaction with the children.

Teachers are aware of developmental levels, individual strengths, and needs based upon constant observation and assessments. They design their lessons based upon the children's interests and their individual needs.



## Elements of the Preschool Program Daily Routine

An effective learning environment includes establishing a structure for each day. Children tend to feel safe and secure and develop independence when time is set up in an orderly and consistent way. The daily routine is the schedule of events that take place in the classroom each day. Throughout the day, children and teachers take part in a variety of individual, small group, and large group activities.

The daily activities and routines in the Preschool Program include the following:

- Large-Group Time – short, well-structured meetings that involve the whole class. These meetings provide an opportunity for children to experience a sense of belonging to a group. In these meetings, children can practice communication skills as they express their thoughts, ideas, and feelings. Large-Group Time typically involves songs, stories, movement activities and games.
- Small-Group Time – smaller grouping of children. The small size of the groups enables the teacher to introduce new concepts, teach particular skills, and focus observations on specific children.
- Choice Time – children choose an interest area in which they would like to work, whom they want to work with, and what materials to use. During this time more than one interest area is available to the children and when they are finished working in one area, they are free to move to another area. Teachers observe children, ask open-ended questions, and make suggestions that extend children’s play and support their learning.
- Snack Time
- Motor Activity Time – either indoors in the gym, classroom, or hallway or outdoors on the playground. During this time children are involved in physical activity using equipment such as balls, slides, parachutes, scooters, bicycles, etc.
- Read Aloud - engaging stories read aloud to the whole group. This is a great opportunity for students to further develop language skills by asking and answering questions, making predictions and retelling familiar stories.

## **Preschool Program Parent Involvement**

The goal of parent involvement is to establish regular and ongoing communication between school and home. Parents can become involved in the Preschool Program in the following ways:

- The majority of communication will be done through email. It is most helpful if parents share events that happen at home so that the teachers may help encourage the child to express his/her news at large-group time. Parents may also give the teachers an insight into a particular child's behavior on a given day. Please communicate with the teacher if your child had a sleepless night, is taking medication, etc.
- Preschool updates are distributed to parents highlighting special class events, tips, and information.
- Parent /teacher conferences – conferences are scheduled once a year to review your child's program and progress. Additional conferences can be scheduled as needed.
- \* Progress Reports will be posted on Genesis three times during the school year – December, March, and June.

## **Preschool Program Student Absence and School Cancellation Procedures**

### **Preschool Program Hours**

AM Session 8:40am-11:00 am

PM Session 12:30pm- 2:50 pm

### **Student Absence**

It is the parent's responsibility to call the Milton Avenue School Nurse and the transportation company each day your child will be absent from school.

Milton Avenue School: 973-457-2508 followed by pressing 1

Transportation – Morris- Union Jointure (if applicable) 908-790-9270

### **Medical Concerns**

Milton Avenue School Nurse direct line:

Erin Zotti: 973-457-2508 followed by pressing 1

E-mail: ezotti@chatham-nj.org

### **School Cancellation Procedures**

If school is cancelled for the day – the following cancellation procedures should be noted:

Honeywell Instant Alert (sign up directions on school website)

Chatham Web Page – <http://www.chatham-nj.org>

Channel 7 Eyewitness News



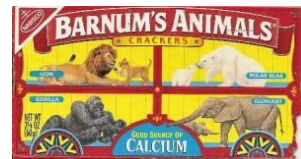
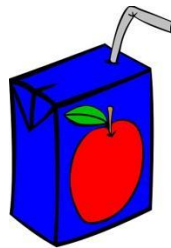
## Preschool Program Reminders and What Child Will Need for School

### Reminders

- Check your child's backpack for important papers, flyers, and library books.
- Sign in at the office to obtain a visitor's pass when visiting the school.
- Contact the nurse and transportation company (when applicable) if your child will be absent from school.

### What Your Child Will Need for School

- A complete change of clothing (pants, shirt, socks, underwear) to be kept in school for emergencies. **Please label your child's belongings.**
- Students with IEPs that are not toilet trained, please provide diapers or pull-ups and wipes.
- A backpack large enough to carry your child's library book, and snack bag.
- A daily snack and drink such as a juice box or water, crackers, fruit, etc. **Please send the snack in a snack bag labeled with your child's name.**
- For the safety and comfort of your child, please have them wear sneakers or rubber-soled shoes to school. If your child wears boots to school in bad weather, please send in shoes to change into. Open-toed sandals and Crocs are dangerous to wear on the playground, in the gym, and for any related services that your child may participate in during the school day.
- Please note, **it is school policy that birthdays will not be celebrated with food.**



## INCLEMENT WEATHER

Please check your school's website for the most up to date information regarding emergency school cancellations and delayed openings.

### Building Entrance Procedures

Cars may not enter the school driveway; this area is reserved for staff and buses. Preschoolers are too young to participate in the "drop off" car line. Please park your car and walk your child to the front of the building where your child will be greeted by a member of the Preschool Staff.

**\*If you are late for school, please buzz in at the front door and sign your child in. A staff member will then bring your child to the classroom.**

### Delivery and Pick-up

The Preschool Staff will meet the children in front of the building and escort them to the classroom.

**AM Session 8:40 – 11:00 am**

**PM Session 12:30 - 2:50 pm**

**During inclement weather, parents may walk their children to the front door of the building. Assigned staff will then escort the children into the building and proceed to our indoor lineup location. You will see a red flag out front to indicate that it is an indoor lineup day.**

**At the end of the program day, promptly meet your child for dismissal in the front of the building.**

### **School Food Allergy Alert**

The number of students having life threatening allergies continues to increase and the severity of these allergies is immeasurable. You are encouraged to send your child a healthy snack of any fruit, vegetable, or crackers and cheese. If your child has food allergies, please contact the school nurse prior to your child starting at Milton Avenue School.