

Wilson County Schools

Preschool Program

Handbook



# **MUST HAVE ON THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS**

Your child **cannot** start school until these items are on file with the school.

1. School Registration form (completed with emergency names and numbers listed)
2. School Health Module Information sheet
3. Health Record All shots must be up to date and correctly marked. The card must be signed by the physician and we must have the original copy. (Age 3-4 need yellow "Tennessee Preschool Immunization Certificate" card, age 5-6 need green school-age card)
4. Birth Certificate (can be a copy of Official copy)
5. Social Security number
6. Custody papers (if necessary, please put into writing if someone is not to pick up your child)
7. Transportation Form
8. Signed Class Information Sheet (indicating you have received and agreed to follow policies in this handbook).

## Introduction

Public Law (PL) 99-457, passed in October 1986, a federal law designed (a) to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs.

Children are eligible for early intervention services if they exhibit developmental delays or have a diagnosed physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in developmental delays in the following areas: cognitive skills, social/emotional skills, adaptive behavior, communication skills, physical skills.

Wilson County Schools currently have three preschool programs which are located at Southside Elementary School, Mt. Juliet Elementary School, and W.A. Wright Elementary School. The purpose of the program is to provide special needs students with early intervention services. The intervention services reduce educational costs by minimizing the need for special education services after disabled students reach school age. It also minimizes the likelihood of institutionalization of handicapped individuals and maximizes the potential for their independent living in society; and to enhance the capacity of families to meet the special needs of their children. All Wilson County Preschool programs are based on IEP goals, which are based on the Tennessee State curriculum standards, from birth to five years. (These standards can be found on the state website <http://www.state.tn.us/sbe/whatsnew.html>)

Since preschool is not required at this age in the public school system, there is not a source of same age peers within a typical classroom setting for our special needs preschool children. Therefore, we bring peer models into our special education class. Using peer models (typically developing children) in the Early Childhood Special Education classroom is a form of inclusion, (sometimes referred to as reverse inclusion or mainstreaming). Inclusion means that both children with and without special needs are provided the same educational experiences. The children learn from each other as we provide them with experiences to prepare them for a kindergarten situation. Research continually proves the benefits of inclusion. Inclusion in early intervention classes can, in some cases, prevent developmental problems, reduce the amount of time spent with special education services and can result in fewer children being retained in later grades. Many modifications are made continuously throughout the lessons, throughout the day. We are fortunate enough to have a lower class size and to have a lower staff to child ratio. We also have many support staff working in our class as needed.

Peer models are selected based on their age appropriate behavior, good communication skills, and the ability to get along with and understand children with special needs. They will learn about the challenges the special needs children have and how to work with them. Good behavior is essential with the many challenges this class presents.

## **Learning Through Centers and Play**

Each preschool class is set up with centers. Each classroom is unique in the centers that are available to the children, but most classrooms typically contain a Block / Construction Center, Housekeeping / Dramatic Play Center and a Puzzle / Fine Motor Center. Other centers may be unique to a specific theme, preferred materials or children's specific needs. Centers serve as learning tools through play. Play contributes to a child's development and academic success through functional and constructive play, games with rules, and dramatic play. As children engage in these different types of play, teachers assist in shaping children's learning by participating in their play and asking questions that encourage them to think.

The effective center is designed to relate to the world of active learners and is planned to encourage their involvement. In centers, small groups of children work together to interact more frequently than in large groups. Through play, children develop problem solving skills, use language to carry out their activities, learn about other people and experience the dynamics of working together. Play nurtures the children's development in all areas; intellectual, social-emotional, language and physical. Centers by the nature of their design, allow each child to work at his/her individual developmental level. Working with children of different ability levels in the center encourages increased understanding and appreciation for others. In centers, children's different ability levels are accepted, which builds their self confidence. Centers offer integrated learning at its best.

### **Housekeeping / Dramatic Play Center**

The Housekeeping / Dramatic Play Center may contain such materials as baby dolls, dress-up clothes, kitchen sets, tables and chairs, dishes, play food items, and puppets. This center is dedicated to "playing house". It involves dramatic play, pretend / make-believe play and role playing. As children act out roles, they learn about themselves, their families and society. The housekeeping center provides for social-emotional development as children use dramatic play to relive real life experiences. They work with others negotiating roles, playing together, and problem solving real life situations. Use of fine motor skills, visual discrimination skills, and language are encouraged as children dress-up, play cook, do laundry, take care of baby dolls and clean-up.

### **Blocks / Construction Center**

The Block / Construction Center may contain such toys as wood, cardboard, or plastic block sets, cars, trucks, planes, tools, or plastic animals. This center is important to cognitive development. Playing with blocks gives children an opportunity to recreate the world around them in a concrete form. The ability to recreate representations of their experiences is a necessary skill for abstract thinking. Children develop concepts essential to logical thinking such as size, shape, number, order, area, length, and

weight (math skills). Physically, children use large muscles to lift and carry blocks from place to place and use small muscles to move cars and operate tools. Language and social-emotional skills are encouraged as children work and play together. Children are also learning about the world around them as they apply their creative abilities and imaginations to build a zoo, airport, farm or fire station.

## **Puzzle / Fine Motor Center**

In this center are found toys and games that are played on a table or on the floor such as puzzles, pegs, bead stringing, lacing cards, Mr. Potato Head and Candyland. Many of these games and toys are quiet activities that can be played alone or in a small group. These toys provide challenging opportunities to learn a new skill. The toys are designed to develop confidence through self checking or cooperation through sharing or turn-taking. This center offers opportunity for children to experiment with intricate designs in construction and invention and to work on emerging mathematical skills such as seriation, matching, and classification. Physical developmental skills such as eye-hand coordination and fine muscle development are improved through activities like bead stringing, peg boards, and interlocking cubes. Social and Language skills are encouraged through games like "Go Fish" and Candyland as teachers guide children through the game, learning to take turns, share, cooperate and ask for items.

# Wilson County Preschool Classroom Policies

## Inclement Weather / Snow Days:

On days when severe weather is predicted please stay tuned to a radio, TV, or computer. This is the best way to find out if there are delayed openings or school closings. In case of early dismissal you must pick up your child as soon as possible. If your child is a bus rider, we will be putting them on the bus at the closing time, unless you contact us requesting otherwise. If there are severe storms in the area, please **use your best judgement** in deciding whether to send your child to school or if you want to pick them up early.

## Attendance:

Attendance is not mandatory at the preschool level however regular attendance is highly encouraged for your child to benefit from the program and to receive consistent services. Your child's IEP spells out a specific plan to prepare your child for school. If you miss a related service due to absences, they will not be made up.

## Illnesses:

The Preschool cannot provide for sick children. Please **do not** send your child to school if he or she is ill. It is required that your child be picked up as soon as possible after you receive our call in the event your child becomes ill during the school day- **no exceptions**. Students presenting any signs or symptoms listed below should remain home until they are symptom free.

- Temperature of 100 degrees or more - must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to class
- Purulent (green, yellow, thick or unusual) nasal discharge.
- Diarrhea - may not return for 24hours after last bowl movement.
- Nausea or vomiting - may not return unless symptom free for 24 hours
- Skin rashes or eruptions – Any rash other than diaper rash must have a doctor's note stating the rash is not contagious. Scabies or impetigo must have verification of treatment from doctor before returning to school.
- Eye discharge, red, matting or crusty eyes – must have doctor's note before returning. (A doctor's note will be needed to explain allergies.)
- Complaints of earache, severe stomachache, sore throat, swollen glands, or severe headache
- Head lice – must have proper treatment and must be brought to school by a parent following treatment to be checked by school personnel and released to be returned to school. The school board's policy is lice and nit free before returning to school.
- Communicable Diseases – Not permitted by law in child care. Some of those illnesses are but not limited to: Infectious Conjunctivitis (pink eye), Impetigo,

Hepatitis A, Scabies, Ringworm, Infectious Diarrhea, Chicken Pox, Scarlet Fever, Lice, and Strep Throat. A child with any of these diseases may not return to school without a doctor's note.

**Medications:** (This applies to any medication whether prescription or over the counter)

We do not administer any medications in the classroom. The school nurse, in accordance with the Wilson County Schools medication policy, handles all medicines, medical directions, or medical procedures. If your child requires medicine or requires medical attention of any sort, you must go through the office at Southside. Medications, medical forms or special procedures need to be discussed with the school nurse or medical designee in the Junior High Office (in the back of the school). Teachers and class assistants do not handle medicine or medical instructions. If you are going to the doctor, you may want to stop by and pick up forms for medication, if needed. No medicine of any kind can be transported on the bus. The medication policy is found in the front of your child's Agenda book.

### **Behavior:**

Good behavior is encouraged, and positive reinforcement in the form of praise, stickers, treats and special privileges is consistently used throughout the school day. When misbehaviors occur, consequences will be used, such as time-out, loss of treat or privileges. Time-out results in a student being removed from the situation where the misbehavior occurred and will last for an age appropriate amount of time. You will be notified if your child misbehaves. We need your help to encourage good behavior at school.

If a child displays any of the following severe misbehaviors while at school, which interfere with his/her learning or the learning of others, and does not respond to consequences, you will be called to come and pick up your child immediately.

- Hitting, biting, kicking, scratching, or other means of hurting other children or adults
- Continual use of inappropriate language
- Refusal of consequences for misbehavior
- Lack of control over behavior or emotions

## **Transportation Issues**

Transportation behavioral issues will be handled on a case by case basis. Transportation to a daycare or babysitter outside of the preschool zone will need to be provided by parents and/or guardian.

## **Report Cards / Parent Conferences / IEP's:**

Updated goal sheets and progress reports for each nine week grading period will be distributed on the designated report card days set by the Board of Education. Parent teacher conferences are not specifically set for preschool. If you have any concerns or questions, please feel free to contact me as soon as possible (by phone, notes, or email) to schedule a conference or IEP meeting. Remember, you can call an IEP meeting at any time you feel it is necessary.

## **Dress code:**

The school dress code has been waived for your preschool child. Dress your child comfortably and appropriately for activities indoors and outdoors. We will go outside for a few minutes each day unless there are extreme weather conditions. Keep in mind that your child will participate in projects involving paint and glue. No flip-flops or slip on shoes are allowed for safety reasons.

Although each child will have an assigned cubby for jackets, mittens, backpacks, and their extra change of clothing, it would be helpful to mark items of clothing with the child's name.

## **Toys:**

There are plenty of unique and age appropriate toys in the classroom for your child to play with. Please DO NOT send any other toys to school unless we request it. We will not be responsible for lost or broken toys.

I have read and agreed to the policies stated in this handbook.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_