

**St. Francis Early Learning Center  
636 Hamilton Street  
Norristown, PA 19401  
610-757-1523  
sfachildcare@gmail.com**

## **PARENT HANDBOOK**

*St. Francis Early Learning Center  
is a component of  
St. Francis Parish of the  
Archdiocese of Philadelphia*

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## **PHILOSOPHY OF** **SAINT FRANCIS EARLY LEARNING CENTER**

In a democracy, we must take all the children of all the people, value them equally, and provide the best possible conditions to encourage their development into persons who can find life worth living and at the same time be useful members of society. We at St. Francis Early Learning Center realize the importance of the early years. Early care and feeding the mind, body, and spirit is essential to the growth of the child and the nation.

St. Francis Early Learning Center is a vital program undertaking a multitude of activities on behalf of young children. Here, a tremendous effort is made to close the gap between theory and practice. We are constantly striving to enhance the effectiveness of our program by supplying all that is needed to help fulfill the complex and expanding responsibilities, which are involved. Beneficial experiences of quality are provided under skilled leadership. Each child enjoys the environmental stimulation and opportunities, which will make it possible for him/her to fulfill the complete range of his/her developmental capacities.

St. Francis Early Learning Center recognizes that each child is a unique individual. To meet the child's needs we provide a rich variety of activities and experiences. We endeavor to create a warm, accepting atmosphere, which not only makes the child feel secure but also enables him/her to learn readily. Learning is an on-going process, which begins for each child in the home and expands as the horizons widen. With help from parents and by means of a curriculum sensitive to individual progress, teachers guide each child in his/her growth toward maturity.

Children who feel good about themselves and have confidence in their abilities are more likely to succeed than children who believe themselves incapable of success. Success or failure appears to be caused as much by the child's concept of himself/herself as it is by measures of mental ability.

All facets of development - physical, social, emotional, spiritual and intellectual - take place concurrently. Only through experiences, which integrate the whole being, can a child grow, learn and discover that he/she is a person of worth.

The physical organization of the classroom is not enough to take care of all the needs of our children. There must be a special "social organization" of the classroom where basic needs of the children are to be met. This we conceive as an atmosphere activated by the operation of the four freedoms, which liberate the child for learning. They are:

- Freedom from fear;
- Freedom of movement;
- Freedom of conversation while working and
- Freedom of choice--allowed frequently.

Finally, we attempt to establish a rapport with parents in order to strengthen your confidence in us by selecting St. Francis Early Learning Center for your children. We do this through frequent communication, face-to-face, electronic and written. We discuss your child's strong points as well as those areas of skill and character that need maturing. This is done to better assist you, the parent, in preparing your child for good citizenship here and in the future.

St. Francis Early Learning Center offers peace of mind to parents from varied backgrounds, with one common denominator--the daily need for quality childcare.

### **Our Mission**

St. Francis of Assisi Parish, School and Early Learning Center exists to transform lives and bring about a just and compassionate society where every individual is valued, families are healthy and strong, and communities are united in their commitment to the good of all.

We are committed to trying to help all children and their families, to value them equally, to provide the best possible physical, emotional, and intellectual conditions to encourage their development into persons who can find life worth living and at the same time be responsible and honest members of society.

We endeavor to create a warm, accepting atmosphere, which not only makes each child feel secure, but also enables him/her to learn readily.

### **Our Vision**

We envision a world touched by God's mercy: where poverty and need are alleviated, and all people share justly in the blessings of creation.

### **Our Core Values**

Compassion: Genuine care and heartfelt concern for those we serve

Dignity: Respect for each person created in God's image, regardless of color, capacity,  
or age

Charity: Generosity toward all people in need, in gratitude for God's goodness to us

Justice: Defense and advocacy for the rights of the poor and disadvantaged

Excellence: Professional competence and responsible stewardship of time and resources

## ADMISSIONS

Children between the ages of 6 weeks to 4 years old may enroll in St. Francis Early Learning Center.

We require all children to have age appropriate inoculations and physicals prior to admission according to the Department of Public Welfare.

Parents will be notified if their child is accepted.

IEP/IFSP: If your child has an IEP/IFSP, a copy must be provided during the enrollment process. If you do not wish to share the IEP/IFSP you must provide a written letter stating so.

St. Francis Early Learning Center opens Monday through Friday at **6:45 AM** and closes at **6:00 PM**.

## FAILURE TO ADJUST

The Center meets the needs of a child who functions according to his/her age level in terms of physical and mental health. Each child is afforded a two-week adjustment period to determine if the child is able to adapt to the program at the Center. The daycare will refer parents to appropriate agencies (PCCR, DPW, Child Link, etc) for assistance in obtaining services best suited for their child's needs. The daycare also reserves the right to withdraw your child at any time if we feel your child is of harm or disruptive to other students and/or staff. You will be contacted to attend a conference with the teacher and director before any action is taken and at that time written records will be presented to support the cause of dismissal.

Every effort will be made by the Director and Staff to assist the child/parent in a smooth transition to the program and to overcome any problems that may arise. However, if for some reason the child does not adjust, he/she will be withdrawn.

## MEALS

Meals are provided by the Center three times daily (breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack). Breakfast consists of milk, fruit juice, cereal/muffin, etc. Hot lunches are served throughout the year, consisting of vegetables, meat, starch and bread and milk. A dessert of fresh or preserved fruit or gelatin is also served. Snacks consist of cookies, (variety brand) or crackers, and fruit juice. ***No outside food is permitted in the center. If your child is lactose intolerant a doctor's note is required. If your child has a food allergy please notify us immediately and provide a Dr.'s note.***

## ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

### ARRIVALS

We have arranged for free play activities between 6:45 a.m. and 8:15 a.m., so that teachers can facilitate parent/child separations and the transition to school activities, as well as have the opportunity for brief communication with parents as they arrive. **In order for your child to receive breakfast they must arrive by 8:30 am. Meals will not be served after 8:45am.** If your child arrives after meal time it is the parent's responsibility to have provide breakfast prior to the child's arrival.

More structured activities begin by 9:30 a.m., and arrivals after that may cause disruptions to an activity in progress resulting in loss of attention. It is imperative to have your child in school by **9:00 a.m.** so that this can be avoided. Children will not be accepted after 9:00am unless previous notice is provided. Doctor's notes are required when arriving late due to a morning appointment.

In the interest of safety, children must be brought to the classroom by an adult who must notify the teacher of the child's presence and initial on the daily sign in/out sheet located outside your child's classroom. **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR CHILD AT FRONT DOOR TO ENTER ALONE!**

### DEPARTURES

If you arrive while the teacher is involved in a structured activity, we ask that you minimize the interruption as much as possible.

Children will only be released to an adult who has been given written permission or verbal consent by the child's parents. Escorts must come into the classroom, notify the staff, and initial the daily sign in/out sheet. This information is used for tracking enrollment and attendance.

The director or receptionist must be contacted by the child's parent if an emergency arises and the child will be picked up by someone other than the persons listed on the proper forms. The teacher or director will require a form of photo identification.

Staff supervises children until your arrival. Once you are in your child's classroom, we ask that you take charge of your child and be responsible for them at that point. If your child is involved in free play or activity, they are required to clean up before they leave. We ask that you reinforce this with your child so that they do not run out and leave toys, materials laying around for someone else to clean.

**DOOR BELL**

A bell is provided for your convenience in the event that the front desk person has left the office temporarily. Please give about 2 minutes before continuing to ring the bell if someone has not come to the front. We appreciate your cooperation with this matter. You may also call the center phone if there is still no one coming to the door.

**SECURITY**

Please DO NOT open the door to anyone or hold it open for anyone entering behind you or as your exiting. The door facing Hamilton Street is not an exit. We ask that no one exit via this door. It can not be supervised properly and we do not want someone to enter without our knowledge. This is a safety risk to all staff and children.

**DURATION OF PROGRAM**

St. Francis Early Learning Center maintains a 52-week program. Hence, once you are registered, if you expect your child to complete the program, you must maintain your fiscal responsibility for the duration of that period of time.

**CURRICULUM**

St. Francis Early Learning Center offers a comprehensive program within the curriculum, which includes:

Language Arts	Math	Science	Spanish
Social Studies	Art	Music	
Physical Fitness	Affective Education	Dramatic Play	

Realizing that premature and relentless insistence upon performance not in agreement with the child’s growth dulls both his/her ability and will to learn, the above concepts are not forced or imposed upon the child’s readiness for the experience. The following are brief explanations of the areas of our curriculum.

**LANGUAGE ARTS**

The term “Language Arts” refers to programs in communication--training in speaking, listening, readiness for reading, writing, and spelling, and non-verbal forms of communication.

Language Arts will serve our children by providing for them various levels of readiness as they become more and more involved with the process of communication. Reading Readiness, Listening and Writing Readiness and Non-Verbal Communications are four major categories in this area.

**MATHEMATICS**

Mathematics is a science, which deals with quantities, magnitudes and forms and their relationships by the use of numbers and symbols.

The small child is interested in quantities and their relationship with the whole selection of objects. Aware of the child's need for active, self-motivated learning situations, St. Francis Early Learning Center program refrains from imposing formal class learning experiences, but utilizes the practical living experiences mathematical concepts afford.

## **SCIENCE**

Science is a search for truth. Children are natural scientists. They learn through the senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching. Such experiences are common in childhood; however, the teacher tries to make the program such as to aid the child to understand his/her work throughout the year.

There is no set "science period" per se, but in the overall nursery and pre-kindergarten programs, the teacher and child cut through and across great bodies of subject matter. Teaching science is not directed toward fact collecting but helping children understand basic concepts in the world around them.

Since neither Science nor Social Studies are compartmentalized for young children, Science and Social Studies are often correlated.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

Social Studies in our program includes learning some of the skills and attitudes of working and playing close together and acquiring concepts about how people in their home, communities, and their expanding world live and work.

Young children work for a number of years to learn to take and share responsibilities, or to understand such concepts as buying and selling. Therefore, the curriculum provides for continuous stages of understanding and skills.

## **ART**

Art is the ability to express himself/herself by creative skills and apply them with imagination. The result will be form and beauty: painting, sculpturing, music appreciation and dance.

There is a deep natural desire on the part of the young to express themselves through art. Thoughts and feelings which, perhaps cannot be adequately expressed with their limited vocabulary, are eagerly splashed out in bold colors or squeezed out in clay.

Through this medium children gain confidence and control in handling crayons, brushes, paints, clay, wood and tools as they discover and experience the many possibilities of these materials. They feel a sense of satisfaction and have their horizons broadened through creating something of their own.

Like artists, children draw upon their own subjective reactions to the world about them. Like artists, they delight in exploring color and form and their work ranges from the most abstract to the most careful representation. This has little to do with the child's future development as an artist. However, St. Francis Early Learning Center wishes to make this experience available to both nursery and pre- kindergarten children.

## **MUSIC**

Music is the art and science of combining vocal and instrumental sounds in varying melody, harmony and rhythm especially to form structurally complete and emotionally expressive composition.

A young child is able to express appreciation of music through listening to recorded sounds and imitating them by the use of simple instruments such as those used in a rhythm band. The child often creates music by using simple objects such as cooking utensils and other play objects. One can readily recognize his/her appreciation through his/her undivided attention and body movements.

St. Francis Early Learning Center desires to provide this sensual, creative, and developmental experience to the nursery and kindergarten children. We hope to form the basis of perceptual and conceptual music skills that will be thoroughly enjoyed now and find greater joy as he/she matures.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Physical education is exercise or movement for fitness of body, mind and spirit. Physical fitness can be preventive medicine for a host of physical maladjustments. It stimulates the brain and heart and all the cells of the body by improving circulation and respiration. It develops the muscles and contributes to growth and well being. It can lift the spirit, be a healthy outlet for pent up emotions and provide an opportunity for the child to experience a type of success that promotes self-confidence and a feeling of self worth.

## **AFFECTIVE EDUCATION**

Affective education consists of discussions, which may emphasize an emotion or a degree of acceptance. Also included is ethical conduct (values). All should lead to the development of a positive self-concept.

## **DRAMATIC PLAY**

As regards the total growth in intellectual and social development of children, studies have shown that Dramatic Play leads to discovery, reasoning, and thought; it is a bridge to social relations, and leads to emotional equilibrium.

The most common form of dramatic play is Simple Housekeeping. Fascinating to girls and boys alike, they play out what they see happening around them and express some of their feelings about it. We see and hear children's emergence as individuals. There's a growing understanding of themselves, of other people, and of important life experiences. Therefore we see how crucial it is that we have dramatic play and how necessary it is to have sufficient time, space, and privacy for this play as part of the daily program. Housekeeping is not the only form of dramatic play. It is essential that we create as many different forms of this play as the children experience in their lives. This includes but is not limited to nail salons, hair salons, barbershops, doctor's office, etc.

## **OVERALL EXPERIENCE**

Socialization and emotional development is of great importance at an early age, therefore, both indoor and outdoor activities are provided to foster group and staff interaction. Academic activities are provided in two categories; teacher directed and self directed. Children are always treated with dignity and respect. Positive reinforcement is provided by both spoken and unspoken means. Handshakes are common; smiles are frequent. Various incentives are provided to children to assist in developing self-confidence.

You can be assured that your child/children is/are receiving the best care at the Center. We look forward to continuing to serve you at St. Francis Early Learning Center.

## **SUPERVISION**

Please be advised that your child/children is/are under constant supervision while at St. Francis Early Learning Center. In the morning when delivered, children are accompanied to their classroom, where a staff person is on hand. At least one staff member is available to monitor children. Health breaks (toileting) are scheduled several times daily, however, the child is permitted to be excused whenever needed. Children are supervised during this time.

Supervision of children to and from school is the responsibility of the parents or guardian.

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

The methods of guidance and discipline used shall be positive and consistent with the developmental age of the children and applied with full knowledge and understanding of the parent (s).

There shall be no use of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, or harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment, or any other kind of child abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Discipline shall not be associated with the behavior of children in regard to rest, toilet training or food.

Discipline shall not be associated with the withholding of emotional responses or stimulation and shall not require the child to remain silent for long periods of time.

Children shall not be isolated without supervision.

## DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE

At St. Francis Early Learning Center, the term guidance is used for several reasons. It is a positive term and implies working WITH the child to develop internal control of his/her behavior. Our goal is to encourage the children to become creative, independent, and responsible and socially mature human beings. This involves learning to make responsible choices and accepting the consequences of such choices.

Guidance takes several forms:

1. Environment: A place designed for children. The furniture is child-sized with lots of hands-on activities.
2. Logical Rules: Such as keeping our hands to ourselves and taking care of the learning environment. These are discussed with the children, as well as why such rules are needed.
3. Curriculum: Is developmentally appropriate, based on the children's interest and level of readiness.
4. Positive Behavior: We reinforce the behaviors we encourage. Catch them being "good!"
5. Redirection: Often interesting a child in another activity can eliminate a potential difficulty. We might ask a child to help us or send them to a different play area.
6. Positive Reminder: Telling the child what we want them to do, rather than using "no" or "don't."
7. Renewal Time: Occasionally a child needs to be removed from the situation for a brief time allowing them to consider alternate behavior.

Any on-going situations will be discussed with the parents to ensure a cooperative approach. Please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns.

**NOTE: No corporal punishment will be allowed. This is defined as the use of negative physical touching (spanking, slapping, pinching, etc.) No unusual punishment will be allowed, such as humiliation, ridicule, threat, or coercion.**

## **CHRONIC DISRUPTIVE DISORDER**

We will make every effort to work with the parents of children having difficulties in child care. We are here to serve and protect all of our children. Children displaying chronic disruptive behavior, which has been determined to be upsetting to the physical or emotional well being of another child, may require the following actions. Staff & director should follow the following procedures.

### **Documentation**

The staff shall record all observed behavior deemed problematic. As much detail as possible shall be included: time, date, environment and what occurred, with the exception of the name of any other child.

### **Initial Consultation**

The staff member will use all means of communication to inform parent of observed behavior. Staff will discuss with parents necessary tactics to assist child in improving.

### **Second Consultation**

If the behavior persists the staff member will arrange for conference with parent to discuss relevant information. Goals will be established and the parent will be involved in creating approaches towards solving the problem.

### **Third Consultation**

If the initial plan for helping the child fails, the parent(s) will be required to meet with the staff and Director. Another attempt will be made to identify the problem, outline new approaches to the problem, and discuss the consequences if progress is not apparent.

### **Suspension**

When the previous attempts have been followed and no progress has been made towards solving the problem, the child may be suspended from the childcare center indefinitely. The Child Care Director may immediately suspend a child at anytime he/she exhibits a behavior, which is harmful to him/ herself or to others. A parent may be called from work at anytime the child exhibits uncontrollable behavior that cannot be modified by the childcare staff. That parent may be asked to take the child home immediately.

Suspensions from the childcare program may vary from a few hours to indefinitely.

## **HIPAA**

The center keeps certain information on file regarding children and families, which may be considered personal in nature. Staff is expected to maintain this information in confidence and not discuss it or release it to persons outside the Daycare Center unless prior written permission has been obtained from the parties involved. Staff will also refrain from discussing confidential information concerning staff, the center or its families among themselves or with parents. Staff shall refrain from derogatory comments pertaining to the center, staff, children, or parents. Any staff found violating anyone's confidentiality would be disciplined. Information that has direct bearing on the welfare of any child shall be brought to the Directors attention immediately.

## **CHILD ABUSE**

Per state regulations, all staff is mandated reporters. This means, that in the event any staff person suspects child abuse by a parent, guardian, or another staff member, immediate action should take place. Staff should implement agency procedures, which coincide with state regulations, for reporting child abuse. The health and safety of each child is the center's priority. If a parent suspects child abuse they should notify the Director immediately.

## **CLIENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

Parents are encouraged to problem solve grievances in an informal fashion with the source of conflict while maintaining a respectful manner at all times.

Parents should schedule an appointment with the staff person with whom there is conflict and discuss issues and concerns immediately. Each person should have the opportunity to discuss and problem solve during this time.

If a parent is still unhappy with the attempts of problem solving then the Director will have a meeting with all parties involved and offer a resolution.

## **DISCHARGE POLICY**

St. Francis Early Learning Center reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of any child if deemed necessary. They can include but are not limited to the following:

- Non-payment or lateness of payments
- Excessive late pick ups and/or non-payment of late pick up fee
- Child is unable to adjust to program
- Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or children by parent/guardian/family member or child
- Not adhering to center policies and/or procedures as outlined in parent handbook

## **FEES FOR TUITION**

RATES EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2008

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED PRICE SHEET



TUITION MUST BE PAID ON **MONDAY**. Please be advised, all tuition must be in our office on the due date. If we do not receive your tuition on that day, a \$5.00 late fee will be applied. If your tuition is not received within 3 days, your child can be **dismissed**. Your child can only return when the tuition is **paid in full** (pending vacancies).

Our primary responsibility is your child/ren. Once the tuition gets behind, it is very difficult to catch up. Your ability to pay tuition on time keeps our focus on your child/ren.

Parents who pay bi-monthly/monthly, please arrange payment schedule so that tuition is paid ahead rather than behind (to avoid late charges).

**All payments are collected 1 week in advance! On the 1<sup>st</sup> day of school a payment for 2 weeks is required. The following Monday and every Monday after, payments are due.**

**CASH, CHECK or MONEY ORDER WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR PAYMENTS OF TUITION.** (If paying by check please allow up to 1 week for checks to clear and avoid bounced check fees of \$10)

**Payment by check will no longer be accepted after the 1<sup>st</sup> time a check is bounced.**

### **BILLING**

All tuition is billed weekly. Each week when payment is made the balance will be 0. If your payments are made on a timely basis then your balance should be 0. The number of weeks billed is dependent on the number of Mondays in each month.

Because of operational expenses, there is **no credit** applied for the following:

1. Children who are absent for vacation, sickness or any other reason.
2. Holidays
3. Snow Days

**TUITION RECEIPTS**

Written receipts are given to parents/guardians each time any payment is received. Printed receipts will be given once payment is entered into computer system.

Parents are requested to retain their receipts in a secure place for tax purposes for the following year. It is also important to retain receipts if a discrepancy occurs in the payments.

End of year statements are provided by January 31<sup>st</sup>, per federal regulations, and sent automatically to all parents. Any account with a past due balance will have it's tax form withheld until payment in full is received. Forms will only be printed once, additional reprinting will incur a fee.

**LATE PICK-UP (TARDINESS)**

A warning letter is sent each time your child/children is/are picked up from the Center after 6:00 PM. Beginning at 6:01 you will be marked as late.

**PICK UP TIME IS 6:00 PM**

After the first and second warning is sent, a final letter will ask you to withdraw your child/children from the Center. St. Francis does not make provisions for families who are constantly late.

**LATE FEES..... \$15.00 FOR EACH 15 MINUTE PERIOD**

FOR EXAMPLE.....6:01 to 6:15=\$15.00 -----6:16 to 6:30=\$30.00 Etc.

**\*\*Late fee must be paid that evening or following morning CASH ONLY  
for your child to continue with their enrollment\*\***

*Any child here beyond 6:30 will result in the police being notified.*

**ADDITIONAL FEES**

**HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES .....Contingent on the type of activities**

**GRADUATION..... Contingent on the venue**

**FIELD TRIPS ..... Contingent upon location**

IF YOUR TUITION IS PAST DUE YOUR CHILD WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO ATTEND ANY FIELD TRIPS UNTIL THE BALANCE IS PAID IN FULL.

**Damaged Property**

If your child(ren) damage any SFELC property it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to cover the expense of replacing the item/equipment. Parents will be provided with proof of cost for the item and will be expected to make payment within 7 days of notification.

Any child who jumps on their cot causing it to break will no longer be given a cot by the SFELC. Parents will be responsible for the replacement cost and must provide them with a mat for their rest time.

**EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION AND  
FINANCIAL AGREEMENT UPDATES**

The center is requiring you to review and update both the Emergency Contact Information and Financial Agreement for your child/children.

In accordance with the Pennsylvania Code for Child Day Care Centers, you will be required to update these forms every 6 months or as a change occurs. These updates are scheduled to occur every September & March. **If your information changes at anytime other than the above months you must complete a new form.**

As always, we appreciate your cooperation.

**NUTRITIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES ELIGIBILITY FORM**

The center is required to have the NDS eligibility forms updated annually or annually by the NDS department and federal regulations. This information must be kept up to date in order for the Center to be charged the correct amount for all meals served. In order to avoid the meal costs being passed on to parents, all forms must be completed and returned to the Office in a timely manner.

## **CHILD'S NEEDS**

### Supplies

Please see the list provided to you at enrollment.

Please be sure that any item that belongs to your child is labeled with permanent marker. Although we use washable paints and crayons and we try not to soil clothing, we are not responsible for stains/damages.

## **WHAT NOT TO BRING**

- Avoid large earrings or long necklaces. These items can cause injury to a child if yanked or becomes snagged on a toy.
- Avoid children bringing money in their pockets. The children tend to play with it or misplace it. If money is sent for field trips, please place it in a labeled envelope and turn into office.
- Lots of barrettes frequently come out and are lost.
- Toys are not to come into the center unless it is Show – N - Tell Day
- Sandals/Flip flops in the summer can lead to quick falls when children are running and skinned/scraped toes. No aqua socks!
- Tight belts make it very difficult for children to go to the bathroom quickly and independently.
- No video games (Nintendo DS, Gameboys, etc.)

*St. Francis Early Learning Center is not responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged items!*

## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

We require that children have current immunizations according to the American

Academy of Pediatrics Guidelines and that we have updated verifications of health forms. Be sure to take the Health Assessment form with you when visiting your doctor and quickly return it to us. The form must be returned to us within 30 days of enrollment or your child will need to be withdrawn until we receive the Health Assessment form.

Our software program will keep track of all immunizations and physicals. We will print notices when immunizations are due and it will be placed in your child's cubby.

### **HEALTH, SAFETY AND SECURITY**

In addition to the Medical Examination and the immunizations required registration, the following must be observed:

If a child is absent for three or more consecutive days due to illness, a physician's certificate is required stating that the child is free from illness and is able to return to school.

- Germs from mucus secreted by nose are contagious. We request that your child stay home for 24-48 hours.
- Pink eye is very contagious. You must keep your child at home when this condition exists for a period of 24 hours while receiving treatment.
- Ring Worm is a common problem, when detected please keep your child home for at least 48hrs with treatment being provided.
- Head Lice is a common problem, when detected please keep your child home for at least 48hrs with treatment being provided.

If your child arrives at the center ill you may be required to take the child back home.

#### **Symptoms, Which Require Your Child to Remain Home:**

- Fever of 101 or more within the 1<sup>st</sup> 24 hours
- Signs of possible severe illness, including unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, or difficulty breathing
- Uncontrolled diarrhea that is not contained by toilet use
- Vomiting two or more times in the previous 24 hours.
- Conditions which could be communicable until they have been determined not so  
For example: chicken pox, pink eye, ring worm, lice etc.

No medication will be accepted for administration in the Center unless a state required form is signed and completed with the following information:

- Diagnosis of the child's illness
- Dosage and times for administration clearly stated
- Medication must be in original container with directions attached
- Prescription medication, must be in child's name, not another family member
- Parent/Guardian Signature

## **ACCIDENTS AND EMERGENCIES**

Despite our careful supervision and attention to safety issues, we recognize that accidents are possible and must be prepared for:

### **Minor Mishaps**

Accidents such as bumps and minor bruises are a normal part of child's play. In the event of a minor accident we will administer First Aid and complete an accident report, which we will ask you to sign so that we are sure you have been notified of the accident.

### **More Serious Injuries & Medical Emergencies**

In the event of an accident or illness that requires immediate medical attention, a staff person will notify you immediately. First Aid will be administered while a decision is made regarding the transportation of your child to Montgomery Hospital.

## **FIRST AID AND CHILD ILLNESS**

The Center attempts to provide a safe environment for all of our children. If accidents do occur, the Director or a member of the staff will render first aid and notify parents or guardians as noted below. Any treatment beyond first aid will be the responsibility of the parent.

### **PARENTS WILL BE NOTIFIED**

- Whenever an accident takes place in which the child needs medical (first aid) attention, an incident report will be **sent home.**
- Anytime a blow to the head has occurred (sometimes intracranial pressure caused by swelling does not take place for several hours). Parent will be **called immediately.**
- Any injury that may indicate possible broken bones would necessitate the parent being **called immediately.**
- Any cut where excessive bleeding occurs would also necessitate the parent being **called immediately.**
- An incident report will be filled out on all accidents, regardless of severity by the person who witnesses the accident & parents are required to sign the form.

**The Director or the Assistant Group Supervisors have the authority to call the Emergency Medical Service Ambulance, if deemed necessary.**

### **EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE WILL BE CALLED IN THE FOLLOWING CASES:**

- When the child is not breathing
- When the child is unconscious
- When back injury has occurred
- When hemorrhaging occurs

### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Feel free to visit the school at any time. You are invited to participate in the program

as much as your schedule allows. Parent participation is encouraged and necessary to foster positive relations and nurture children. You may:

- Come in and read a story
- Cook or bake with the children
- Help with lunch, snack or party
- Talk about a career or hobby
- Teach a game
- Special Activities
- Field Trips

### **COMMUNICATING WITH STAFF**

When you enroll your child at St. Francis Early Learning Center we share a challenging and rewarding responsibility - that of assisting your child to develop intellectually, socially, emotionally, etc. In order to do this, we need to maintain open communication with you.

Because time to talk can often be limited on both sides, we do the following:

- Post parent information boards, in the hallway and outside of each classroom with all updates and new information, Provides notes home if any problems arise.
- Send home a daily information sheet with each child every day to keep you updated on eating, sleeping, and potty habits as well as any upcoming events. **(Please take the time to read these daily notes).**
- Hold quarterly parent meetings to introduce any new staff & discuss upcoming events.
- Please know that supervision of children is our first priority, therefore talking with you may not be possible at drop-off and/ or pick-up; therefore scheduling a convenient time may be necessary.
- Hold a “getting to know you” meeting within 60 days of enrollment
- Hold conferences two times a year to update you on your child's progress and get your input on topics
- Provide parent workshops here at the center and information on workshops or classes offered by another department within the agency or within the community,
- Telephone you if your child seems ill or if we have other concerns.
- Provide a calendar, snack menu, and monthly letter of upcoming dates and events.
- Host a parent’s night out activity (no children)
- Send emails regularly

Parents and teachers must **work together as a team** in order to accomplish our common objective of giving every child the best experience possible.

### **TRANSITION POLICY**

As children grow and develop we continually assess their preparedness for the next room or grade. With the exception of Pre-K, the children will typically move to the next room

when both their age and development allow for the move. When the time comes your child's teacher and/or the director will discuss the plans with you. If everyone is in agreement for the transition the children will be given the opportunity to spend some time in the new room to allow them to adjust to the new setting. After monitoring the child's interactions and comfort level in the new room parents will be notified of the move up date.

Pre-K children are working on preparing for Kindergarten throughout the school year. As the end of the school year grows near the teacher will discuss with your child the next step to Kindergarten. Working together we can make this an exciting and enjoyable experience for children and minimize the anxiety of going to a new, BIG school. We work with St. Francis School to allow the children to visit the Kindergarten class.

### **SAFE PICK-UP AND DROP-OFF POINTS FOR CHILDREN**

In accordance with the Pennsylvania Code for Child Day Care Centers, the following information concerns the safe routes to be taken when arriving and leaving the Center. We suggest that when at all possible, these routes be followed.

The center operates from 6:45 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Arrival is generally between the hours of 6:45 AM and 8:30 AM.

For vehicular arrivals there are several different parking locations. You may enter through the Hamilton St. entrance by Rectory and continue through to front of Center where you can drop off your child. The parking lot may be used between 6:45am & 9:00am ONLY. There is 15 minute street parking located on Hamilton. Parents and children **must** enter the center through the main entrance on the parking lot side.

When arriving at the Center to pick-up children in the evening, please follow the same procedures. If you are driving, **the parking lot will only be accessible after 4pm.** We suggest that you park as close to the Center as possible.

Children can only be picked-up at the main entrance. Upon arrival, please let the front office and the staff person on duty know that you are there to pick-up your child. **Always initial the sign out sheet.**

*For security reasons, children will only be released to authorized individuals. If the person picking up your child is not, recognized or on the authorized list, ID will be required and you may be contacted for confirmation. All parents should have the last 4 digits of their SS# on file for verbal authorizations.*

### **PARKING**

There is NO PARKING permitted in the area marked RESERVED. This is for

STAFF ONLY. All parents/guardians/escorts are to park to the left of the building (if facing the building). There is NO PARKING in front of the steps or anywhere on the white lines. This is a serious safety issue when you are parking where families have to walk and the steps and ramps are being obstructed.

For your information, the Norristown Police Dept., located at 235 East Airy Street, Norristown, PA 19401-5048, supervises our district. Emergency Medical assistance is available at Montgomery Hospital.

Feel free to contact the Director with any questions or concerns you may have.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

St. Francis Early Learning Center does not provide daily transportation to and from the Center. Field Trips are the only time the center will provide transportation through a contracted bus company.

Per state regulations, children under the age of 3 cannot be transported on the bus for any field trips. Parents will need to provide their own transportation if they wish to attend with their child who is under age 3.

### **WITHDRAWALS**

Each parent/guardian has the responsibility to inform the Director in writing that your child will not be continuing at St. Francis Early Learning Center. The exact last day of attendance is needed in your letter or on withdrawal form. The forms can be obtained from the office. Please have all of your financial matters in order. If you wish to have your child's records released to another educational institution we require a release form to be completed. Both forms can be obtained from the office.

### **WE REQUIRE 2 WEEKS NOTICE.**

If 2 weeks notice is not received tuition will be billed and expected for the remainder of the enrollment time.

### **VACATION**

Should you take your child/children for a vacation during the regular school year, you are expected to pay the regular tuition for that period of time. No credits are given. No exceptions.

### **SNOW POLICY**

**ST. FRANCIS EARLY LEARNING CENTER FOLLOWS THE REGULATIONS**

**OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.**

Please consult KYW (1060 AM) radio for information on these specific days.  
Listen for St. Francis's code number:

**3177**

The decision on delayed openings and/or closures may not be made until 6:00am. Please listen to the radio or try calling the center before leaving your home.

When the center is on 2 hour delay, we will open at 8:45am which is still before the 9:00am cut off. During snow delays ONLY we will extend the arrival time until 9:45am.

Tuition is paid for all snow days -- Monday through Friday.

**EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Parent volunteers are welcome to assist parent/staff committees for these special events!

Halloween Party  
Christmas Program  
Valentine's Day Party

Thanksgiving Lunch  
Christmas Party  
Easter Egg Hunt

Summer Program

Field Trips

\*During these activities parents may be asked to sign up to provide items for the festivities. We require everyone's participation as these events are to benefit all children.



### **FUNDRAISERS**

We have several different fundraisers (candy, candles, etc.) throughout the year. In order for these to be successful we need **ALL** parents' participation. All children benefit from the funds raised, therefore your support is **MANDATORY**. Those who do not participate will be asked to pay a fee to cover their participation. This fee must be paid by the designated due date.



### **BIRTHDAY PARTIES**

If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday with his/her class we are happy to help. Please request, complete and return the birthday party request form which will let us know all the important details of the special day.

### **PARENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

**To:** Parents/Guardian of Child

**Please read, sign and return this statement to the Office.**

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I have received my copy of St. Francis Early Learning Center’s Parent Handbook, which outlines the policies, procedures, and rules that are required of parents.

I will familiarize myself with the contents of this handbook. I understand that it constitutes the policies of the Center. I also understand that St. Francis Early Learning Center reserves the right to make changes at anytime to its policies.

I understand that the information in this handbook is to maintain a healthy learning environment for the children.

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**Parent Signature**

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**Date**