

Dear Preschool Parents,

Welcome to the Preschool Department for the 2010-2011 school year. We are very excited to begin a new year. We look forward to getting to know each of your families and enjoying each day with your child. We are going to have a wonderful year together.

Your handbook contains classroom goals, classroom policies, and other resources for you to use at home. We are confident you will find this information helpful. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to discuss them with me. We are available Monday through Friday here at Stepping Stones. You may also contact us by email at any time or day. Again, we look forward to our year together!

Sincerely,

The Preschool Department

CLASSROOM GOALS

CURRICULUM

Our *We Can* curriculum helps us to create a successful classroom through a multilingual program using English, Spanish, and American Sign Language. We use a monthly scope and sequence and daily lesson plan that helps us deliver effective instruction. We use a phonics program called *Letter, Sounds, and Strokes* in addition to an *I Can Draw* prewriting program that uses art to develop fine motor coordination and print awareness. Daily activities include math, science, social studies, oral language, written expression, literature, music, and poetry to enhance learning experiences. In addition, we introduce a Character Building unit. The character traits include: manners, politeness, caring, respect, honesty, and being a good friend.

CALENDAR

A monthly calendar will be sent home regarding the topics, projects, and activities planned for the month. We have tried to make these “family-friendly” in hopes that they will fit on your refrigerator or cabinet to be viewed easily. This information will be a great reference regarding your child’s day.

CIRCLE TIME

Circle time is an important part of the day when the majority of our learning takes place. During this time, we will introduce our letter of the week, read books, have group discussion, and sing songs that pertain to our theme that week. We encourage the children to participate in this activity daily.

ART PROJECTS

Art projects will pertain to our topic for the week. During this time, your child will be encouraged to use his or her imagination to create original projects. These projects will be offered twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. We suggest that you dress your child in clothes that will allow for messy projects.

DISCIPLINE

Rules and structure are very important for a healthy classroom. Redirection will always be our first response to issues that may arise. We believe that each day is a new day, with a chance to start fresh. If your child has a problem that redirection does not resolve, you will be notified through daily sheets or a phone call. If at any time you have concerns, we can set a time for a conference and explore our options.

MEALTIMES

Lunch and snack will be eaten in our classroom. We use this time to provide a family-type atmosphere, where the children and teachers sit and eat together. We ask that the children only bring lunches when requested for a field trip or fun day. If any health needs exist, and your child needs to eat food that you bring from home, we will need a physician’s or dietician’s note. When everyone eats the same food, the children will

usually try new items and sometimes even learn to like them. A classroom that eats together, learns together, and will have fun together.

STAR OF THE WEEK

Each Friday, we will choose our “Star of the Week” for the following week. When your child is selected, please send six to eight pictures and a brief statement about each one. We will post the pictures with statements about your child on the “Star of the Week” bulletin board. We will also send an “All About Me” questionnaire to be filled out and returned along with the pictures. This activity is a big honor for the children, and we appreciate your time and help.

SELF-HELP SKILLS

- Picking up after play
- Bathroom responsibility
- Picking up nappers
- Dispensing soap
- Washing and drying hands
- Serving food
- Cleaning up after eating
- Dressing and undressing self
- Putting on shoes
- Responsibility of personal belongings

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS

Here at Stepping Stones, we pride ourselves in community awareness. Each year, we choose several community service projects in which to participate. We will keep you posted regarding these special events throughout the year.

CLASS PET

Our class will have a pet, such as a hermit crab or a fish. The children will take turns caring for our classroom’s pet. We hope this opportunity will be a thrilling experience for all of us!

GARDEN

The children will also have the opportunity to participate in gardening activities this year. The children will help with the planting and watering of plant and/or flowers. We will discuss how plants grow and the special care our garden will need. We plant inside in cups or plastic containers in the fall and outside in the spring.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

DROP-OFF/ PICK-UP

Morning drop-off is very important to us. Having your child here to participate in all activities will help aid in their growth and learning as well as helping them feel validated

as a class member. Morning is a great time for us to talk to you and your child, which will keep communications open and get our day off to a good start. We ask that you clean out your child's cubby each day when you pick him/ her up. The teachers will sign your child in and out daily.

DRESS CODE

A change of clothes is necessary for your child due to accidents that can happen. This preparation is important even after they are fully potty trained. Daily dress should be comfortable and easy for them to snap or zip for independent dressing. Shoes should not be open-toe due to accidents on the playground. Please do not send your child in anything you treasure or would not want to see dirty.

DAILY SHEETS

Daily sheets will be sent home every day. These sheets are to inform you regarding your child's day and upcoming projects, parties, or other important information. Please take a few minutes to check them out each day.

CLASS PARTIES

We will be planning parties throughout the year. Our Room Parent will contact you regarding any items needed for the parties. We always appreciate any help you provide and welcome your company. Your child may bring a commercially-packaged snack to share with the class for his birthday. We ask that any outside parties with invitations be given to all class members to prevent hurt feelings. Otherwise, please mail them to the individual residences.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips will be planned periodically throughout the school year. Most trips will pertain to topics we are studying. Information regarding the field trip will be presented in the calendar with a reminder on the daily sheet the day prior. In addition, we will have a sign-up sheet attached to the door during the week prior to the field trip. This sheet serves as a permission slip to allow your child to attend the field trip. You will need to sign and initial this sheet for your child to attend. Some field trips will require the children to bring in a sack lunch. To promote self-help skills, we ask that children bring items they can easily open themselves. We will be there to help and to offer any assistance they may need. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me. Do not forget to wear your Stepping Stones t-shirt!

SUPPLIES NEEDED

We use many items commonly found in your home for art activities. These items are needed throughout the year. If you are able to donate any of these items, we would greatly appreciate it. We will accept any of the following items happily whenever you have them available: buttons, newspaper, foil, Saran Wrap, wax paper, film, old clothes, old hats, old shoes, pillows.

OOPSIE BOX

Our class will have an “oopsie box” that will be located on top of the cubbies. The purpose of this box is to keep the children from bringing items from home on days not authorized. If any item is “confiscated,” you will be able to find it in the box. You may also find lost-and-found items in the box.