

Mark West Community Preschool



Parent Handbook

2013-2014

www.MarkWestPreschool.com

Mark West Community Preschool Handbook

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2013-2014 School Calendar

School is closed the following days:

2013

Dec. 23-Jan 3 Winter Recess

2014

Jan. 20 Martin Luther King's Day

Feb. 10 Lincoln's Day Holiday

Feb. 17 Presidents' Day

March 17-23 Spring Recess

April 28 Teacher Workday

May 26th Memorial Day

May 29th Last day of school

May 30st Graduation

June 2nd -6th Summer Break

June 9th Summer Program Begins

June 30-4th 4th of July break

August 11th-15th Summer break

August 18th Tentative First day
of school

Preschool Events:

2014

March 15th -Family Work Day

April 5th MWCP

Ice Cream Social

May 30th -GRADUATION 12:00

August 16th 12:00 MWCP

Family potluck and Picnic

October 19-Family Work day

Contact Information

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Mission Statement

The Mission of Mark West Community Preschool is to support each child's intellectual, emotional and social growth in an environment which inspires the imagination, and cultivates a life long love of learning. We strive to work hand in hand with families, creating a community, which will build the foundation for a joyful and successful life.

Philosophy Statement

At Mark West Community Preschool we recognize that early childhood builds the foundation for a lifetime love of learning. From birth to age five, a child's life is full of experiences so precious, they will form a lasting foundation to grow from. Children learn at an incredible rate, and it is our job to create a stimulating environment, which supports and encourages children's education.

At Mark West Community Preschool, the nurturing of the child's genius is intrinsic, and as expected as breathing and smiling. Every experience is an opportunity to learn how to be confident, competent humans. Children must be provided the opportunity to learn naturally and to explore uninhibited. The incorporation of the arts, music, sciences, mathematics, multilingual education, and cooking, provides our children with an empowered relationship with the world around them.

By creating a curriculum, which encourages children to explore, take risks, collaborate and feel confident in their decisions, we are guiding children towards making meaning through their own discoveries. We are not here to feed children information, but to create a space where they can find it. Through inquiry and investigation, children will discover the incredibly rich and diverse world around them. It is through these opportunities that children are able to build on their foundation and learn by the joy of the experiences themselves. By giving children these opportunities, we are ensuring they will exceed the academic requirements of both their preschool and future education.

We incorporate valuable lessons into our every experience, creating an opportunity to acquire mathematical, logical, communication, artistic, musical and social skills. We respect that children need a predictable routine, but also respect that everything, including that routine, must be designed to be flexible, according to the individual needs of each child and the overall well-being of the group.

As our most precious gifts, our children must be loved, nurtured and challenged in a way that builds a strong self-image, and engenders self-esteem through accomplishment and self-recognition. Our teachers establish deep, meaningful relationships with the children: helping them to feel safe, secure and confident. Together, child and teacher, become co-creators; working side by side to make meaning of the world around them. With this mutual respect and desire to learn, education is taken to new heights.

We endeavor to encourage both the child's and parent's desire to learn, for the sake of learning, thus elevating our standards for education itself. A deeply instilled knowledge of the value of life, and highly developed social and leadership skills are invaluable. At Mark West Community Preschool, our desire is for your child to develop and maintain a strong sense of self, a respect for life, and a passion for learning. By incorporating a strong sense of family as well as the child-teacher relationship in both at home and during their time at school, together we can create a foundation which will ensure that our children are prepared to thrive as confident, intelligent, socially aware leaders of society.

Your child is an important individual in our program. We recognize that parents are the first and most powerful teacher in their child's lives. With your help, we will embark on an adventure where challenges, experiences and joyous accomplishments will last a lifetime!

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Social Constructivism

The Reggio Approach sees the child as protagonist: an active constructor of his or her own knowledge. The teacher is likewise seen as a protagonist who engages in the same processes, with colleagues, making individual and collective interpretations. Social constructivism is shown in the teachers' respect for the children's need to generate their own questions and revisit their choices.

The Reggio Approach makes the connection between children as co-constructors of knowledge and the importance of reciprocal communication and as a key element of learning. Education is based on communication within teacher-teacher, child-child, teacher-child, parent-child, parent-teacher and parent-parent relationships. This creates a very rich learning environment for all those involved. In the Reggio Approach the teacher is a researcher and the school is seen as a place of research: a place of participation and shared construction of value and meaning.

The Image of the Child

All children have an innate system of preparedness, potential and curiosity. Children maintain natural ability and interest in constructing learning: engaging in social interaction and negotiating meaning in environmental elements.

The Role of the Teacher

The role of the teacher begins with co-constructing the learning process. In Reggio Theory, teachers consider themselves researchers and partners in learning, and enjoy discovering with the children. Teachers endeavor to be resources for children by observing and listening to children closely. In this way instruction is designed by taking child-direction: teachers use the children's organic interests as a platform to plan and implement their interactions with children, materials and curricula. Teachers use inquiry and self-correcting stratagem; instructors ask questions to provoke children's ideas, hypotheses, and theories, ultimately stimulating higher thinking and providing occasions for discovery learning.

Relationships

Learning is based on relationships between, teachers, parents and children in their environment. Together, children, teachers and parents co-construct knowledge in the context of the school.

Environment

The environment is warm and welcoming and fosters children's ability to make choices, problem solve, master skills and develop relationships. The environment is used as a third teacher and makes visible children's learning processes.

Parent Involvement

Parents are considered to be an essential component of the program, families act as the advisory councils for their children's school, and support classroom activities, celebrations and school events. They are a competent and active part of the school community: children, teachers and other adults.

Collaboration

Based on mutual respect; collaboration among teachers, children and parents is a key element. Children, teachers and parents cooperate with each other to create joyful experiences that encourage the development of knowledge, self-esteem and a deep commitment to the community. Working together at every level enhances and enriches the opportunities for learning and discovery.

Documentation

Observing children in action and documenting learning is an important component used as inspiration for projects, as well as both furthering learning and communicating achievement. Documentation provides opportunities for the teachers, children, and parents to revisit their ideas, activities and projects, and to reflect on their experiences.

Projects

Short and long-term projects are in-depth studies of concepts, ideas, and interests, which arise within the group. Project ideas originate as the children and teachers construct knowledge together. Projects can last a few days to several months.

Curriculum

General Information

At Mark West Community Preschool, curricula are inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education. We use the term “inspired” because we see this Italian approach as a fascinating guide, rather than a curriculum blueprint. We feel that our values of education, childhood, and community are deeply reflected in the Reggio Emilia approach and endeavor to use those values as a basis for our ever-evolving program. As staff, we are continuously learning with the children, with parents, and with other early childhood educators to gain a deeper understanding of education.

We offer an emergent curriculum that allows for flexibility, spontaneity, and in-depth exploration. It is most often child-directed and teacher-guided. This means that teachers offer provocations to stimulate the learning process, allowing children to investigate their own interests and theories. Sometimes these explorations turn into long-term projects, where children experience the research process: questioning, hypothesizing, testing and documenting. On occasion children learn from experts: parents, community members and/or texts, and explore ideas through symbolic languages. Through these child-initiated experiences, children learn a variety of concepts and skills that will stay with them throughout their lives. Not only do they develop skills in literacy, art, science, and math, but they also develop the ability to communicate, to collaborate, and to think critically. We believe that children have the right to an educational program that values and nurtures these skills.

Concepts

Although we base our yearly program on a Reggio-inspired emergent curriculum, we also plan for general concepts that we will be exploring with the children. Our flexibility allows us go in a different direction than we had expected, or to get deeply involved in the concepts in which the children are most interested.

Here is an outline of our past seasonal curricula concepts:

Fall

The self, Family, Safety, Relationships, How do we treat others? How do we treat materials?
Harvest, Colors, Light/shadows, Ocean life

Winter

Family, Music, Human body, Rain, Weather, Drama, Puppets, Community, Caring for others

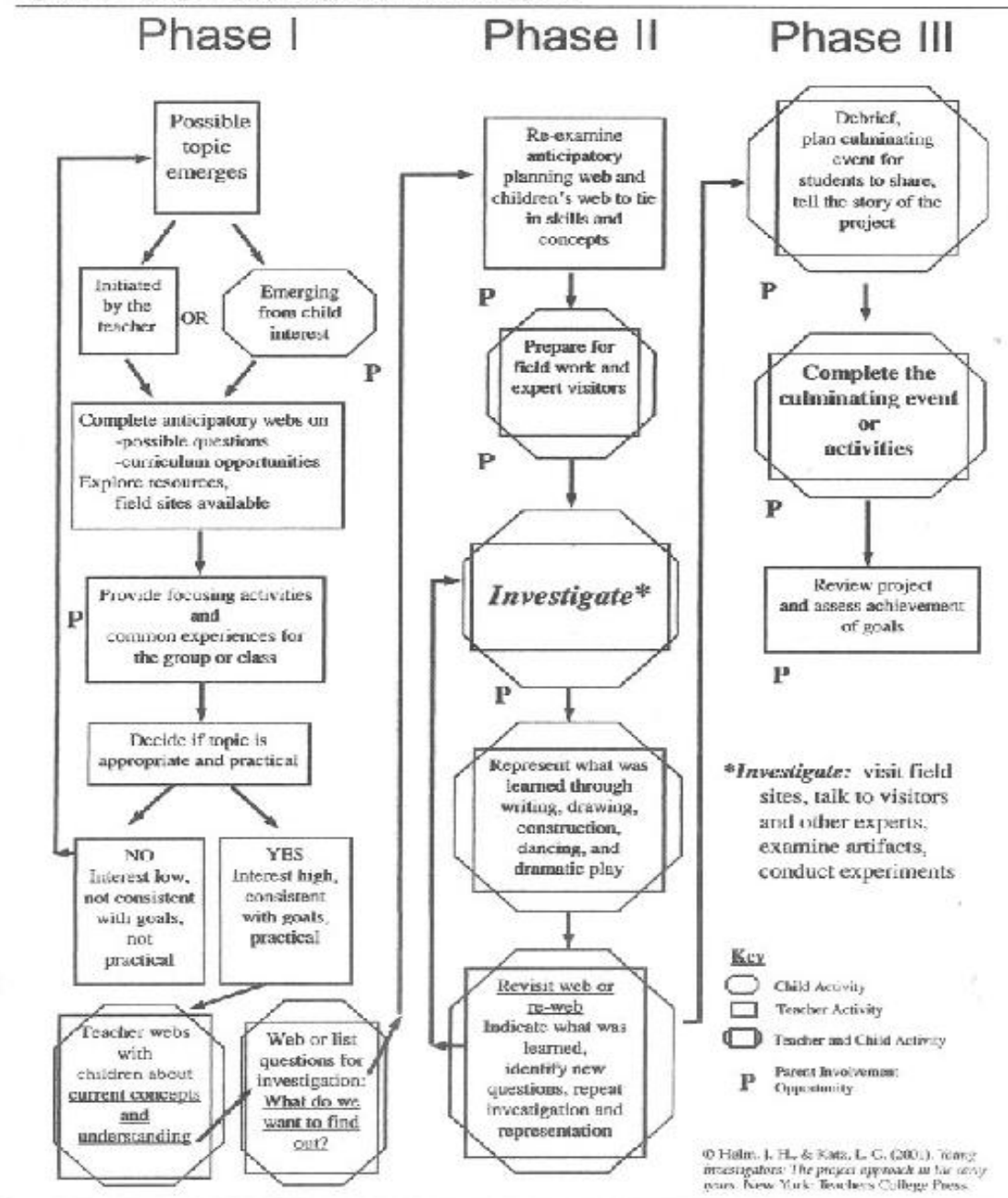
Spring

Growth, Planting, Water, Animals, Insects, Outdoors, Transportation, Sun, Wind, Conservation, Plant Sale Space, Famous Artists

Emergent Curriculum and Project Based Learning

Through our experiences we will plan curriculum based on long term projects the following is an example of the process we may go thru in developing our project

Figure 2.1 Using the project approach in the early years.



The Atelier and Art Studio

Children will participate in many projects in the art studio. Art is a means of expression for children. Children will use various materials such as paint, crayons, warming trays, glue, hot glue guns, scissors, tape and many other items. Children may be excluded from activities that may not be appropriate or safe for their age or ability level.

It is a special occasion when your child brings home a piece of art. Each child's artwork is unique, a special part of him or her. Please take a moment to share the art with your child. We encourage families to examine, talk about and display children's artwork.

Children have many purposes in creating art: discovery, exploration, communication, emotional relief. Perhaps today was a chance to explore what happened when blue and yellow mixed together. Or maybe your child practiced using scissors and glue and discovered a new way to make shapes. To adult eyes, we may see only some mixed-up colors or odd sticky shapes. However, to your child those mixed-up colors extend to science and the shapes to mathematics.

- Do ask: "Tell me about your picture." Do not ask, "What is it?" It may not be important to your child that the art be something. Do not guess what it might be. You might be wrong.
- Do ask how it was done. You will help your child use words to describe what was learned, technique, medium and/or genre.
- Ask if there is a story to go with the artwork. You will learn much more about the artist's imagination and assist in language development.
- Describe what you see in the artwork- the lines, the colors, the shapes, the textures, and the patterns- and ask your child to do the same. You will help your child build his or her vocabulary.
- Share a memory of a piece of art you created or have seen. You will be teaching your child that art has been created by many people.

After sharing a piece of art, hang it in a special place for the family to see, such as on a door or refrigerator. You can also share it with others by turning it into a card to give to friends or family to enjoy, make an Art book, scrapbook or photo album. When new artwork comes home, remove the old one and store it away. If your child produces lots of art try taking photographs of their pieces to keep. Someday your child will enjoy looking at his or her art and remembering that special moment.

Effective Responses to Children's Aesthetic Products

Acknowledge effort: "You worked a long time on that."

Impact on child: My hard work is noticed.

Recognize use of aesthetic elements: "You used lots of different shapes." Or "The bright yellow areas look even brighter next to the dark gray ones."

Impact on child: Yes I did. I didn't notice that. That looks good to me.

Indicate understanding of symbols: "I noticed your tree has lots of fruit." Or "The people in your picture are standing in the rain."

Impact on child: Good; you know what I mean.

Acknowledge child's feelings: "You're proud of your collage." Or "You're disappointed with your painting."

Impact on child: I don't have to feel the same way about all of my art.

Ask for information: "Show me a part you like." Or "Tell me something about your picture."

Impact on child: I can tell things about my art that only I know.

Broaden child's self-concept: "You really like animals."

Impact on child: Yes, I guess I do.

Recognize progress: "This is the third drawing you've made about our field trip."

Impact on child: I've accomplished a lot.

Multilingual Instruction

According to California census reports, the three most common languages within Sonoma County were English, Spanish and French. At Mark West Community Preschool, we consider multilingual instruction to be an integral part of education. Your child will be introduced to foreign languages via developmentally appropriate curricula and activities, as determined by your child's instructor. We are not an immersion program, and our approach to language learning is a natural one, comprised of Total Physical Response and Content Based Education. A foreign language curriculum is valuable to children regardless of language(s) spoken at home. Instructors do their best to accommodate all levels of ability and learning styles.

Multilingual Instruction Models: TPR and CBI

At Mark West Community Preschool, we value quality of education, and believe this quality should never be sacrificed. Thus, we support language learning by using widely studied and successful, multilingual instruction: Total Physical Response and Content Based Learning. Arguably, immersion is not conducive to fostering all developmental domains and has been less successful than TPR or CBI.

Total Physical Response allows learners to acquire language efficiently: logically and naturally, in the way the human brain is hard-wired for language. In a study comparing second language acquisition between adults and children using Russian, *using TPR*, the adult groups out performed the children. The common belief that children acquire language more easily is perhaps fully attributed to the fact that children synchronize movement to language; they move and play and ultimately generate more physical movement in response to language than do adults. In this way, movement helps the brain comprehend and remember the association to language similar to adult taking notes in lecture, the common suggestion to learn by writing given information down, writing is a physical action. By linking movement to language learning, we exercise different areas of our brain: chiefly both the primary motor cortex and temporal lobe.

Next, Content based instruction, (CBI) a teaching method that emphasizes learning *about something* rather than learning *about language*, successfully produce high yielding academic and language learning results organically. There has been an increased interest in CBI over the last ten years, particularly in the USA and Canada where it has proven very effective in ESL immersion programs. This interest has now spread to EFL classrooms around the world where teachers are discovering that their students like CBI and are excited to learn English this way. CBI has been used successfully at the bilingual University of Ottawa, where classes are taught in English and French, (Briton, 1989). CBI disproves the common misconception that a second language will never be spoken with equal fluency to a first language. Native children and foreign learners usually find themselves in vastly different situations. Native children for example acquire their first language 'informally' - they pick it up without specifically being taught it. Most foreign learners acquire a second language 'formally' in a structured teaching situation (Ingram, 1975). CBI and TPR allow children to learn language informally, maximizing the potential for speaking ability.

Bilingual and trilingual children will have increased academic and professional opportunities. "The world is becoming an ever more interconnected community. Within this global village, there is a growing need for people to communicate with people in completely different parts of the world. A vital tool needed for this communication is the knowledge of foreign languages" (Brun, 2004).

Multilingual Instruction in Early Childhood

Preschool is the optimal time to begin foreign language acquisition (Strozer, 1994). Firstly, children's palates are substantially hardened after the preschool years, thus children are more likely to be able to have optimal pronunciation by learning to manipulate the physical speech required for native pronunciation before the palate hardens (Lenneberg, 1967). This is the science behind why surgeons perform palate surgeries on infants, toddlers and preschoolers. Secondly, preschool is connected with "the lateralization of language," in the left hemisphere, the hemisphere associated with monolinear cognition (ie. abstract reasoning and step-by step physical tasks) and not the right hemisphere, which is associated with 3D spatial acuity, artistic and musical ability. Unlike adults, children seem to be able to employ both hemispheres to acquire language.

Benefits of Multilingual Instruction

In addition to developing a lifelong ability to communicate with people from other countries and backgrounds, learning another language offers a multitude of academic and professional opportunities including, but not limited to: improved overall school performance and superior problem-solving skills (Bamford & Mizokawa, 1991; Hakuta, 1986), and higher standardized test scores and continued education. Results from the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) show that students who had studied a foreign language for 4 or more years outscored other students on the verbal and math portions of the test (The College Board SAT, 2003). Knowledge of a second language also seems to coincide with high academic achievement. A study by Horn and Kojaku (2001) shows that students who were took 3+ years of foreign language study, were likely to earn better grades in college.

According to 2011 American Association for the advancement of science, "Being exposed to two languages from early childhood does not create confusion, but instead modulates the trajectory of language development; that signed and spoken languages produce a form of bilingualism that is similar to bilingualism in two spoken languages; and that the continual activity of both languages affects brain function and structure." Furthermore, learning another language can enhance knowledge of English structure and vocabulary (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004). What's more, AAAS states that bilingualism helps learning in other areas, not overtly related to language learning such as prioritizing and sequencing information, and "Provide(s) a defense against some effects of Alzheimer's..and a great workout for the brain."

Mixed-Age Groups

At Mark West Community Preschool, our educators are well studied and practiced in implementing a mixed age group. We believe that providing a broader range of competencies increases opportunities for children to develop relationships and friendships with others who match, complement, or supplement the children's own developmental needs and learning styles. By providing diversity in maturity, various levels of competence present in a mixed-age group, providing those on the advanced end of the spectrum opportunities to further their understanding of conceptual knowledge and inversely, newer student's with the ability to learn from a multitude of sources.

Our individual classrooms are divided into cohorts of the same age of children based upon kindergarten entry year. We then take the opportunity for these children to interact with the age range across the program in order to maximize the opportunities for social learning. The classrooms are developmentally appropriate for the children who use the space.

There have been well documented benefits to mixed-age grouping, including but not limited to: cooperation, decrease in negative competition, enhanced motivation and self-confidence, and other prosocial behaviors.

Social Development in Mixed Age-Groups

Prosocial behaviors are the indices of social development. Instigating helping, sharing, and turn-taking facilitate interaction and promote socialization. Social insights are an essential part of a child's increasing social awareness. Friendships often form based on a child's perceptions of others, and the roles they play, across a multitude of social contexts. Children are more likely to exhibit prosocial behaviors (Whiting, 1983) and offer instruction (Ludeke & Hartup, 1983) to younger peers than to those their age. Children are also more likely to exhibit aggression with age-mates (Hartup, 1976), and to display dependency with older children. The availability of younger and therefore less threatening peers in mixed-age groups offers balance and harmony to the challenges presented in children learning to thrive among age-mates.

Cognitive Development in Mixed-Age Groups

Contrary to common assumption, grouping older and younger children together does not dictate hierarchy. According to Brown and Palinscar (1986) the contribution of "cognitive conflict" in mixed-age groups is not simply that the less-informed child imitating the more knowledgeable one. Rather, the interaction between the children leads that less-informed child to internalize new understandings. Similarly, Vygotsky (1978) maintains that the internalization of new understandings, or "cognitive restructuring," occurs when concepts are actually transformed and not merely replicated. Hence, more-informed children also learn from interaction with younger children because they have to reexamine information: explore fundamentals and explain in their own words. According to Vygotsky, internalization takes place when children interact within the "zone of proximal development." Vygotsky (1978) defines this zone as "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p.86). Thus less-experienced children benefit from being challenged, and more-experienced children benefit from readdressing information in new ways (Brown and Reeve 1985). Slavin explains (1987): "Collaborative activity among children promotes growth because children of similar ages are likely to be operating within one another's zones of proximal development, modeling in the collaborating group behaviors more advanced than those they could perform as individuals" (p. 1162).

School Information

Hours of Operation

School is open Monday 7:30am- 1:00pm Tuesday thru Friday from 7:30am-5:30pm

Children may attend as follows:

- AM Class- 8:30am-12:00pm
- PM Class- 1:00pm-4:30pm
- Full Day- 8:30 am-4:30pm
 - Extended care is available 7:30-8:30 and 4:30-5:00
Must be arranged in advance.

Note: failure to pick up child by required departure time will be assessed a \$1 per minute late fee for **ALL** late pickups. Continued late pickup is grounds for immediate termination.

Arrival and Departure

Please be consistent in your drop off and pick up times. It is extremely important that your child arrive on time in order for him/her to have ample time to transition into the daily routine and participate. When children arrive late, they will miss meaningful activities and experiences. Remember, we want children to get the most out of their day. Please call ahead if either you are going to be late, or your child will be absent for any reason.

If your child arrives earlier, or departs later than scheduled times, late pickup fees will be charged.

Please remember to connect with your child's teacher upon drop off and pick up and sign your child in and out every day. A full legal signature is required. Any person who picks up a child must be 18 years of age and able to provide valid identification.

Daily Plan

Morning Program

8:30 Classroom Meeting
9:30 Activities/Snack/Projects
10:30 Clean up-Group Gathering
10:45 Outdoor time
11:45 Group gathering/ wash up
12:00 Pick-up

Lunch and Language Program

12:00 Lunch (family style, nutritional food)
12:30 Language lesson

Full Day

9:00 Classroom meeting
12:00 Lunch (family style, nutritional food)
12:30 Language lesson
4:30 Afternoon pick up

Note: children in full day program will participate in both morning and afternoon activities

Afternoon Program

1:00 Arrival Outdoor/Indoor Choice
1:30 Classroom Meeting
2:00 Activities/Snack/Projects
3:00 Clean up-Group Gathering
3:15 Outdoor time
4:15 Group gathering/ wash up
4:30 Afternoon pick-up

Early Care

7:30- School opens early arrivals snack
8:00-8:45 Indoor choice

After Care

4:30 Indoor/outdoor choice
5:30 School closes-Final pick up

Enrollment

Child must be 2-5 years old to enroll in the half-day program. Parent interview and school visit will be conducted prior to enrollment. A \$25 fee is required at application. Spaces are available on a limited basis. If there is no immediate opening, the family will be placed on the waiting list.

All forms required by Community Care Licensing, including proof of immunizations, and medical assessment must be submitted before a child is enrolled, children will not be admitted to school without submission of required forms.

Trial Period

Either party, for any reason, can cancel the enrollment without penalty within an initial 2-week trial period. The registration fee and first 2 week tuition fee is non-refundable.

Schedule Changes

Any changes in schedule must be written and signed as an addendum to the contract. All schedule changes require a 30 day notice. The Director has the right to accept or reject any schedule changes.

Termination

30 days notice is required cancel service and terminate enrollment. However if the Director cannot guarantee the health safety of the staff, or any children in attendance, we reserve the right to terminate enrollment with written explanation at any time. Nonpayment is grounds for immediate termination of enrollment.

School Policies

Parent Participation

Your family is required to participate 10 hours per school year. You may pay \$200 in lieu of participation. There are many options. Family Work days are planned for any family member 18yrs or older to contribute. You may do classroom work or help with the outdoor areas. Your participation hours will be logged. Hours will be charged if not completed

At Mark West Community Preschool, there is an open door policy. You are free to come unannounced and visit your child. Parent involvement is very important to a child's education. There are many methods in which you may be involved.

Please contact your child's teacher for more information, or to arrange a time to volunteer.

School Closures

At the beginning of each school year, you will be provided with a calendar of the days that school will be closed and social events. Please notify the Director of any family vacations when your child will not attend school.

Field Trips

We may take fieldtrips during the school year. You are always invited to attend. We will ask for volunteers. All field trips will be scheduled in advance. You will be notified, and required to complete permission slip, for your child to attend. Transportation will be by chartered bus or parent drivers.

Walks

We may take walks around the neighborhood area to further the children's learning, support curriculum development and foster a sense of community. Our staff will uphold the child to teacher ratios of the classroom during these walks.

Photography-Artwork

Children are photographed throughout the day as they interact. These photos may be used in classroom displays, newsletters, school website and or flyers.

You are encouraged to bring in photos of family members and pets to be posted along with our regular classroom displays. It is important for children to be able to make a strong home/school connection and being able to view familiar faces while at school will help children to feel comfortable and safe.

Mark West Community Preschool has the right to publish, make, reproduce, use and reuse photographs and artwork of children, without his or her name, and to circulate and use the photographs for educational purposes. I agree to hold Mark West Community Preschool harmless from any claim action and damages based on violation or alleged violation of these representations. All photographs, prints, drawings, reproductions, sketches and artwork shall remain exclusive property of Mark West Community Preschool.

Special Items

Please DO NOT allow children to bring any items from home such as toys or special things. This can cause arguments between children. Mark West Community Preschool is not responsible for broken or damaged items brought from home. Typically, we support a Share Day once per week, families will be notified of Share Day. Children may bring items to share with the group. Please do not bring anything that cannot be damaged, broken or stained, as the children generally play and "share" these items throughout the day. Any media-based Share Day Items will not be able to be shared, so please do not bring media inspired items at any time.

Media, Television and Cinema

Media influences inhibit children's play. We ask that children do not come to school with items or clothing that reflect any media images or characters. During the day children are encouraged to pull from their imagination rather than from media sources. When children use media as a basis for play, they are merely imitating what has been seen, rather than constructing their own knowledge. When children use media ideas for play, teachers encourage children to choose a different scenario, or guide children by offering alternative ideas. Teachers will also redirect conversation away from media and towards real life experiences or other fantasy ideas.

Holidays

At Mark West Community Preschool we do not celebrate holidays. In order to be inclusive of all faiths and beliefs, we refrain from celebrating and acknowledging holidays. In addition we wish to limit the commercialization and stress related to specific holidays. Instead, we will discuss values associated with holidays.

Birthdays

At Mark West Community Preschool, birthdays are cherished. Families are welcome to celebrate the child's birthday here at school. You may bring a snack for all of the children.

Please DO NOT DISTRIBUTE party invitations at school unless EVERY CHILD is included. This will avoid hurt feelings.

Safety

Illnesses and Emergencies

If any teacher deems a medical emergency, 911 will be called first. You will be notified as soon as possible.

You are *required* to keep a child home if any teacher deems necessary because of illness. Symptoms include but are not limited to:

- A cold or runny nose
- Persistent cough
- Fever
- Contagious illness
- Diarrhea
- Any serious illness or condition

If your child has had any of the following symptoms WITHIN THEN LAST 24 HOURS, please keep him or her home. The child must be SYMPTOM FREE for a FULL 24 hours before he/she may return. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated, as this will greatly reduce the spread of infectious disease.

Should the child become ill during the course of the day, or symptoms previously okayed worsen, the teacher reserves the right to call a parent or any authorized person to come and pick up the child, and/or request a doctor's release for the child to return to school.

Please do not send your child to school ill.

Medication

Medication will **NOT** be administered to children by teachers, with the exception of a prescribed epi-pen, Asthma treatment, and sunscreen/block. Over the counter medication will not be administered. If a child is in need of medication, generally, the child is not well enough to be at school. If there is an exceptional circumstance, or chronic health condition, please discuss with the Director. Children must have a signed permission slip on file for any exception.

Sun Protection

It is the responsibility of the parent to apply sun protection prior to the child's arrival. On very hot days, teachers will re-apply school provided sunscreen in the afternoon. Children must have a signed permission slip on file.

Child Abuse

The following required of all employees under California State law:

'Section 11166 of the Penal Code requires any child care custodian... who has knowledge of or observes a child in his or her professional capacity or within the scope of his or her employment whom he or she knows or

reasonably suspects has been the victim of abuse, to report the known or suspected instance of child abuse to a child protective agency immediately or as soon as practically possible..."

Pets

We have site pets that are a part of our family. Additionally, we have community experts including but not limited to: veterinarians, who come to speak and bring small animal guests. If your child has any allergies to animals, parents are responsible for disclosing allergies, in writing, to the school. Please discuss any allergies with the director.

Emergency School Closure

To ensure the health and safety of the children, in the following cases school will be closed and parents will be called for immediate pick up of children: power outage of more than 2 hours, loss of water, natural disaster, extreme weather, or illness outbreak.

Dress Code

Clothing: Please dress your child in plain clothing: do not dress your child in clothing with any media images, branding or characters.

It is the responsibility of the parent to send children in clothing that is appropriate for all daily activities such as, painting, mud, water and dirt play, as well as drawing and all outdoor play. Children will play outdoors every day, regardless of weather, with the exception of extreme heat, cold or wind. Children are involved in messy exploration throughout the day, and must to be able to play accordingly. We suggest you dress children in play clothes which you are not concerned with getting stained or dirty. There are messy activities and projects going on throughout the day, in all different areas of the school, at all times. In order for teachers to optimally spend time with, and supervise all of the children, it is impossible to ensure that the children are wearing smocks during all activities. In addition this can inhibit the movement and spontaneity of the experience, which is why we do not require smocks for the children. We suggest children have a few choice items for only wearing to school in order to avoid nicer clothes from being stained. Children WILL get dirty. Mark West Community Preschool is not responsible for dirty or stained clothing.

Shoes: for safety reasons please dress your child in shoes *without laces* as they often come untied and pose a trip hazard.

✧ Each child is required to have a complete change of clothing appropriate for the current weather available at all times in his/her cubby.

Community Care Licensing

The following is a required statement from the State of California:

A) The Department of licensing agency shall have the authority to interview children, or staff, and to inspect and audit child or facility records without prior consent. The licensee shall make provisions for

private interviews with child(ren), or any staff member; and for the examination of all records relating to the operation of the facility.

B) The Department or licensing agency shall have the authority to observe the physical condition of the child(ren), including conditions which could indicate abuse, neglect, or inappropriate placement, and have to have a licensed medical professional physically examine the child(ren). NOTE: Authority cited: Section 1596.81, Health and Safety Code. Reference: Sections 1596.72, 1596.73, 1596.81, 1596.852 and 1596.853, Health and Safety Code.

Behavior and Discipline

Relationship based, positive discipline is the method we use to guide children here at Mark West Community Preschools. We understand that every child is an individual, thus must be guided as such: an individual. Every child has the right to be free from corporal or unusual punishment, infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse or other actions of a punitive nature including but not limited to: interference with functions of daily living; including eating, sleeping, toileting, or withholding of shelter, clothing, medication or aids to physical functioning. All teachers and staff members are to follow the discipline policy. Any violation of this policy is grounds for immediate termination and reports made to the Community Care Licensing and Child Protective Services. Our philosophy on behavior and discipline begins with three main components: open communication, positive relationships, and the principles of guiding and Positive Discipline.

The first, and most important, aspect to the child's time here at preschool, is the relationship between the family, our program, and teachers here at school. Communication is the key to the success of our program. The child's teacher will have an initial meeting, and continuous meetings, in order to determine and understand what the family does at home. We do this so we may respect the values and provide the consistency and continuity that the child needs to thrive in our program. We maintain an open door policy, parents may come by at any time to observe and interact with their child. The director and teachers are available to discuss any questions or concerns and share information about the child. The child can feel secure in the positive relationship between teachers and parents.

Secondly, another integral part of our program is the relationship the child has with his/her teachers. In order to guide children in the direction that we wish for them, we must first establish a positive relationship. Children will not respond in a meaningful way to a teacher whom they do not care for, does not care for them. The child's teacher will take the time to get to know the child. This includes all of the basic cues that are unique to each child. These cues include recognizing when the child is tired, hungry, angry, happy, hurt, content, or just needs time to be alone. During this time, the child's teacher will take the time to build a positive connection with the child. The child's teacher will be able to discern the reason for the behaviors the child exhibits, and how to respond to that behavior, in the manner that is most appropriate for the individual child. The child will know that his teacher respects and values him/her as a person.

Next, within our classroom, children will be guided toward the desired behavior. We will use class meetings to discuss our expectations of the children's behavior. Children will be involved in the decision making process. Children will not only know what is expected of them, but we will explain why the expectations exist. Children will be encouraged solve social problems within their peer groups, with the guidance of their teacher, if needed. Children often react in a more positive manner to peer interaction, rather than teacher direction. We will not use time outs, as we believe this is a short-term solution to stopping the immediate behavior but does little to prevent

the behavior in the future. Time-outs do not support problem solving and can enable negative labeling, resentment, and is ultimately a reactive verses proactive strategy. We aim to support children in learning to moderate their own behavior, rather than needing the teachers to control their actions. Teachers are trained in positive discipline methods to use with the children. Teachers are here to guide the children, and talk with them so they can fully understand how to be a positive member of the group. The child's own positive self-image is retained in using these techniques.

Finally and above all else, all interactions with children are meaningful, thoughtful and intentional. We believe by following this approach, children can thrive in our school. We wish for children to gain the knowledge and self-esteem that will allow them to thrive beyond their years here in preschool and set our students up for future social and academic success.

◇ In the event that a child's behavior is dangerous physically or emotionally to anyone, the parent and teacher will have a conference to discuss possible options that best meet the needs of the child. If the health and safety of the children and/or staff at Mark West Community Preschool cannot be guaranteed, this constitutes grounds for immediate termination of enrollment.

Nutrition

Lunch and Snacks

- All food served at Mark West Community Preschool are carefully selected to be free from hydrogenated oils, excessive sugars and preservatives.
- Meals include fresh local produce and organic foods. All meals are carefully planed to meet all of the dietary needs of a growing child.
- All meals are intended to be a pleasant social affair. Children are never forced to eat anything however; Children are encouraged try new and different foods. Children will participate and prepare meals and snacks as much as possible.
- Please do not bring food for your child as there are children with severe allergies that can be triggered by simple exposure. (ex. peanut butter) This will help avoid disruptions, and children often have a hard time sharing items including food brought from home.
- We are a "Peanut Free Zone," please do not bring food containing peanut butter.
- You may bring special snacks for birthdays per school guidelines.
- Candy gum and soda are not allowed please keep these items home.
- We will try our best to accommodate dietary requests such as vegetarian, lactose free etcetera. Please discuss any special requests with the director.

Meal and Snack Schedule

Lunch and snacks are served as follows:

AM Snack 9.30am, AM Lunch 12:00pm, PM snack 2:00pm

- We do not serve breakfast.
- If you arrive late and have missed a meal or snack, time please feed your child prior to arrival. This allows the child to come in and participate in the program without any disruption.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition and Attendance

Enrollment is based upon the number of days the child is scheduled to attend regardless of the actual days attended. If a child misses a scheduled day, another day may not be substituted for the day missed nor will credit be issued. The rate is calculated based on the space that is reserved for the child not the actual attendance. Rates are determined per year to make the space permanent and available. Tuition is determined on an annual basis for a 10 month school year and payable in 10 monthly payments.

Payment Policy

Tuition Payment is due in advance of services according to your contracted payment schedule. Should payment be late, a late fee of \$45 will be added to the total amount due. Payment may be made with cash, check or money order. Should a check be returned a fee of \$50 plus the late fee will be charged. Failure to make timely payments is grounds for immediate termination of enrollment.

Fees

- \$25 Application Fee at time of submission of application to school
- A non-refundable Materials Fee of \$200 per child is due at enrollment
- Returning students are required to pay \$150 Materials Fee annually
- Late Fee will be charged of \$1 per minute for late pick-ups'
- \$45 Late Payment Fee for late tuition or materials fee payments
- \$50 Returned Check Fee on all returned checks

Communication and Documents

Communication

Communication is the foundation of our partnership. Please feel free to talk with any teacher regarding ANY issue that you feel is important or of any concern. Remember there is nothing that is too small to ask. If you would like to schedule a parent/teacher conference, please call to make arrangements.

Admission Agreement

Mark West Community Preschool

Admission Agreement

School Year 2013-2014

Child's Name _____ D.O.B. _____ M/F-
 Address _____ City _____ Zip _____
 Siblings _____

Parent Information
 Name _____ Occupation _____
 Address _____
 Phone (Home) _____ Work _____ Cell _____
 Email _____

Name _____ Occupation _____
 Address _____
 Phone (Home) _____ Work _____ Cell _____
 Email _____

Annual Materials Fee: \$150(new students) \$100(returning students)

PLEASE CHECK YOUR PREFERENCE

Please Specify Which Days M T W T H F

- Half-Day Preschool**
 - Morning 8:30 to 12:00 Monday-Friday
 - Afternoon 1:00 to 4:30 Tuesday-Friday
- 2 days - \$2950 per year – to be paid in 10 monthly payments of \$295
 - Early care- 7:30 to 8:30 \$80/mo
 - After Care 4:30-5:30 \$80/mo Tuesday-Friday
- 3 days - \$4100 per year – to be paid in 10 monthly payments of \$410
 - Early care- 7:30 to 8:30 \$120/mo
 - After Care 4:30-5:30 \$120/mo Tuesday-Friday
- 4 days - \$5350 per year – to be paid in 10 monthly payments of \$535
 - Early care- 7:30 to 8:30 \$160/mo
 - After Care 4:30-5:30 \$160/mo Tuesday-Friday
- 5 days - \$6500 per year – to be paid in 10 monthly payments of \$650
 - Early care- 7:30 to 8:30 \$180/mo
 - After Care 4:30-5:30 \$180/mo Tuesday-Friday

Please Specify Which Days T W T H F

- Full-Day Preschool** *includes lunch and language program*
- 8:30 to 4:30 Tuesday-Friday**
 - 2 days - \$4050 per year – to be paid in 10 monthly payments of \$405
 - Early care- 7:30 to 8:30 \$80/mo
 - After Care 4:30-5:30 \$80/mo
 - 3 days - \$5950 per year – to be paid in 10 monthly payments of \$595
 - Early care- 7:30 to 8:30 \$120/mo
 - After Care 4:30-5:30 \$120/mo
 - 4 days - \$7850 per year – to be paid in 10 monthly payments of \$785
 - Early care- 7:30 to 8:30 \$160/mo
 - After Care 4:30-5:30 \$160/mo

Lunch and Language *includes lunch and a language lesson*
 12:00-1:00
 \$10 per day

TUITION AGREEMENT (Please read carefully)

1. I hereby undertake admission to Mark West Community Preschool for the academic year beginning August 19th 2013 and ending May 29th 2014
2. I have received, read and agree to all items and terms outlined in the Parent Handbook.
3. A materials fee of \$200 must be paid upon acceptance to the school. (New students only.)
4. Re-enrolling students pay an annual Materials Fee of \$150.00.
5. I understand that if I do not fulfill 10 Parent participation hours I will be charged \$200 in lieu of participating.
6. I understand that the tuition is based on a yearly rate and payable monthly for convenience.
7. I undertake to pay the year tuition of \$_____ in 10 monthly installments (Aug. – May) of \$_____.
8. Tuition is due in advance on the 1st of each month. There is a \$45 late fee for tuition paid after the 5th of the month.
9. Payment may be made with cash, check or money order.
10. Should a check be returned a fee of \$50 plus the late fee will be charged.
11. \$1 per minute late fee for all late pickups
12. Tuition that is 7 days past due will result in termination of enrollment until payment is received.
13. In case of withdrawal, I agree to notify the school 30 days in advance.
14. I understand that no refunds or credits will be granted.
15. A 5% discount per family will be allowed for prepayment of annual tuition by September 1st.
16. An application fee of \$25 is required for the initial processing of application. (Returning students do not pay fee.)
17. This agreement may be terminated without notice by the Director if the health and safety of the children and staff cannot be guaranteed.
18. The Department of licensing agency shall have the authority to interview children, or staff, and to inspect and audit child or facility records without prior consent. The licensee shall make provisions for private interviews with child(ren), or any staff member; and for the examination of all records relating to the operation of the facility. B) The Department or licensing agency shall have the authority to observe the physical condition of the child(ren), including conditions which could indicate abuse, neglect, or inappropriate placement, and have to have a licensed medical professional physically examine the child(ren). NOTE: Authority cited: Section 1596.81, Health and Safety Code. Reference: Sections 1596.72, 1596.73, 1596.81, 1596.852 and 1596.853, Health and Safety Code.
19. All forms required by Community Care Licensing, including proof of immunizations must be submitted before a child is enrolled, children will not be admitted to school without submission of required forms.
20. In case of any changes to this agreement, any changes will be signed as a new agreement by all parties.

I have read, understand and agree to the terms of this Admission Agreement and the Parent Handbook and hereby enroll my child for attendance at Mark West Community Preschool.

Parent Copy for your records