FAMILY HANDBOOK

Saint Paul Public Schools
Early Childhood Family Education
www.ecfe.spps.org
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WELCOME TO EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY EDUCATION (ECFE)

The mission of ECFE is to strengthen families through education and support of all parents in providing the best possible environment for healthy growth and development of their children. ECFE provides education in child development and parent/child relationships, which sets the stage for children’s school success.

Early Childhood Family Education is administered by the Community Education Department of Saint Paul Public Schools.

This handbook includes valuable information about expectations and guidelines for the Saint Paul ECFE program for parents/guardians and children. We believe that this information will help you to better understand our program’s policies and procedures. Please feel free to contact the ECFE main office at 651-793-5410 or your ECFE site directly if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you for choosing ECFE!
We are looking forward to a great year with you and your family.

CLASS COMPONENTS

ECFE has 3 main components:

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<th>Together Time</th>
<th>Parents’ Time</th>
<th>Children’s Time</th>
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<td>Families participate in activities together in the children’s classroom including circle time with songs and stories.</td>
<td>Parents separate from their children and participate in a class taught by a licensed Parent Educator.</td>
<td>While the parents are in their class, children continue to participate in educational age-appropriate activities taught by a licensed Early Childhood Teacher.</td>
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Non-separating ECFE classes: parents and children stay together for all three components.

Each of these components plays a key role in strengthening families and providing lasting educational benefits for children.

Thank you for being on time so you and your family can enjoy the whole experience that ECFE has to offer.

“*The parent is the child’s first and most important teacher.*”
PARENT/CHILD TOGETHER TIME

Parent/Child Activities
The classroom teachers will explain, verbally or in writing, the activities that are set out for the day. Parents are asked to “follow their child’s lead” by allowing the child to choose which activities they are interested in.

The roles of parents during Parent/Child Activities time are to observe, participate and communicate with their child. It is during this uninterrupted time that parents can gain a meaningful understanding of their child’s development. Tips for successful parent child activity time are:

- Parent/Child interaction time is a special time to focus on your child. Please limit adult interactions or conversations.
- Follow your child’s cues. Observe your child’s pace, temperament, choice in activity and playmates.
- Participate in activities that interest your child. Simply follow your child’s lead.
- Try using open-ended questions as you communicate with your child.
- When you have more than one child, inform the staff/volunteers of your intent to create individual time with each of your children.
- Be flexible, relax and enjoy your child(ren)!

Circle Time
At circle time, families sit together to enjoy books, songs, fingerplays, calming exercises, instruments or movement. Participating with the support of a loving adult helps the child extend their attention span in a group setting.

Circle activities increase your child’s brain connection, along with:
- Building the foundation of math and literacy
- Reinforcing an understanding of cause and effect
- Fostering the development of creativity through music and movement
- Promoting interest and confidence in social interactions
**Circle Time Expectations** – It may take some time for children to engage fully in circle time. Here are ways to encourage your child’s learning and enjoyment in circle time.

- Invite your child to sit on your lap or stay next to you during circle time.
- For younger children, it may help if you face them toward you (rather than away from you) and do the songs/finger plays together.
- Watching is a useful activity for kids. Allow them to watch rather than sing or do the actions.
- Parents who participate in the circle activities often give children permission to participate when they are ready.

**Transitioning to Parent Education Time**
Teachers will signal families when it is time to separate. Parents are asked to make time for bathroom, diapering & checking in with teachers before leaving for the parent room.

Separation anxiety is a very normal, natural process for both parents and children to experience. Each family experiences successful separations in their own unique way and time. ECFE strives to provide a safe, caring environment for both parent and child to work on the normal developmental process of separation. Parents are encouraged to talk to staff about any separation concerns. Here are some basic steps to use when you separate:

**Steps to Successful Separation**
- Always say good-bye. Sneaking out erodes the child’s trust.
- Helpful things to say to your child:
  - “I will be back after you play, have a snack and story.”
  - “Teacher _____ will help you while I’m in the parent room.”
  - “I am going to my class, and I will come back after _____.
- **Once you say “Good-bye” – GO!**
- Let your teacher know if you want extra help with separation.
- “You look sad, sometimes mommy/daddy feel sad too. Teacher _____ is here for you. Remember mommy/daddy always come back.”

Separation is sometimes harder on the parent than the child! Parents’ fears may intensify the child’s fears.
The parent education component of ECFE provides a confidential environment where parents can gain knowledge and confidence about parenting, child development, behavior and learning.

A licensed parent educator guides and facilitates group discussion, providing information and resources. The parent component of the program includes:

- Parent topics based on the Minnesota Department of Education Parent Education Core Curriculum. (See next page of this section)

**Group guidelines for the parent room can include:**

**Be Safe**
- For the children's safety, please do not bring adult beverage containers in the children's room.
- Keep valuable items with you.

**Be Kind**
- Be respectful of one another; there are many positive ways to parent!
- All thoughts, feelings and opinions are respected.
- Actively participate by speaking and listening.
- Everyone has a right to be heard and everyone has a right to pass.

**Be Responsible**
- Silence cell phones and refrain from texting during class.
- Be responsible for your own learning.
- Be open and honest about your thoughts/feelings.
- Model confidentiality—what is said in the group stays in the group.
- Clean up after your snacks and papers.
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- Culture and Community
- Family Development
- Diversity
- Community Resources
- Early Childhood Development
- General Child Development
- Social & Emotional Development
- Approaches To Learning
- Language & Literacy Development
- Creativity & The Arts
- Cognitive Development
- Physical & Motor Development
CHILDREN’S EDUCATION TIME

The staff at ECFE provides:

- Inviting, comfortable learning environment designed for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with safe age-appropriate equipment and hands-on activities.
- Designed for young children by licensed early childhood teachers that follow the Minnesota’s Early Childhood Indicators of Progress, 2017.

DOMAINS: MINNESOTA’S EARLY CHILDHOOD INDICATORS OF PROGRESS FOR BIRTH TO 3 YEARS OLD
PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Immunizations - Minnesota Statute requires that ECFE has up-to-date immunization records on file. Medical immunization forms with month, date and year of immunization, or a notarized exemption form must be turned in to attend class. Please submit these medical forms at registration or as soon as possible. The immunization record can be waived when the properly signed medical or conscientious exemption form is filed with the school.

Health Policy - For the benefit of all program participants and staff, families are asked to:
- Call or email the site staff if you are unable to attend class.
- Inform the staff of any allergies or concerns you may have about your child.
- Have all family members wash their hands when arriving at ECFE.
- Put mouthed toys in provided bins for the ECFE staff to sanitize.
- Change diapers only in the designated changing areas and follow posted sanitation instructions.

The Board of Education policy strictly prohibits smoking or the use of tobacco on school district property.

Please keep children home if they have had within 24 hours of class:
- Oral temperature of 99 degrees or above
- Undiagnosed rash, or one with an illness
- Vomiting
- Nasal discharge
- Bacterial/viral infections
- Frequent sneezing or coughing
- Any mouth diseases
- Earaches
- Sore throat
- Red mattery eyes
- Diarrhea
- Don’t feel well enough to enjoy school

You will be asked to leave school promptly if your child shows any of these signs during class.

Snack - No snacks in classrooms due to Covid policies. Please bring a beverage for children in a sippy cup or bottle that is labeled with their name. Parents can bring a beverage for the parent education room.

Mandated Reporting - Minnesota law mandates all ECFE staff members to report any belief of physical, emotional, and/or sexual abuse.

Attendance - Regular attendance and prompt arrival allow you and your child to fully benefit from parent/child interaction time, and help your child(ren) adjust more smoothly to class. Please call or email the site staff if you are unable to attend class. It is expected that parents are present during class time.

What to Wear – Please dress your child in clothing that allows movement, safe exploration and the possibility of getting soiled. For safety reasons, shoes must be worn at all times.
**Cell Phones, Cameras and Solicitation Policy** – To protect the learning environment and private information of ECFE families, we are asking that you:

- Limit the use of cell phones to emergencies
- Refrain from taking photos in the classroom/special events unless permission is given by ECFE staff and participants
- Solicitations by individuals for personal gain are prohibited during class time.

**Visitors Policy** – Currently, visitors are not encouraged. If you have questions about this please ask your teachers.

**School Closings** - In the event that school is cancelled due to severe weather, the school district will contact families and staff through its mass notification system, as well as through WCCO radio, the school district website, the main message on the school district switchboard, and other local media as soon as possible. We are listed as Saint Paul Public Schools, Saint Paul Community Education, or Saint Paul Early Childhood Family Education. On days of emergency closings we will not hold any previously scheduled program-related meetings or events (such as Advisory Council).

**ECFE EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

The district requires drills to take place during the year so that staff and learners are better prepared should a real incident occur. In all emergency procedures it is important for the adults to REMAIN CALM. Speak to the site staff for further information or questions about the procedures.

**FIRE/EMERGENCY EVACUATION**

When an emergency evacuation is called:

- Each room has evacuation instructions posted at the door.
- Parents and children will follow staff through the designated door to the designated safe area until the “All Clear” signal is given.

**TORNADO/SEVERE WEATHER**

When severe weather sirens sound, staff lead children and parents to “designated safe area.” All families and staff will assume a safe sitting position with their heads covered until an “All Clear” signal is given.

**LOCKDOWN**

This is an emergency situation that takes place inside or outside the building resulting in the need for “locking down” the space. This situation requires all students and staff to remain in their classrooms until the “All Clear” signal is given. Follow staff directions.

**LOST CHILD**

When a child has been reported missing:

- Inform ECFE staff, parent or guardian immediately.
- Staff will monitor building exits.
- Building, rooms and surrounding areas will be searched immediately.
- If child is not located, 911 will be called.
Early Childhood Screening | http://studentwellness.spps.org/screening | 651-632-3746
2102 University Avenue West (University at Cleveland Avenue) St. Paul, MN 55114

Early Childhood Screening (ECS) is a program that helps to identify health and developmental needs of young children before they enter Kindergarten. The screening includes vision, hearing, height, weight, development, speech, social/emotional and a review of health and immunization information.

Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) provides the screening without charge to children ages 3, 4 and 5 years old. It is important to have children screened at an early age so there is adequate time to obtain help for any identified concerns before the child enters school. The screening is required by law for entrance into Kindergarten in all Minnesota public schools and recommended for students entering Pre-Kindergarten in SPPS.

Screening is offered by appointment at the Student Placement Center, mornings and afternoons, five days a week. Call the office at 651-632-3746 to schedule your appointment or obtain further information. Parents/guardians may also arrange the screening with their Health Care Provider. Forms are available at the website listed above.

Help Me Grow is part of a statewide initiative to provide information about child development and the availability of special services for eligible children from birth to kindergarten entry. Help Me Grow Ramsey County offers (at no cost to families) information, support and referral services that may help your child and your family. For families who have concerns about the development of their child, birth to five years old, please contact the office by phone or by email.

Saint Paul Schools Student Placement Center | http://placement.spps.org/
2102 University Avenue West (University at Cleveland Avenue) St. Paul, MN 55114

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English: 651-632-3700</th>
<th>Español: 651-632-3751</th>
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<td>Karen: 651-632-3716</td>
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All student applications, Pre-Kindergarten through grade 12, are processed by the Student Placement Center. For more information on your school choices, or to submit an online application, please visit apply.spps.org or contact the Student Placement Center.
### SCHOOL CALENDAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>September 2021</th>
<th>October 2021</th>
<th>November 2021</th>
<th>December 2021</th>
<th>January 2022</th>
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**September 2021**
- 1-3: Opening Workshops
- 6: Labor Day

**October 2021**
- 21-22: NO SCHOOL, ALL SITES
- 29-30: NO SCHOOL, Concourse Prep

**November 2021**
- 12: End of 1st quarter (35 days)
- 19: NO SCHOOL, ALL SITES

**December 2021**
- 19: NO SCHOOL, ALL SITES
- 22-23: NO SCHOOL, ALL SITES

**January 2022**
- 17: NO SCHOOL, ALL SITES
- 21-22: NO SCHOOL, ALL SITES

**February 2022**
- 21: NO SCHOOL, ALL SITES
- 27: Professional Development Day

**March 2022**
- 4: NO SCHOOL, ALL SITES
- 25: PACE Professional Development Day

**April 2022**
- 1: End of 1st quarter (35 days)

**May 2022**
- 30: Memorial Day

**June 2022**
- 10: Last day for teacher

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**PACE** Professional Development Day

**End of Quarter 1 (42 days)**

**End of Quarter 2 (42 days)**

**End of Quarter 3 (43 days)**
Family Handbook Addendum  
August 20, 2020

In order to maintain the health and safety of staff and students during the coronavirus pandemic, the following practices have been put in place. These practices work in conjunction with the policies and procedures in the Early Childhood Family Education Parent Handbook. These practices were created under the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). We will continue to update and revise procedures based on their guidance.

**Health and Safety**

**Reporting Absence**
- Families should contact ECFE staff if a child is going to be absent from program. If families know in advance that their child will not be in attendance please let staff know ahead of time.

**Handwashing**
- Staff and students will follow proper handwashing procedures.
  - Soap and water for at least 20 seconds
  - Alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol can be used if soap and water are not readily available
- Handwashing takes place at the following times:
  - Upon staff and student arrival
  - Before and after preparing food or drinks
  - Before and after eating or handling food
  - Before and after administering medication or sunscreen
  - After using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom
  - After coming in contact with bodily fluid
  - Before and after playing outdoors
  - Before and after transitioning to a new space

**Health Screening**
- Parent(s)/child(ren) are screened by a staff member upon arrival.
- **Exclusion Guidelines** per the MDH will be followed.
- For the safety of Parent(s)/child(ren) and staff, anyone who does not pass the screening will not be allowed into the building and will be asked to return home.
  - If an ill student has a sibling, the sibling will also be sent home for observation.
Ill Parent/Child or Staff
If a parent/child or staff member develops any symptoms of illness consistent with coronavirus, the following procedures will be followed.

- After the ill parent/child or staff member leaves the facility, staff will disinfect areas where the staff or student were present.
- If an ill child has a sibling, the sibling will also be sent home for observation.

Sick Policy
- If a child has been directly in contact with a person in the program that is either diagnosed or presumed positive for COVID-19, you will be contacted and your child will have to remain out of the program for up to 10 calendar days from the date symptoms are first reported.
- This action will not be taken until the person is either diagnosed or is presumed positive for COVID-19.
- Please understand that the up to 10-day requirement is a directive from MDH and not a school district decision.

Masks
- Masks are required for all individuals aged two and up while indoors.

Snacks
- ECFE will not have snack time. You may bring beverages for your family. Those who need a snack for a medical reason may bring a non-nut snack with them.

Cleaning and Disinfecting
- All areas of the building being used (classrooms, gyms, cafeteria, common areas, etc.) are equipped with sanitizing wipes & sanitizing sprays.
- Staff will routinely clean, sanitize, and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched, especially toys and games. This may also include cleaning objects/surfaces not ordinarily cleaned daily such as doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops, desks, chairs, and playground structures.
- Toys and equipment will be cleaned and sanitized prior to being used by a new group of children.
- After toys and equipment have been used, they are to be set aside until they are cleaned and sanitized.

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**COVID-19 INFORMATION FOR IN-PERSON CLASSES**

Due to the highly contagious nature of the current COVID-19 virus outbreak, and the understanding that any virus can be contracted from both symptomatic and asymptomatic people, Saint Paul Public Schools assumes no responsibility for the contraction of any illness as a result of your participation in Saint Paul Public Schools Community Education classes and programs. Although Saint Paul Public Schools conducts regular and thorough cleaning and sanitation of its facilities and follows state and federal public health and safety guidance, it cannot guarantee that participants will not be exposed to the COVID-19 virus or other illnesses. Participation in Saint Paul Public Schools Community Education classes or activities is at your own risk. You acknowledge this risk on behalf of yourself and your minor children as a condition of participation.

Health and safety expectations will be communicated to all participants. Participants are prohibited from participating or entering school district facilities when they are ill or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or subject to quarantine. All participants are required to comply with current MDH (https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecover.html), SPPS (https://www.spps.org/safelearningplan) COVID guidelines, and all other communicated health and safety expectations. Failure to do so could result in removal from the class/program and the premises.
Layers
- The SPPS policies this year include layers of protection, vaccination/regular testing (adults), masks, hand washing, staying home when sick, and keeping distance between all people, when possible.

Classroom Model
- Children and adults will be assigned to the same group and classroom each day.
- The majority of the activities will take place in the assigned classroom for each group.

Field Trips
- Off-site field trips have been cancelled.

Early Childhood Family Education COVID-19 Reporting Procedures

SPPS works with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to review cases involving employees, students or visitors who have symptoms or a diagnosis of COVID-19. As part of this process, The Department of Student Health and Wellness learns of close contact exposures. Close contact exposure is defined as being within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 or COVID-19 like symptoms for a prolonged period of time (15 minutes or more).

COVID-19 related symptoms/diagnosis include: cough or trouble breathing OR at least two of these symptoms: fever, chills, repeated shaking, muscle pain, headache, sore throat or new loss of taste or smell.

Maintaining confidentiality, SPPS nurses will interview those with symptoms and learn who they had close, prolonged contact with. They will then inform those people and share guidance and recommendations from MDH. Health information is protected under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), therefore we are unable to share who the person with COVID-19 or COVID-19 like symptoms is.

As a general rule, building-wide notifications will not be sent to ECFE families and staff unless there is a need to close a building. Student Health and Wellness works closely and collaboratively with:

- Facilities and Environmental Services Group (ESG) so that additional cleaning measures can be taken as needed when cases occur according to our cleaning procedures and guidelines. They additionally provide routine cleaning throughout the day.
- Director of Community Education who is an administrator for Early Childhood Family Education programs, so he is aware of and can promptly isolate staff or students (due to symptoms) or quarantine staff or students (due to close, prolonged exposure) at each of our sites.

As we continue to promote the safety of all Early Childhood Family Education participants and our employees caring for them, we ask for your continued partnership in reporting absences. Reason for absence is especially important, in order for us to follow guidelines recommended by the Minnesota Department of Health. Absences of unknown reason or absences that are illness-related will be followed up by staff from Student Health and Wellness. As a reminder, please keep your child home if they are sick.

Please report daily absences including reason and/or symptoms to your ECFE Teacher or email ecfe@spps.org.

Please email Early childhood Family Education (ecfe@spps.org) with additional questions you may have. Thank you.