



Saint Paul
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



**Saint Paul Public Schools
Early Childhood Family Education
www.ecfe.spps.org**

Family Handbook



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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, concerns or need clarification.

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

Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) Class Components

ECFE has 3 main components:

Together time- Families participate in activities together in the children's classroom including circle time with songs and stories.	
Parents' time- Parents separate from their children and participate in a class taught by a licensed Parent Educator.	Children's time- While the parents are in their class, children continue to participate in educational age-appropriate activities taught by a licensed Early Childhood Teacher.

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.

Regularly going through the whole sequence of activities in a class period strengthens the child's ability to anticipate and predict what will happen next. Relationships and routines are established when the group starts all together. This is the start to teaching children the responsibility for being on time and respecting other participants and staff time constraints.

The parent is the child's first and most important teacher.

Parent/Child Together Time

The parent/child together time includes circle time and parent child activities. It is designed for you and your child to enjoy together. Keep these things in mind when interacting with your child:

- Arms' length parenting – How far am I from my child?
- Child-directed play – Who decides what and how long at each activity?
- Eye contact – Can my child see my eyes?
- Quiet, calm voice – Am I modeling “inside voices” especially in a large group?
- Child's Eye Level – Am I at my child's eye level?
- Open-ended questions – Use “who/what/when/where/why/how” questions and “tell me more.”
- Children Conversations – Use simple labels and descriptions rather than evaluative words.
- Use the time to play & have fun!

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 a 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.

Parent Education Time

ECFE programs are founded on research that shows parent education is the most effective way to produce long-range educational benefits for children. 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 based on research and experiences with families. 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)
- Parenting goals that will direct the focus of specific topic discussions.
- Group discussion around parents' successes and challenges.

Group guidelines for the parent room discussion 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 considerate with interruptions, side conversations and long-winded speeches.

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.
- Stick to the topic of the day unless the group agrees to change the topic.
- Clean up after your snacks and papers.

What you get out of the group will depend on what you put into the group effort.

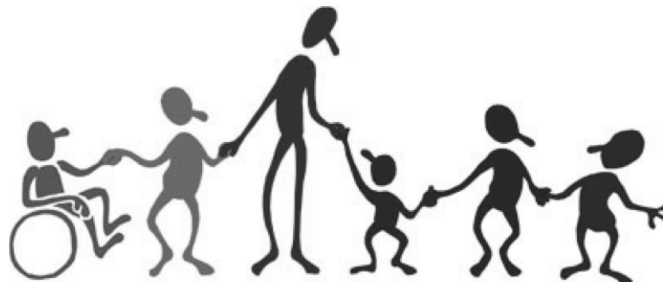


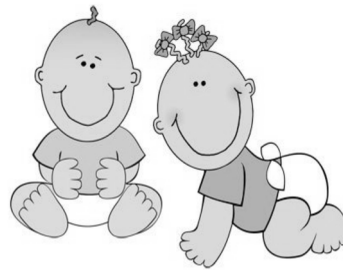
Table Form: Parent Education Core Curriculum Framework

Parent Development	Parent-Child Relationships	Early Childhood Development	Family Development	Culture & Community
<p>Role of Parent</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transition to Role 2. Multiple Parental Roles 3. Parenting Philosophy <p>Changing Parent Roles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stages of Parenting 2. Family-of-Origin 3. Balancing Parent-Child Needs 	<p>Importance of Parent-Child Relationships</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nature & Quality 2. Intentionality <p>Attachment/Autonomy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trust 2. Brain Development <p>Relationship Skills</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Observation Skills 2. Sensitivity & Responsiveness 3. Reciprocity 4. Pace 5. Temperament <p>Nurturing</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical Care 2. Affirmation & Affection 3. Empathy & Respect <p>Guidance</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Modeling 2. Monitoring & Management 3. Structure 	<p>General Child Development</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Process of Development 2. Developmental Expectations <p>Social & Emotional Development</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emotional Development 2. Self-Awareness & Self-Regulation 3. Social Competence & Relationships <p>Approaches To Learning</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Curiosity 2. Risk-Taking 3. Imagination & Invention 4. Persistence 5. Reflection & Interpretation <p>Language & Literacy Development</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Listening & Understanding 2. Speaking 3. Emergent Reading 4. Emergent Writing <p>Creativity & The Arts</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creating 2. Responding 3. Evaluating <p>Cognitive Development</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mathematical & Logical Thinking 2. Scientific Thinking & Problem Solving 3. Social Systems Understanding <p>Physical & Motor Development</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gross Motor Development 2. Fine Motor Development 3. Physical Health & Well-Being 	<p>Family Traditions & Values</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Daily Family Time 2. Rituals & Celebrations 3. Family Responsibilities 4. Values <p>Family Relationships & Dynamics</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relationships 2. Communication 3. Resource Management 4. Work & Family 	<p>Family Support & Community Involvement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support Networks 2. Community Involvement & Social Change <p>Societal & Global Forces</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Media 2. Violence & Safety 3. Wellness 4. Environment <p>School & Community</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parent Involvement 2. School Success <p>Diversity- Ethnic, Economic, Ability, Other</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community Populations 2. Cultural Identity, Acceptance & Advocacy <p>Community Resources</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Resource Identification, Assessment & Use 2. Quality Early Care & Education

Children's Education Time

Play is the way in which children learn best. 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*.



Minnesota's Early Childhood Indicators of Progress for Birth to 3 years old

Social Systems-Cognitive Domain

Mathematics Domain

Social and Emotional Domain

Approaches to Learning Domain

Language, Literacy and Communications Domain

Arts Domain

Physical and Movement Development Domain

Scientific Thinking Domain

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 any 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
- Significant 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 notified and asked to leave school promptly if your child shows any of these signs during class.

Snack -The guiding principles for program snacks in our children's room are as follows: No nuts; No hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated products; No artificial sweeteners. We look for healthier products low in sugar. In an effort to align with the districts "No Sweets Zone," ECFE encourages families to provide healthy snacks (low sugar, low salt, low fat) to the classes on their assigned days. State law stipulates that snacks be brought in unopened commercial packages. If you or your child has a food allergy, please tell the teachers ASAP. Parents of children with food allergies should provide an alternative snack for their children.

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 e-mail 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.

What to Bring from Home - Children may bring comfort items such as a pacifier, blanket, bottle, etc. that will help them feel better in school. However, we ask that families leave toys at home. Toy guns and weapons cannot be brought to school. Please label diaper bags, bottles and other belongings with your child's name.

Cell Phones, Cameras and Solicitation Policy – To protect the learning environment and private information of ECFE families, we are asking that you:

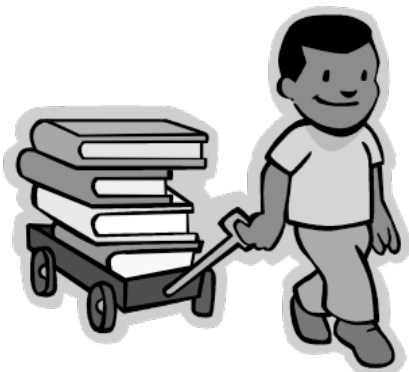
- Limit the use of cell phones to emergencies
- Refrain from taking photos in the classroom/special events unless permission is given by ECFE staff and participants

Solicitations by individuals for personal gain are prohibited during class time.



Visitors Policy – Staffing is set up specifically for children registered in classes. Please ask permission from the early childhood teachers before bringing any child visitors, including school-age children. Adult visitors are welcome at anytime (i.e. parenting partner, grandparents...) but please give a courtesy call.

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 early as possible the morning of the closing, as well as through WCCO radio, the school district website (http://www.spps.org/school_closing), the main message on the school district switchboard, and other local media. 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:

1. Each room has evacuation instructions posted at the door.
2. 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:

1. Staff will lead children and parents to "designated safe area." All families and staff will assume a safe sitting or crouched 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:

1. Inform ECFE staff, parent or guardian immediately.
2. Staff will monitor building exits.
3. Building, rooms and surrounding areas will be searched immediately.
4. If child is not located, 911 will be called.

Advisory Councils

The **ECFE All-City Advisory Council** meets once a month and is comprised of representatives from Saint Paul ECFE sites and administrators. Its purpose is to promote, advise, advocate and relay information to the ECFE administration.

The **ECFE Site Advisory Councils** are representative groups organized to offer support to their individual programs. They encourage parents at the neighborhood level to get involved in volunteer activities, service projects, fundraisers and special events that will enhance the growth and learning of families. They also relay information, promote the program, and make recommendations to their site staff, all-city representatives and program planners.

Community Resources

Early Childhood Screening

<http://studentwellness.spps.org/screening>
2102 University Avenue West (University at Cleveland Avenue)
St. Paul, MN 55114
651-632-3746



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

<http://www.helpmegrowramseyco.org>
651-604-3700

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

English: 651-632-3700
Karen: 651-632-3716

Español: 651-632-3751
Soomaali: 651-632-3709

Hmoob: 651-632-3706

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.

2020-2021 School Calendar

August 2020	August	February	February 2021																																																																																																																						
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