

Toddler and Preschool

Philosophy

The mission and philosophy of the St. Francis Preschool program is to provide high quality care in a developmentally appropriate program while promoting self-esteem and fostering independence and creativity in a relaxed and nurturing environment.

Majors goals and objectives are to promote the educational, emotional, physical and social development of children while meeting the needs of their families; ensure that staff remain sensitive to the values of the families they service; employ and retain staff who are well trained in child development and early childhood education; and continue to be dynamic and changing in response to the needs of the community we serve.

Accreditation

You have chosen an early childhood program for your child that is accredited by the NATIONAL ACADEMY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS. The academy administers a national voluntary, professionally sponsored system for all types of schools and child care centers. The academy is a division of the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**, the nation's largest organization of early childhood educators. **Only 8% of programs achieve accreditation.**

The early childhood programs accredited by the academy have voluntarily undergone a comprehensive process of internal self-study, invited external professional review to verify compliance with the academy's criteria for high quality early childhood programs and have been found to be in substantial compliance with the criteria. A copy of the criteria can be obtained from the academy (www.rightchoiceforkids.org).

Grow NJ Kids

St. Francis Preschool is currently participating in Grown NJ Kids. Grow NJ Kids is a state-sponsored initiative to raise the quality of child care and early learning throughout New Jersey.

Grow NJ Kids gives child care and early learning programs resources to assess and improve their programs, while providing parents with information that allows them to evaluate the quality of programs and make the best choices for their child. The goal is to create a system that encourages ongoing improvement.

For more information on Grown NJ Kids please visit the website at <http://www.grownjkids.com/>

Let's Move Initiative

St. Francis Preschool earned a Certificate of Achievement by the National Early Care Education Learning Collaborative Project (Let's Move).

Let's Move! is a comprehensive initiative, launched by the First Lady, dedicated to solving the problem of childhood obesity in a generation so that kids born today will grow up healthier and

able to pursue their dreams. This is an ambitious goal. But it can be done. Combining comprehensive strategies with common sense, Let's Move! is about putting children on the path to a healthy future starting with their earliest months and years and continuing throughout their lives. Giving parents helpful information and fostering environments that support healthy choices. Providing healthier foods in our schools. Ensuring that every community has access to healthy, affordable food. And, helping kids become more physically active.

For information on the Let's Move Initiative please visit the website at <http://www.letsmove.gov/initiatives>

Strengthening Families

St. Francis Preschool is currently participating in Strengthening Families Initiative.

The Strengthening Families Through Early Care & Education Initiative is an approach to preventing child abuse and neglect by supporting families through childcare programs. The Center for the Study of Social Policy developed the framework for Strengthening Families through Early Care and Education Initiative. The fundamental principle is that certain protective factors contribute towards family resiliency and strength. These key protective factors are Parent resilience, Social connections, Knowledge of parenting and child development, Concrete support in times of need, and Healthy social and emotional development. Early Care and Education Centers play a prominent role in building these protective factors among the families they serve. Through seven key strategies, centers become well positioned to help families build these protective factors that have proven to be effective in preventing child abuse and neglect. This approach uses early childhood programs to build evidence-based protective factors for children and their families. This is a strength-based approach which builds on existing assets to keep all families strong and all children safe.

For more information on Strengthening Families please visit the website at <http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengtheningfamilies/about>

Curriculum

High/Scope Preschool and Toddler Curriculum

In the High/Scope approach teachers and children are active partners in the learning process. This balanced approach to adult-child interaction — also called "intentional teaching" — is critical to the effectiveness of the program. It includes techniques for encouraging learning in specific content areas as well as strategies for helping children resolve conflict.

Classroom arrangement, materials, and equipment-- The space and materials in a High/Scope setting are carefully arranged to promote active learning. The center is divided into interest areas organized around specific kinds of play; for example, block area, house area, small toy area, book area, sand-and-water area, and art area.

Daily routine-- High/Scope teachers give preschoolers a sense of control over the events of the day by planning a consistent daily routine that enables the children to anticipate what happens next. Central elements of the preschool daily routine include the plan-do-review sequence, small- and large-group times, greeting time, and outside time.

Curriculum Content

Toddler Content Areas: **Sense of Self** (making choices, learning about others, solving problems and developing self-help skills); **Social Relations** (relating to adults and children, expressing emotion, responding to others feelings and playing with others); **Creative Representation** (pretend play, exploring and building); **Movement** (moving body, moving with objects, moving to music); **Communication and Language** (listening and responding, speaking, exploring picture books, and showing interest in stories, rhymes and songs); **Exploration and Early Logic** (exploring objects, exploring categories, developing number understanding, exploring space and time).

Preschool Content Areas: **Approaches to learning** (making choice, solving problems, taking care of personal needs and initiating play); **Social Relations** (relating to adult and children, conflict resolution, understanding and expressing feelings); **Creative Representation** (art, building, pretend play); **Movement and Music** (physical development, singing, musical rhythm); **Language and Literacy** (listening and understanding speech, using vocabulary, showing awareness of sounds, demonstrating knowledge about books, reading and writing); **Math and Science** (counting, sorting comparing, sequencing, identifying , learning about nature and living things).

Nutrition Program

The program is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Children are provided nutritious meals and snacks throughout the day. To know what is served all families receive a menu at the beginning of the month.

Prices

There is an annual \$40 Registration Fee. There are no refunds.

Toddlers - Ages 14 months to 2½ (Prices are monthly)

Full Day (9 am – 4 pm): 5 days a week \$533; 4 days a week \$448; 3 days a week \$359

Work Day (8:30 am – 5:30 pm): 5 days a week \$638; 4 days a week \$536; 3 days a week \$436

Extended Day (7:30 am – 6 pm): 5 days a week \$770; 4 days a week \$643; 3 days a week \$506

Preschool - Ages 2 ½ to 5 (Prices are monthly)

Full Day (9 am – 4 pm): 5 days a week \$497; 4 days a week \$412; 3 days a week \$321

Work Day (8:30 am – 5:30 pm): 5 days a week \$600; 4 days a week \$500;

3 days a week \$400

Extended Day (7:30 am – 6 pm): 5 days a week \$731; 4 days a week \$607; 3 days a week \$471

Contact Us

For information about childcare services contact Katie Opauski at ext. 114. For information on subsidized slots for all programs are available on a first-come first-serve basis. For more information on subsidized slots contact Amy Marks at (609) 494-8861.