

Jackson Learning Center Early Childhood Program



Parent Handbook



*Sandusky City Schools
2009-2010*

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Jackson Learning Center Early Childhood Program

Dear Families:

Welcome to the Jackson Learning Center Preschool!

At our preschool we offer developmentally appropriate programming for young children at varied developmental levels. Our program specializes with students who are developmentally delayed, as well as their typically developing peers. We also help students who may be “at risk” for developing delays in any of the developmental domains.

Our curriculum is both language-based and play-based. It is streamlined with our district’s elementary curriculum program. Teachers and support staff here assist your child in developing cognitive skills, pre-academic skills, social and emotional skills, and both fine and gross motor skills. This is taught through a variety of engaging, hands-on learning activities/lessons.

Families are a vital part of a child’s development at our preschool. We highly encourage you to work with our teachers and support staff in order to create a strong supportive learning network for your child. We encourage you to visit your child’s classroom and communicate often with teachers and support staff. Within this handbook, you will find information about our preschool and daily program procedures.

We are looking forward to working with you and your child throughout the coming year.

Sincerely,

*The Jackson Learning Center
Preschool Staff*



Jackson Learning Center Mission:

To be the building blocks for a sound academic foundation through developmentally appropriate practices.

Goal 1: Support character development through socializing in a child friendly environment.

Goal 2: Promote a safe and orderly environment.

Goal 3: Promote success in all academic areas and developmental.

Philosophy

The Sandusky City Schools Jackson Learning Center Early Childhood programs are designed to foster personal, social, emotional and intellectual growth in a developmentally appropriate, play-based learning environment. The curriculum is based upon teacher observations and knowledge of children’s special interests. Developmental progress that emphasizes learning as a process of interacting with materials and people are an integral part. Our curriculum is aligned to the Early Learning Content standards adopted by the State Board of Education. The state standards are addressed on the teacher’s lesson plans. Children’s learning activities in the classroom will most often be characterized as play, real and relevant to their lives.

The primary goals for children will emphasize socialization, physical and language development. Children will be involved in a variety of free-choice, center-based, and group learning opportunities throughout the day. Children learn through actual hands-on experiences. Time is set aside each day for group activities devoted to story telling, music, finger plays, games, etc. Play is the natural way for children to learn.

The Mission of Sandusky City Schools...

High Performing Learners...in a High Performing School System

Goal 1: Assure high achievement for all learners.

Goal 2: Promote a safe and orderly learning environment.

Goal 3: Support the character development of each student to become a responsible citizen.

Goal 4: Develop a high performing organization that is efficient.

Staff Phone Numbers

Early Childhood Staff Telephone Numbers:

Linda Wohl	Principal/Director	419-621-2819
Lynne Kaufman	Administrative Assistant	419-621-2818
Toni DeLuca	Counselor	419-621-2105
Lisa Calderon	Itinerant Teacher/Clinic Planner	419-621-2840
Karen Eckert	Itinerant Teacher/Clinic Planner	419-621-2840
Deb Capucini	Speech Therapist	419-621-2818
Anne Singler	Speech Therapist	419-621-2818
Marla Hagemeyer	Speech Therapist	419-621-2818
Bob Daniels	School Psychologist	419-626-4695
Becky Szucs	School Nurse	419-621-2818

Teaching/Assistant Staff Telephone Numbers:

Call the office at 419-621-2818 and ask for the staff member's extension number:

Becki Camp & Amy Sampsell	Ext. 3075
Sarah Fresch & Denise Schoen	Ext. 3074
Becky Patterson & Heidi Riedel	Ext. 3072
Erin Terry & Jackie O'Loughlin	Ext. 3076
Shelly Wentworth & Theresa Snowden	Ext. 3070

Licensing

The Sandusky City Schools Preschool Programs are licensed by the Ohio Department of Early Education. The licensing component requires compliance to inspections by the health, building and fire departments, as well as licensing evaluators from the Ohio Department of Early Childhood. Our license is posted in each classroom, as well as a copy of the most recent compliance report. Any complaints concerning the program can be reported to the department ombudsman or the Office of Early Childhood Education, 614-466-0224. Any concerns regarding the program may be directed to Linda Wohl, the Jackson Learning Center Principal, at 419-621-2819.

Preschool Related Services

The Jackson Learning Center Preschool Program provides a variety of professionals to enhance the education of young children.

Additional services for your children are: school psychologist, Speech-Language Pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, guidance counselor and nurse, when appropriate. Additional services, such as health screenings or assessments, may be available when needed per the educational plan.

When support services are a part of your child's educational plan, they will include:

1. Collaboration with the teacher for IEP goals.
2. Classroom activities are suggested.
3. Necessary adaptations are made.

A professionally staffed, play-based diagnostic assessment team is also available for evaluating potential, developmental delays in preschool-aged children.

Students who are not currently on an educational plan will also be exposed to related services in a group setting due to team planning.

Transitions

If your child transitions to or from another program other than the Jackson Learning Center Preschool, our staff will communicate any problems or concerns. We want your child to experience smooth and uneventful daily transitions to establish consistent routines. As your child becomes eligible for school-age programming, we will work to evaluate your child's developmental levels and review program options. Meetings will be arranged between parents/guardians, preschool staff, and receiving teachers to make transitions as informative as possible. We are here to get your questions answered. Please feel free to ask for more information as the need arises.

Preschool Curriculum

We believe that children learn when we provide them developmentally appropriate opportunities to learn. Creative Curriculum provides children with opportunities to learn and practice newly acquired skills in an environment where children are safe and valued. The curriculum also offers challenges just beyond the level of their present mastery.

We encourage hands-on experiences, as children learn by doing. The curriculum is developed around four areas of development and ten areas of interest. The four major areas of development are:

Social/Emotional – This is the process in which children learn the values and behaviors accepted by society.

Physical Development – Physical development is as important as academic development and considers fine motor and gross motor skills. This includes moving large muscles and coordinating small muscles in the hands and wrists. It supports the child's academic development, general health, self-esteem, stress management and social development.

Cognitive Development – Children learn to problem solve by purposefully acquiring information, resources, and materials. By gathering and making sense of the information, they learn to think logically. This is accomplished by comparing, contrasting, sorting, classifying, counting, measuring and recognizing patterns. By pretending they will also learn to represent and think symbolically.

Language Development – This is the process of communicating through verbal and non-verbal means. This includes listening, speaking, reading and writing. Children will begin to enlarge their vocabulary, express themselves, understand speech from others, and participate in conversations. They will be exposed to written language that facilitates understanding the purpose of print and how it works while gaining knowledge of the alphabet letters, writing, and words.

Our teachers have been trained to recognize the level of a child's development, and where he/she should be. The curriculum is developed around their needs. Creative Curriculum (our adopted curriculum) is approved by the Ohio Department of Education and follows the state standards. If you would like a copy of the Ohio Pre School Content Standards please ask your child's teacher for a copy. The Ohio Pre School Content Standards are posted on our hallway bulletin board for viewing.

Class Sessions

AM Session: 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m., Monday through Thursday

PM Session: 12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday

Holidays and Vacations

Jackson Learning Center follows the Sandusky City Schools Calendar for the current school year, i.e. all holidays, vacations, etc.

Attendance

Regular attendance is necessary for learning. **Parents are required to notify the school when a child is absent.**

- Please call the school each day of your child's absence at 419-621-2818 (*preferably before the beginning of your child's class*).
- The secretary is available beginning at 7:00 a.m. at the school office.
- A voice mail message can be left if the line is in use.
- Please be ready to provide the following information:
 - Child's name
 - Child's teacher
 - Brief explanation of child's illness
 - Follow-up with a written excuse upon child's return.
- A doctor's excuse may be requested in the event of a long-term absence.
- If your child comes to school on a bus, please notify the transportation office at 419-625-2264.

If we do not hear from you, we will be calling you to inquire about your child's absence. Please note that we are required to follow the Missing Child Act of 1985.

Regular attendance is important for all aspects of a child's development. Attending regularly allows the child to build relationships with peers and staff. It provides multiple opportunities for the child to learn the routines of the classroom and about the environment of school. Most importantly, it provides the foundation that contributes to future academic growth.

Transportation

Busing is available for students identified with disabilities attending Jackson Learning Center Preschool Program. Busing is *not* available for students enrolled as “typically developing students”. Parents of these students must make their own transportation arrangements.

Child Drop-off and Pick-Up

Child Drop-off and Pick-Up Times - Preschool classes are in session from:

- 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m., Monday through Thursday
- 12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday

Child Drop-Off - Parents are responsible for escorting their children to the designated drop-off area. If for some reason the teachers are not in the room, please wait with your child in the hall.

Child Pick-Up - It is important that each child be picked up promptly at dismissal time. It can be very upsetting to a child for a parent to be late.

We take our children’s safety and well being very seriously. Therefore:

- Only persons authorized by you (listed on the completed authorization form) may pick up your child.
- We ask parents to list those authorized to pick up their child on the Registration Form and/or the Emergency Contact Information Form (available in the office).
- When an unfamiliar person comes to pick-up your child, his/her name will be checked against your list in the office.
- Photo identification will be requested from those unfamiliar to the preschool staff.

Bus Garage - For questions regarding busing, please call the Bus Garage directly at **419-625-2264**.

Registration Forms

All children attending Sandusky City Schools Preschool classes must be fully registered before they can attend Jackson Learning Center. The following forms must be completed annually:

- ___ Registration Form
- ___ Copy of Birth Certificate
- ___ Emergency Medical Form
- ___ Federal Poverty Guidelines Form - due to information we are required to report, an income statement is needed. Any of the following are acceptable:
 - W2 Form from the previous year
 - Payroll Statement
 - Tax form 1040 or 1040A from the previous year
 - AFDC case number
 - Food stamp case number
 - Free or Reduced school lunch eligibility documentation
- ___ Copy of custody papers (if applicable) - must have court stamped page with name of residential parent
- ___ Emergency Transportation Authorization
- ___ Child’s Medical Statement (Physical) - All children are required by the State of Ohio to have a current medical statement on file. The medical statement must be completed by a physician and is good for one year from the date of the examination. All children must have a current medical statement in order to attend preschool.
- ___ Residency Statement
- ___ Immunization Record - must be up-to-date and complete in order for the child to be fully registered and to attend the preschool
- ___ Parent Roster Consent Form
- ___ Combined Student Authorization Form
- ___ Health Screening Consent Form
- ___ Parent authorization form for others to pick up your child

It is unlawful for Jackson Learning Center to discriminate in the enrollment of children upon the basis of race, color, religion sex, national origin or disability in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 104 Stat.32.42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.

Physicals and Immunizations

All children must have current and up-to-date physical and immunization records on file in order to attend preschool.

- Physicals/medical statements are valid for one (1) year from the date of the examination.
- New physicals must be turned in to the preschool office prior to the expiration of the child’s current physical.
- You will be notified by the preschool office prior to the expiration of your child’s physical to allow sufficient time to obtain a new physical.
- All children must also have up-to-date immunizations on file in the preschool office.

Conferences

Progress reports are sent home at least twice per year. Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled in the fall and spring and are held as needed. You may request a conference with the classroom teacher at any time.

Parents or guardians have access to the classroom during school hours for the purpose of talking with the teacher, evaluating the services provided by staff, observing the program in operation, or to evaluate the premises. We welcome your questions and visits to our program.

Change of Address, Phone Numbers or Emergency Numbers

If you move during the year, it is important to send your new address immediately to your child's teacher. This includes telephone number changes. It is important we have parents' or guardian's names and current emergency numbers. This form is available on the District website <http://www.scs-k12.net/Forms.aspx>.

If you go out of town, please notify the school and leave your baby-sitter's name. Please provide any additional emergency numbers or people to contact during your absence.

Child Abuse

In accordance with Section 2151.421 of the Ohio Revised Code all preschool staff are required to report any suspicions of child abuse or neglect to the local public children's services agency. Staff members have completed the required six-hour course prescribed by the Ohio Department of Human Services in recognizing signs of child abuse and neglect.

Telephoning the Classroom

If you need to call the classroom to speak with a staff member, please call before or after school. If you would like a telephone conference, please send a note and we will be happy to arrange a time. Please do not call the school during class time unless it is an emergency. Telephone interruptions take time away from the children's important classroom activities.

Emergencies and Accidents

During the course of everyday play, minor accidents do occur. In the event of a minor accident involving a child, first aid will be administered immediately. Members of the Jackson Learning Center staff are certified to administer first aid, and periodically attend classes to keep this certification current. Should an accident occur or an emergency arise, parents will be notified immediately. The required Emergency Contact Information Form must contain the home and work numbers of both parents/guardian. If neither parent nor guardian can be reached, a staff member will contact one of the other adults listed as emergency contacts on the form. **It is important that the emergency contact person is available and within a reasonable driving distance to pick-up your child when necessary.**

Parents are required to complete an Emergency Transportation Authorization form for every child in attendance at a Jackson Learning Center Preschool. If permission is granted to transport the child, Jackson Learning Center has the authority to contact emergency transportation for a child in the event of a serious accident. When minor accidents occur, parents are required to provide emergency transportation. Under no circumstances will a Jackson Learning Center staff member transport a child.

Care of Sick Children

An ill child will be comfortably cared for by an adult in an area of the school not being used for other children. A cot will be provided for an ill child who needs to rest. The child will be observed carefully for worsening condition until the child is discharged to his/her parent, guardian, or person designated by the parent.

Parents or guardians will be contacted immediately and expected to pick up the child. If the parents or guardians cannot be reached, one of the persons listed in the child's records as emergency contacts will be notified and asked to come to pick up the child. The child will not be readmitted to school until the observed symptoms are no longer present. In some cases, a doctor's note may be necessary.

Medications

Parents and/or guardians are responsible for the administration of prescription and non-prescription (over-the-counter) medication to the children. Only under unique circumstances can school personnel administer medications.

If at all possible, please give medications to your child at home. However, if it is not possible, and it is needed at school, written instructions must be provided by a licensed physician or licensed dentist, for the school to administer any medication. The medication must arrive at school in the originally labeled container. If medications need to be administered at school, the following conditions must be met as per 3313.713 and 3313.716 of the Ohio Revised Code. "*Prescriber's Request for the Administration of Medication in School*" form to be completed and signed by both the physician and the parents/guardians before the prescription medication can be administered.

- Prescription medication will be accepted only if it is in the original container
- Non prescription medication may only be administered by following the manufacturer's recommendation on the label. Medication must be in the original container and accompanied with a copy of the information given to you by the pharmacy.

Health and Safety

Sound health, safety and nutritional practices are emphasized. Good nutrition is discussed with children both during snack time and as a separate classroom unit. Families are encouraged to share favorite snacks reflecting their cultural heritage. Activities are developed to encourage awareness of safety at home, school and the community. Teachers talk about good health practices such as washing hands, brushing teeth, getting regular exercise and enough rest. They discuss visits to the doctor and dentist.

Illness and Communicable Diseases

The Jackson Learning Center staff is trained and certified in first aid and in recognizing the signs and symptoms of communicable diseases.

Disease Prevention – Hand washing is the most effective measure to prevent the spread of disease. All children and staff will thoroughly wash their hands before handling or eating food, after toileting or wiping noses, and after changing diapers. As much as possible, children are encouraged to manage their own hand washing. We provide step stools, soap and towels within reach, and our adults will observe the children using good hand washing procedures. Upon arrival at school, your child will be checked for signs of illness. If your child shows any of the symptoms listed, you will be asked to take the child home. If your child displays any of the following signs or symptoms before coming to school, **please do not send your child to school.**

Signs and symptoms of Communicable Disease (cause for immediate dismissal from school):

- Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool within a 24 hour period)
- Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Conjunctivitis (“pink eye”)
- Temperature of 100 degrees or more, taken under the arm, especially in combination with any other signs or illness
- Untreated infected skin patches
- Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool
- Stiff neck
- Unusual spots or rash
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- Vomiting within a 24 hour period
- Evidence of lice, scabies or other parasitic infestation

If a communicable disease is suspected, the child’s parent or guardian will be contacted by telephone. A form will be sent home stating that it will be necessary for the child to see a doctor for diagnosis, and treatment before returning to school. If your child may have been exposed to a contagious disease, you will be notified to look for signs and symptoms.

Celebrations

We have special parties for holidays and birthdays. If you would rather that your child not participate in these activities, please inform your child’s teacher. We would like our program to reflect the heritage of all the children attending. Specific information about celebrations will be sent home by the teacher.

Clothing for School

Since your child may be involved in “messy” activities such as painting and sand and water play, it is suggested that you dress your child appropriately for these activities at school. Tennis shoes are recommended. Please send in a complete change of clothes in the event that your child’s clothes become wet. Extra clothing should be appropriate to the season. Also please mark your child’s coats, sweaters, mittens, etc. with his/her name.

Snacks

Children may be directly involved in the preparation of their daily snacks. A variety of nutritious foods are offered in consideration of the child’s nutritional needs and dental health. Snack menus are posted in your child’s classroom. No child is forced to prepare or consume a snack. Adequate portions are provided for each child, so gum or candy is not permitted in school.

Please let us know in writing if a child has special dietary needs or allergies. These food allergies include but are not limited to: milk, eggs, peanuts, etc. Parents/guardians of children with specific dietary needs such as, diabetes, blended foods, etc., may be required to provide an alternative snack.

If a parent/guardian would like to donate a snack for their child’s class, please note the following guidelines on nutrition.

- Snacks should be individually pre-packaged and non-perishable when possible, and should not require refrigeration or preparation.
- We encourage you to bring nutritious snacks.
- A sample of snacks allowable would include fresh fruit and vegetables, cheese and crackers, or low-sugar cereal mixes.
- To inform the families of the daily snack, a monthly calendar is posted in each classroom.

Supplies Needed For School

Your child should bring the following items to school before our first regular school day:

- A complete change of clothing, including socks, to be kept at school (please label all items with your child's name)
- Toileting supplies your child may need such as diapers, wipes, extra training pants, etc.
- Backpack or book bag for carrying papers
- Large box of facial tissues
- Hand sanitizer

A donation of paper plates, napkins, cups, or paper towels is appreciated.

Toys from Home

Bringing toys to school from home is generally discouraged. Items from home often are lost or broken, and your child may find it very difficult to share a favorite toy with others. "Show and Tell" may be a part of your child's class. Your child's teacher will let you know when this will occur.

Things to Bring

Each child should bring a book bag clearly marked with his or her name to school each day. Please contact your child's teacher for an additional list of supplies required for school.

Children should not bring toys, books, or other items from home unless they are requested by the teacher. Guns, light sabers, swords, or weapons of any type are not allowed at preschool.

Discipline

The goal of discipline and guidance at Sandusky City Schools Preschool and Pre-kindergarten is to teach children to guide and direct their own behaviors and to get along with others. The emphasis is on guiding children to become responsible for their OWN behavior. Guidance then is a PROCESS of helping the children to build positive behaviors.

Our goal is to utilize techniques, such as those described below, which will promote appropriate behavior. The following list is not intended to be meticulous, but rather illustrative of the range of techniques the Sandusky City Schools Preschool and Pre-kindergarten staff will strive to employ. Other intervention methods may be followed when, in the staff members' judgment, the particular circumstances warrant such techniques.

- **Distracting or redirecting:** Most often this means shifting children away from potential problems before they happen. If conflict does break out the teacher may give the child one or two alternative choices. The child moves to another activity where he/she is able to control his/her behaviors more appropriately.
- **Natural consequences:** Staff members' help children see and understand the results of their behavior. For example: if Susie is dumping water on the floor, she may be handed paper towels to take responsibility for the clean-up.
- **Classroom rules:** Rules are kept to a minimum and are usually for the children's health and safety. When a conflict arises, a staff member may stop the action and remind children of the rule. An example would be, "Sand is for digging, not throwing."
- **Problem solving:** Sometimes children need help understanding the results of their behavior. Children who are hitting, kicking, biting, etc. will be stopped. Through discussion and visual aides they will be guided to decide what alternatives they should use to solve their dispute. The teacher might say, "What words can you say to tell John to stop hitting you?"
- **Positive reinforcement:** Minor misbehaviors can often be changed by not rewarding it with attention. Attention should be given for praiseworthy accomplishments.
- **Renewal time:** This technique may be used as a cooling off time. The child can use appropriate problem solving behaviors. The child is seated away from the activity from a minute or two. It is not viewed as punishment.
- **Collaboration:** If problems persist, parents and teachers may confer to determine the best course of action and techniques to use. The goal is for the child to be successful in understanding and learning the appropriate behaviors for the classroom.

Our staff is continuously striving to further their knowledge on new techniques of discipline and guidance to fully benefit all developmental ages of our children.

Parental Involvement

Family Role - You are **most important and you know your child the best!** Please be assured that any and all of your concerns will be respected and recognized for the important role you play in your child's development. Contact your child's teacher to share any concerns or to have questions answered. Our staff will maintain an open communication between parents and/or caregivers. In the event a parent feels uncomfortable stating their concerns with the teachers, please contact the Jackson Learning Center Principal, Mrs. Wohl, at 419-621-2819.

Parent Unlimited Access Policy

Any parent, custodian or guardian of a child enrolled in Jackson Learning Center, shall be permitted unlimited access to the facility during all hours of operation. The purpose of the visit should be for contacting the children, evaluation of the care provided by our facility, or evaluating the premises. Upon entering the premises, the parent or guardian shall notify the office of his/her presence.

Family Education

Offered regularly in the preschool program, parent education may involve your participation in one or more of these:

- classroom time with your child;
- special activities or events;
- involvement in IEP development;
- involvement in conferences.

Parents/guardians are welcome to participate at any level at which you feel comfortable. You are always welcome to offer ideas for other families, too! Please be sure to sign in at the office.

Parent Roster Statement

A roster for each group of children, which includes names and telephone numbers of parents, custodians or guardians of children attending the center, must be prepared annually and given to parents, custodians or guardians upon request.

Grievance Policy for Parents

It is the intent of the Sandusky City School District's Preschool program to provide all parents and guardians with an avenue for discussing and resolving any concerns they have in regard to the care being provided by the center.

- When a concern has been identified, the parent should first discuss the issue with the teacher.
- It is suggested that in order to facilitate the conversation, an appointment should be scheduled.
- You should prepare a written list of pertinent discussion points prior to the appointment.
- A written summary of the discussion and agreements are also encouraged.
- After the teacher has addressed the issue, the parent/guardian should consider the issue resolved.
- If the teacher was unable to address, or if the parent or guardian is dissatisfied with the response or outcome, he/she should then discuss the issue with the Director.
- A meeting will be scheduled, and the parent/guardian should be prepared to discuss what has transpired to date.
- The Director will research the issue and respond to the parent in a follow-up meeting, or at the initial meeting if no research is needed.

Review of Student Records

Staff will review each of their enrolled student's cumulative and health records as required in Rule 3301-37-05 of the Ohio Administrative Code.



Sandusky City Schools

407 Decatur Street, Sandusky, Ohio 44870-2442

419-626-6940

Visit us on the web at: www.scs-k12.net