

South St. Paul
Public Schools



SOUTH ST. PAUL PRESCHOOL

FAMILY GUIDEBOOK

2023-2024

Welcome to SSP Community Preschool

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“South St. Paul Public Schools is committed to providing high-quality, equitable, early learning programs for all children. Early learning experiences are crucial for developing social skills, emotional regulation, problem solving, and a love of learning. ECFE is an important step in a child’s development and we are excited to partner with our families in this learning experience. Thank you for choosing South St. Paul Public Schools. Welcome to the Packer family!”

- Brian Zambreno, SSPPS Superintendent



SSP Community Preschool has a Four-Star Rating

Four-Star Ratings allow families to easily identify child care and early education programs using research-based best practices to prepare children for kindergarten. Programs who volunteer to be Rated are going above and beyond health and safety requirements and have:

- Volunteered for extra, in-depth training
- Devoted themselves to strong, caring relationships with each child
- Adopted the latest approaches to keeping children's learning on track
- Committed to daily activities and routines that help children learn



Early Childhood Screening

We are excited to meet you and your family before your child starts school!
Come in for a FREE, one-hour visit to learn about how your child is developing.



Call 651-457-9418 for FREE screening appointments

Early childhood screening is required for all children attending SSP Community Preschool and for ALL children before kindergarten.

How it helps your child:

- Get their hearing, vision, height, and weight checked
- Find out more about how they play, communicate, and develop.
- Go home with a free book!

How it helps you:

- Learn about how your child is growing and developing.
- Meet the friendly school staff in your district.
- Go home with advice and support, and resources if needed.
- We make a plan together to help your child be the best they can be.



If needed, we can help you sign up for Early Childhood Family Education classes and Pre-School Scholarships (income guidelines apply).

Student Census Information

New to South St. Paul? Had a new baby?

Please call SSP Schools to update your contact information!

This helps us keep you informed about our programs, and important school information for your family!

Call 651-457-9470 to update your SSP census information.

Helping Young Children Be Successful at Preschool

Ideas for HOME before preschool starts:

Adapt to a new schedule by starting bedtime and morning/afternoon routines a few weeks before school starts to give your child time to adjust to the change.

Read stories about going to school to help your child gain confidence and information about the new experience. Talk about the changes that school will bring in your child's typical daily routines.

Drive by your child's preschool site so it becomes a familiar place. Talk about fun experiences your child will have at preschool. Go to the outdoor playground to explore.

Attend Family/Child Fall Family Meeting activities to familiarize you and your child with the preschool classroom environment.

Let your child help get ready for the first day of school by choosing which clothes to wear and backpack to use during the school year.

Approach the year with confidence so your child will too! Listen to what your child is telling you about preschool, good or bad. Talk with the classroom staff if you have concerns.



Creating Drop-Off and Pick-Up Rituals:

Intentional family rituals are some of the most supportive ways to smooth transitions at the beginning of preschool. You might consider how consistent and predictable your "hello" and "goodbye" rituals are.

Have confidence in your child's school and teachers, and you and your child will be able to normalize hellos and goodbyes quickly.

Remember to give your child your complete attention. Please, no cell phones during hello and good-bye!

Drop Off & Pick Up Ritual/Routine Tips and Tricks

- Make bed-time and wake-up time the same every day.
- Leave extra time so you don't feel rushed if traffic or something interesting happens on the way to school.
- Play good-bye and hello games. "Later alligator!"
Come to pick up with a question. "What made you laugh today?"



SSP Community Preschool



Kaposia Education Center



Lincoln Center

South St. Paul Community Preschool classrooms are located right in our two elementary school buildings. Being in our public school buildings allows for a number of services to be available to our Preschoolers and their families every day!

- **Breakfast and/or Lunch are available** for all morning, afternoon, and all day Preschool Programs.
- **Transportation** by bus is available at the beginning and end of the elementary school day for 4-5 year olds who have secured a bus buddy.
- **Licensed School Nurses** are on site for any health concerns.
- Family Support Workers help families with crisis, financial, social, and emotional needs.
- Cultural Liaisons work with families who may have language barriers to learn about school systems and communicate with staff.
- Student Support Specialists are available to consult with classrooms teachers and work directly with children.
- Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services are available at each site.
- State of the Art Facilities in both buildings give our Preschoolers access to indoor and outdoor play areas, interactive technology, and school libraries.



SSP Community Preschool

A great way to become familiar and comfortable going to your school BEFORE kindergarten!

3s Preschool – 3 Days Per Week

AM/PM Sessions

Tuition based, scholarships available

Age 3 on or before September 1

The Three-Year-Old Preschool Program is focused on having a school experience to build social skills, self-help and problem solving, gross and fine motor skills, and early literacy and math. Classes engage young learners in hands-on learning experiences. The daily schedule allows a mix of large and small group activities, with a focus on social interaction, individual exploration, creativity, and inquiry.

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Class Time | 2 hours 45 minutes |
| Breakfast in AM/Lunch in PM | Served by SSPPS Food Service, Free |
| Daily Schedule Included | Circle Time, Movement, Large Group, Choice Time, Story Time, Learning Centers, Creative Arts, Snack, Individual Work |
| Curriculum | Creative Curriculum, SEEDS of Early Literacy |
| Social/Emotional Support | Conscious Discipline |
| Assessments | TS GOLD assessment for development and learning organized within the areas of Social–Emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy, and Mathematics |
| Reporting | Conferences scheduled in November and March Progress Reporting in January and June |



4/5s Half-Day Preschool – 5 Days Per Week

AM and PM sessions

FREE at Kaposia & Lincoln Center– Voluntary Pre K (VPK)

Age 4 on or before September 1

The Four/Five-Year-Old Preschool Program offers ample school time prior to kindergarten, and is designed for children who have had some social experience with peers. These classes focus on direct social skills instruction, self-regulation skills, gross and fine motor skills and direct teaching of early literacy and math skills. Classes exploring concepts using hands-on learning activities. The daily schedule allows a mix of large and small group activities, social interaction, turn taking, solving problems, and practicing school routines.

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Class time | 2 hours 45 minutes |
| Breakfast in AM/Lunch in PM | Served by SSPPS Food Service Breakfast is Free, Lunch Free/Reduced prices available |
| Daily Schedule Includes | Circle Time, Movement, Large Group, Choice Time, Story Time, Learning Centers, Creative Arts, Snack, Individual Work |
| Curriculum | Creative Curriculum, SEEDS of Early Literacy |
| Social/Emotional Support | Conscious Discipline |
| Assessments | TS GOLD assessment for development and learning organized within the areas of Social–Emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy, and Mathematics, Preschool Early Literacy Indicator (PELI) measures early literacy, Early Math Inventory (EMI) measures early math |
| Reporting | Conferences scheduled in November and March Progress Reporting in January and June |



4/5s All Day Preschool – 5 Days

ALL DAY Session

FREE at Kaposia & Lincoln Center – Voluntary Pre K (VPK)

Age 4 on or before September 1

The Four/Five-Year-Old Preschool Program offers significant school time prior to kindergarten, and is designed for children who have had little or no social experience with peers. These classes focus on direct teaching of self-regulation skills, social skills, gross and fine motor skills, early literacy, and math skills. Classes explore concepts using hands-on learning activities. The daily schedule allows for a couple of cycles of large and small group activities, social interaction, turn taking, solving problems, and practicing school routines. All day classes fill quickly!

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Class time | 6 hours and 10 minutes |
| Breakfast in AM & Lunch in PM | Served by SSPPS Food Service Breakfast is Free, Lunch Free/Reduced prices available |
| Daily Schedule Includes | Circle Time, Movement, Large Group, Choice Time, Story Time, Learning Centers, Creative Arts, Snack, Individual Work |
| Curriculum | Creative Curriculum, SEEDS of Early Literacy |
| Social/Emotional Support | Conscious Discipline |
| Assessments | TS GOLD assessment for development and learning organized within the areas of Social–Emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy, and Mathematics, Preschool Early Literacy Indicator (PELI) measures early literacy, Early Math Inventory (EMI) measures early math |
| Reporting | Conferences scheduled in November and March Progress Reporting in January and June |



Preschool Class Information

What We Do in Preschool and Why We Do It

- **Social/Emotional Learning (SEL)** focuses on helping children gain knowledge about feelings and getting along with others. SEL is the process in which children are able to acknowledge and recognize the emotions of others, develop empathy, make good decisions, establish friendships, and handle challenges and situations effectively.
- **Literacy and Math** are embedded in all of our activities, whether it is walking down the hall and looking at signs or room numbers, or engaging in specific reading or counting. Every moment is a learning opportunity.
- **Circle time** is a group gathering where we share our ideas, plans, and observations. Circle activities are designed to stimulate youngsters' thinking, enrich their social skills, and extend their attention spans.
- **Gross-motor activities** give children the opportunity to use their muscles--as well as their imaginations--as they engage in fun, healthy exercises, such as running, jumping, and climbing.
- **Fine-motor activities** help improve small-muscle development and eye-hand coordination. Some common items found in the fine-motor/manipulative area include puzzles, beads and laces, pegboards, crayons, and scissors.
- **Art activities** help youngsters creatively express their thoughts and feelings. They help reinforce fine-motor skills and concept development in areas such as colors, shapes, and size relationships.
- **Dramatic-play activities** help children express themselves, practice life skills, improve social skills, increase self-esteem, build vocabulary, and solve problems. And, well, dramatic play is just plain fun!
- **Literacy and math activities** such as learning letter names, letter sounds, journaling, using the writing center with prompts for language learning, number names and counting are integrated into activities throughout the class time, as well as sign-ins, repeated read-alouds, centers, transitions, and activities. We use small groups to work on specific skill building for each child's needs.
- **Music activities** promote children's listening skills, creative expression, and social skills. In music, children can explore sound, volume, tempo, and rhythm.
- **Science activities** offer many hands-on opportunities for observation, exploration, investigation, making predictions, and experimentation.



- **Sand and water activities** allow youngsters to experiment with textures and the properties of different substances. These activities also promote the development of other skills, such as math, science, and language.
 - **Block play** gives children experience with many different concepts, such as shape and size discrimination, spatial relationships, number skills, balance, organization, cause and effect, and classification. Cooperative play skills, problem solving, and creativity are also promoted in block play.
 - **Story time** is designed to help youngsters develop an appreciation and enjoyment of literature, plus enhance children's vocabulary and comprehension skills, and expand their knowledge base and attention span.
-

Tuition Information

- Tuition applies to 3-Year-Old Classes and Lil' Packers only. 4's Preschool is FREE at Kaposia and Lincoln Center thanks to Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) funding from the state of Minnesota!
- Tuition is due the first school day of every month, September through May.
- Tuition is to be paid on time at the beginning of each month. If you are having difficulty making payments on time, contact the Community Preschool Office at 651-457-9418 to make arrangements for payment. Your child may be withdrawn from class if your account is not kept up-to-date.
- Preschool Scholarships are available for qualifying families. Please call the Community Preschool Office at 651-457-9418 for more information.
- Yearly tuition for all classes is divided into 9 equal payments. Tuition for children who start preschool later in the year will be prorated to the months of enrollment.
- If your family leaves the preschool program, tuition for the month of departure is to be paid. Tuition will not be reimbursed for days missed.

How do I make tuition payments?

- Preschool tuition will be paid month by month
- A reminder will go out during the last week of each month
- Go to earlylearning.sspps.org and follow the link on the main page to pay online

Payments are not accepted in the preschool classrooms.

Scholarships

South St. Paul Community Preschool provides **SCHOLARSHIPS** for children to learn, grow, and attend. We are happy to work with you to fill out paperwork and check eligibility for free tuition.

For more information on scholarships call

651-457-9418

We are here to support all families!

Drop-Off & Pick-Up Information

We are continuing to stagger our start and end times from both Kaposia and Lincoln Center (K-5) to allow for more distance and easier drop-off and pick-up for preschool families.

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Kaposia Education Center | All Day Classes Mon - Fri AM Classes: Mon - Fri, Mon/Wed/Fri PM Classes: Mon - Fri, Mon/Wed/Fr Lil Packers: Tues/Thurs | 9:10 AM - 3:25 PM 9:10 AM – 11:55 AM 12:35 PM - 3:25 PM 9:10 AM – 11:10 AM |
| Lincoln Center | AM Classes: Mon - Fri, Mon/Wed/Fri PM Classes: Mon - Fri, Mon/Wed/Fr Lil Packers: Tues/Thurs | 8:25 AM - 11:15 AM Noon – 2:50 PM 8:25 AM – 10:30 AM |

Kaposia & Lincoln Center Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

SSP Community Preschool will follow the Elementary building expectations for drop off/pick up. Families are asked to drop off/pick up outside with your teacher each day. Additional outside drop off details will be shared by your teacher during your Family Meetings in September.

Kaposia Education Center

Parents must walk your child to the teacher at Door 2 at Kaposia to check in, and pick up your child from the teacher at the end of the day at the same door.

Lincoln Center

Parents must walk your child to the teacher at Door 1 at Lincoln Center to check in, and pick up your child from the teacher at the end of the day at the same door.

Drop Off/Pick Up Safety

Children will only be released to adults (aged 18 or older) listed on the enrollment/emergency information. Teachers will take a picture of families for easy and efficient identification at the door, and to support “Conscious Discipline Family Wall” routines.

Preschoolers who are dropped off by their “Bus Buddy” brother or sister will be met by staff at the bus. At the end of the day, preschoolers will be escorted to the gathering area for students who bus, and matched up with their Bus Buddy in the supervised line for their numbered bus. See requirements about “Bus Buddies” below.

Late Fees

If a parent is late for pick-up, immediately notify the Preschool Office at 651-457-9418. A staff member will remain with the child until the parent’s arrival, or the child will be supervised in the school/building office.

We understand that unexpected circumstances sometimes arise, so families are given a grace period of two late pickups. **On the third late pickup, there will be a meeting with the Early Learning Coordinator and late fees will be enforced.** \$5 for the first 15 minutes, and \$1 per additional minute beyond 15 minutes will be charged each day that a child is picked up late.

Bus Information

Children who are 4 by September 1st may be eligible to ride the bus to school!

If your family qualifies for bus transportation, your four-year-old preschooler may ride the bus to and/or from school if you secure a “Bus Buddy.” A Bus Buddy is a big brother or sister, or responsible student from your stop but stop (in 1st grade or older). **Families are responsible for finding their preschooler’s Bus Buddy, as well as an alternate.**

If you have questions about whether your family is eligible for transportation, call the Transportation Office at 651-457-9474

Bus service is available for drop-off only for the morning preschool session, or pick-up only for the afternoon preschool session.

Children must have a BUS PASS issued by the SSPPS School District Transportation Department to ride a bus. This pass should be visible to the driver in or attached to the child’s back pack.

Use the “Bus Buddy Contract” as your guide to teach the buddy how to support the safety and supervision of the preschooler on the bus and at the bus stop. Please contact the Community Preschool Office to make arrangements for bussing, including submitting a completed “Bus Buddy Contract” found on the next page of this Handbook.

Bus Buddy Contract

For families eligible to ride the bus to school

Please return completed form to:
SSP Community Preschool Office
104 5th Avenue South
South St. Paul, MN 55075
651-457-9418

Once this form is completed and returned to the Early Learning Office, you will receive a bus pass. Preschoolers **MUST** have a bus pass to ride the bus.

A “Bus Buddy” is a big brother, sister, or friend (at least first grade or older) who gets on the bus at the same bus stop as your four-year-old preschool student. Parents make the arrangements and the “Bus Buddy” signs the contract to be responsible for:

- Being a good role model in words and behavior.
- Standing with the preschooler at the bus stop.
- Sitting with the preschooler on the bus (first 3 seats by the driver please!)
- Following the rules of the bus.
- Walking the preschooler to his/her teacher from the bus, and/or
- At the end of the day, meet your preschooler buddy at the gym to go to the bus together.

Please find an alternate bus buddy so that your preschooler has someone to ride with if their usual Bus Buddy is absent or goes home sick. Remember to let your Preschool Teacher know of any changes! Preschoolers will only be released to the authorized “Bus Buddy” and will not be allowed to board the bus if their Bus Buddy is not with them.

Preschooler’s Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____
Parent Name: _____ Email: _____
Home Address: _____ Phone #: _____
Building: _____ Teacher: _____ Class Days of Week: _____ AM/PM: _____
Address Child will be coming from or going to: _____

I agree to be a great “Bus Buddy!”

Student “**Bus Buddy’s**” Name: _____
Student “**Bus Buddy’s**” Signature: _____
School: _____ Grade: _____ Teacher: _____ Bus Number: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date _____
Alternate “Bus Buddy’s Name _____ Grade/Teacher: _____
Alternate “Bus Buddy’s Signature: _____

Attendance/Nurse Information

Kaposia Education Center
Health Office
651-457-9422

Lincoln Center
Health Office
651-457-9498

**Call your Health Office before the start time of class
to report an absence on the 24/hour voice mail**

When reporting an absence:

- Leave the child's first and last name
- The reason for the absence, with as much details as you can
- Your relationship to the student
- A phone number where you can be reached

Aim for perfect attendance! It's a great learning habit!

Attendance: Call if Absent - REQUIRED

Regular attendance at preschool is very important for your child's learning and preparation for kindergarten. If your child must be absent, parents must call the Health Office of your school (phone numbers above.) You will receive an automated call from the Attendance Office if your child is absent and you have not called to let us know. This is the same procedure as the elementary schools have, so there is an opportunity to build great habits!

Inconsistent attendance, being late to class often, or missing many days in a month will require a meeting with the Early Learning Coordinator, Family Support Worker, teacher, and parent to make a plan for improvement. If there is a waiting list for enrollment in a particular class or for scholarships, a pattern of inconsistent attendance may result in the loss of your preschool spot.

Prepare your child for a lifetime of success by making regular school attendance a priority. By figuring out the reasons for your child's absences – whether physical or emotional – and taking advantage of support services at school, you can help set your child on the path to success!

If regular attendance is difficult for any reason, please give us a call at 651-457-9418 so we can help connect you to resources and support.

SSP School Nurse Frequently Asked Questions

A Licensed School Nurse (LSN) is on staff at each elementary school during regular hours.
Call your school nurse, at the number on the previous page, with any other questions!

Is my child well enough to go to preschool?

Please do not send your child when he/she is sick. A bad cough, diarrhea, vomiting, upset stomach, or a temperature above 100°F prior to fever reducing medication within the last 24 hours are reasons to stay home. Although children sometimes insist on going to school when sick, please do not send them.

What happens if my child becomes sick at preschool?

If your child becomes ill during class, your child will be kept as comfortable as possible in the Nurse's Office at Kaposia and Lincoln. You will be notified to pick-up your child. If you cannot be reached, a person listed on the Emergency Card will be contacted for pick-up. Please inform your child's teacher when changes to Emergency Contact Information occur.

What happens if my child gets hurt while at preschool?

Common injuries and minor first aid will be handled by staff and/or the school nurse. An accident form will be completed by the teacher and you will be informed that day. In case of more significant injury, our school nurse will assess the situation and give first aid as needed. You will be notified, and when necessary, 911/ambulance will be called in case of extreme emergencies and your child will be taken to the nearest hospital. This will be billed to the parents(s)/guardians(s).

What if my child has ongoing health concerns/allergies?

If your preschool child has a health condition that requires any medical attention during the school day, please contact the School Nurse and arrange a conference to discuss a Health Plan regarding how these needs can be met during school hours. Please be sure your child's teacher is aware of any allergy concerns.

What if my child takes medication during the time preschool is scheduled?

A form must be completed and placed on file with the School Nurse for any student to receive any medication or medical treatments during school hours. New forms are required whenever there are changes in dosages or times medication is to be given. Medication to be given in schools must be supplied in the original prescription bottle, and prepared by the pharmacist with the appropriate labeling for school use. Written physician orders for all medication must include specific instructions: dosage, time of day, and length of time needed. Medications should be given at home whenever possible.

What happens if a child has a contagious illness?

Parents are requested to call teachers immediately for any contagious illness their children contract. A notice will be posted and sent home so other parents will know their child has been exposed to a contagious illness.

Why are immunizations required?

Minnesota State Law will be enforced regarding required immunizations. Please contact the Health Office at 457-9449 or 457-9476 if you have any questions about your child's immunization status.

Positive Behavior Support

Positive Behavior Support

We are committed to providing a safe and positive learning environment for all children. The SSP Community Preschool's behavior expectations encourage children to develop social and emotional skills including self-control/or self-regulation skills, problem solving, safety and respect for others.

SSP Community Preschool's commitment to an age-appropriate and play-based curriculum ensures that activities are child centered and promote positive social interactions. Teachers carefully craft the environment, communicate and enforce clear boundaries and expectations for behavior, and use verbal and nonverbal cues and/or directly teach behavior expectations to foster success.

Teachers model appropriate behavior and guide positive interactions among children and adults. Nurturing these skills is a central component of both Creative Curriculum® and Conscious Discipline®. Consistent use of these strategies and instructional materials help support children as they grow into successful, lifelong learners. Throughout the school year, each month in the SSP Community Preschool e-Newsletter, we will be sharing Conscious Discipline strategies and vocabulary you can use at home!

When a problem arises, the teacher relies on modeling appropriate behavior, giving children vocabulary to use, supporting ways to calm bodies, teaching peacemaking skills, reinforcing positive behaviors, and making good decisions. Children learn to make appropriate choices and develop techniques for regaining self-control when they feel frustrated. Instructive and individually appropriate strategies and routines help to strengthen the child's self-control and maintain self-esteem and the feeling of being part of our school family.

When a child experiences a particularly challenging time, we encourage parents and teachers to work together and develop appropriate strategies. If a specific circumstance needs attention, the teacher will follow these procedures:

1. The teacher will observe and document a child's behavior.
2. The teacher will discuss the child's behavior with a parent and inform him or her of learning-based strategies the teacher will implement, and will follow up with the parent about how these strategies are influencing the behavior.
3. If the concerns continue, the teacher will discuss additional options/interventions with the teaching team and behavior specialists in the building. A meeting with the parent will be held to share data collected, and to continue to document new or additional strategies.
4. If the concerns continue to be significant and, persistent, our teaching team will ask the Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) department to meet with the teaching/parent team, discuss the concerns, review data, and consider next steps or supports which could include an evaluation from the ECSE Team. Further information is available regarding ECSE and Special Education qualifications, Individual Education Plans, Parents Rights and Due Process from our Special Education Team at: 651-457-9497.
5. In the rare instance that a child has hurt another child or adult, is a safety concern to themselves (ex: running out of the building, throwing furniture), or the child's behavior is so unregulated that

remaining in school for the rest of the day would not be beneficial, the parent(s) will be called to pick up the child before the end of the day. A meeting will be held with the parent, and the preschool teaching and administrative team prior to the child returning to school. A behavior plan will be made, updated, or changed to better meet the needs of the child. Exclusion from preschool is a last resort and occurs when all school supports have been exhausted and/or found not effective in supporting safe school behavior.

Nutrition Services

ALL families must complete (or opt out of) the Household Application for Educational Benefits Free/Reduced Priced Lunch.

This ensures our school district receives additional benefits and funding.

The form or opt out option can be found in your schoolcafe account or visit the SSP Nutrition Services webpage: www.sspps.org/department/nutrition to download a physical copy.

Meals

Breakfast is a critical part of a healthy start to a learning day. In preschool, breakfasts and lunches are eaten in the preschool classroom. You can find menus and more information on the SSPPS District website.

School breakfast and lunch are provided FREE to ALL families through the Free School Meals program.



Preschool General Information

Assessments/Conferences/Progress Reports

Each child's progress in preschool is observed and monitored throughout the year. We use TS Gold throughout the year to track developmental and academic progress. The teacher looks for growth in areas of social/emotional, cognitive, language, and physical development. Skills are assessed in the fall, winter and spring and reported via Conferences in November and March, and through Progress Reports sent home in January and at the end of the year. During the school year, additional conferences may be held as requested by school personnel, parent(s), or legal guardian(s).

Birthdays, Party Invitations, and Holidays

Birthdays are important for many preschoolers. We acknowledge children's birthdays with songs, discussions, and stories, unless we are notified by a family they do not observe birthdays. We ask that birthday treats or desserts be saved for parties at home, and therefore not to be brought to school. Consider bringing a healthier snack such as fruit or crackers. They will be passed out at the teacher's discretion either during the snack/meal time or as a "take home treat."

We understand that some parents plan birthday parties at home, and would like to invite the preschool class. Preschool staff cannot take responsibility for party invitations being distributed at school, and are not permitted to give out classmates' contact information.



Because many holidays are religious in nature, we choose to not celebrate holidays in general at our school. However, we do recognize that holidays are an important part of many lives and often include discussion about holiday activities. Whenever possible, we will lead activities or have crafts that might parallel the season, focus on kindness and on building our school community, acknowledge friendships, and celebrate our learning.

Child Custody

Staff will strictly adhere to the enrollment/emergency information for the list of authorized people to pick-up children. All legal documents defining custody and visitation rights must be submitted to the preschool staff, and kept up-to-date if legal expectations change. Without such information, preschool staff will assume joint legal and physical custody.

Clothing

Children should wear comfortable, washable play clothes and closed-toe shoes (please no flip-flops - tennis shoes are best). We recommend bringing a large paint shirt to be worn for messy activities. Toilet accidents are prevented when children can easily unbutton or pull down pants. Clothing that is easily managed by children encourages self-help and independence. Please dress your child for the weather as we go outside nearly every day. **Label all personal items such as backpacks/mittens/boots/etc.**

Please bring an extra set of clothes for your child which will be kept in their backpack!

Confidentiality

Confidentiality plays a vital role in promoting respect for every individual and fostering a strong community. We take confidentiality very seriously and make every effort to protect each family's privacy. Communications among staff and parents about children should be kept confidential at all times. We recommend that conversations about a child, behavior, or incident should be conducted in private, away from the child and other members of the community. Discussions at drop-off or pick up should be kept to a minimum. If you have a question or concern, we suggest that you first contact the teacher via email or in person to arrange a time to discuss.

Data Privacy & FERPA (Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act)

SSP Community Preschool complies with state and federal data privacy laws that protect the integrity of a student's academic record and student privacy. Student Information and Immunization/Health forms may be shared with preschool staff in order to better serve your children.



Do Not Bring: Pets/Balloons/Flowers/Toys from Home

Please do not bring family pets into the preschool class for visitation/sharing. Student allergies and animals create health and safety concerns at school. Balloons and flowers of any kind are also not allowed in school due to various student allergies and the difficulty of transporting home. Toys from home can be a distraction, can get lost or broken, and can cause issues with other children in the class, and in general should be kept home. Exceptions may be made in individual classrooms for comfort objects or Show & Tell days.

Emergency Closing - Weather

Check the district website www.sspps.org/newsroom for school closure information. Preschools are open in the South St. Paul Public Schools except when weather conditions warrant closure. You will receive an automated phone call from the district, and emails with updates with either the revised start time, distance learning options or the closing of school. Announcements are also made over local radio and local television channels.

Evacuations

If an evacuation of a building is necessary SSP Community Preschool follows the school building plan:

- Kaposia staff escorts all students to Concordia Lutheran Church and uses the Kaposia Education Center Evacuation plan.
- Lincoln Center staff escort all students to the Packer Activity Center on the west side of the Secondary Building.



Information about the nature of the emergency would be posted on our website www.sspps.org, phone line: 651-457-9465. You would receive an automated phone call from the district, as well as an email with updates.

Parents would be expected to come to the evacuation centers prior to the end of the school day if possible to pick up your child. IDs will be checked and only those listed on our enrollment cards will be allowed to take students from the evacuation areas. Students will only be released to another adult with written approval by a parent. Buses will run as usual at the end of the school day.

Field Trips

Off-site preschool field trips are rare, but may be used to ignite learning or enhance our curriculum. Parents will be notified in advance of the event, location, time, and expectations. A Field Trip Permission Form is required for each child. Be in contact with your teacher for details.

Mandatory Reporting

All staff are mandated reporters, and are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect.

Parent/Family Organizations

Early Learning Advisory Council The SSP Early Learning Advisory Council is made up of early learning/Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) parents, staff and community members. Their mission is to support the Early Learning programs such as Preschool and ECFE. For more information, contact the Preschool Office at 651-457-9418.

PTA Parent/Teacher Associations meet monthly at both Kaposia and Lincoln Center. See the building principal's monthly newsletter and the District calendar for details. All parents or legal guardians are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Photographs/Video

South St. Paul Community Preschool staff or representatives of the media occasionally take photos and videotape of student and staff in schools and classrooms. These may be used in newsletters, newspapers, on television or internet pages or for educational purposes. If you do not wish your child(ren) to be photographed/video-taped, contact the Early Learning office for an opt-out form. Parents are not permitted to take photos/video of children other than their own.



Safety Drills

- Crisis plans are reviewed and updated yearly.
- Drills are practiced throughout the year.
- An alarm sounds and/or an announcement is made.
- Efforts are made to keep the experience positive and children calm and reassured.
- Everyone in the building participates.

Fire Drills (5 per year)

Staff, children, and parents leave the building through designated exits and gather in a predetermined area.

Lockdown Drills (5 per year)

No one is allowed to enter or leave the building until an all clear is issued. If a drill occurs during drop-off, keep your child with you in your car until the building doors are unlocked.

Tornado Drill (1 per year)

Staff, children, and parents move to a designated shelter area within the building.

Evacuation Drill (1 per year encouraged)

Staff, children, and parents leave the building through designated exits and gather in a predetermined area off-site.

School Board Meetings

The South St. Paul Public Schools Board of Education meetings are held on the second and fourth Monday of each month at 6:00 pm in City Council Chambers at City Hall. We welcome your attendance!

Snacks

Snacks are offered daily and will include water, crackers, fruit/vegetable, ect. Alternatives will be offered only in case of health reasons such as allergies. Snack is either a scheduled time of the class day, or in classes where breakfast and/or lunch is also available, it is a “choice time activity” for children who want/need it.



Parents may be asked to provide snacks during the year; a sign-up sheet is posted by your teacher. All snacks must be store bought, unopened and in store packaging. Your donations are appreciated! If you are unable to sign up, napkins and crackers are always welcomed! Please note that many children have allergies, so snacks not on the sign-up may not be made available to all children.

Toileting

Children must be toilet trained to attend preschool. This means that a child knows when he/she needs to use the bathroom and can independently take care of his/her own personal needs. Parents are encouraged to have their children use the bathroom before class begins. Age appropriate bathrooms are available to children to use any time during class.

Toy Safety

The school district’s weapon policy applies to preschoolers. Toys that look like weapons, such as guns or knives, are not allowed in school, on the bus, or on school property. In general, keep all toys at home unless invited by the teacher for a special event or activity.

Volunteering and Background Checks

When health conditions allow us to have volunteers, opportunities are determined and communicated by the building/department administration and/or classroom teacher.

When able, the following expectation will apply:

Volunteers will be welcomed and encouraged in our school district. All volunteers are required to complete a Volunteer Application Form and complete a background check each school year. The fee for the background check is paid by the district. A Volunteer application is available in the school office or at the SSP Community Preschool Office. If you have questions, call us at 651-457-9418.

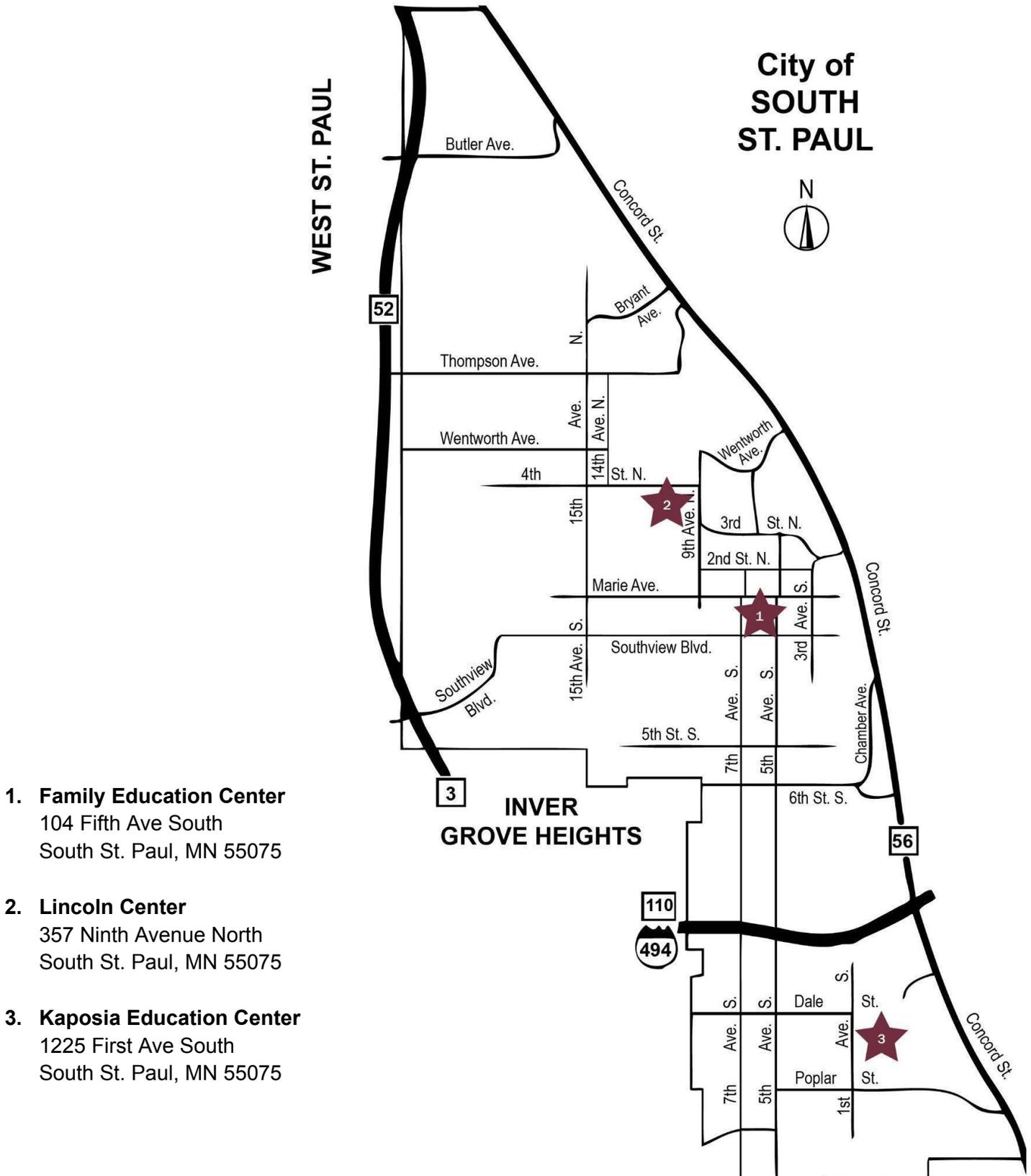
Opportunities are available to assist the teachers, read to children, share interests or traditions or help with specific class requests. Please read newsletters, websites and updates from your teacher to keep up on the new learning in the classroom, and for opportunities to participate!

Kaposia Education Center and Lincoln Center are secured during the school day. For the safety of the students and staff, all exterior doors are locked during the school day. All visitors are expected to:

1. Coordinate with their teacher before a visit;
2. Check in at the main office;
3. Wear a visitor tag and remain in visual contact with a school employee when with students; and
4. Refrain from physical contact with students or disciplining children.

**Questions regarding policies can be directed to the
Early Learning Office and the Early Learning Coordinator.**

South St. Paul Early Learning Locations



Work for South St. Paul Schools

Come work with us! South St. Paul Public Schools and South St. Paul Community Education have substitute opportunities available for:

- Teachers
- Classroom Assistants
- Lunchroom Supervisors

View all employment opportunities at www.sspps.org.

School district phone numbers

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| SSP Early Learning Office | 651-457-9418 |
| Adult Basic Education | 651-457-9441 |
| Birth-to-three Early Intervention | 651-306 3682 |
| Community Education | 651-306-3632 |
| Early Childhood Screening | 651-457-9418 / 651-306-3642 |
| Early Intervention (3-6 years ECSE) | 651-457-9497 |
| Kids' Choice School-Age Care | 651-306-3631 |
| School Readiness | 651-306-3642 |
| SSP School District | 651-457-9400 |
| South St. Paul Secondary Building | 651-457-9408 |
| Kaposia Education Center | 651-451-9260 |
| Lincoln Center | 651-457-9426 |

Community Resources

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Child Care Resource & Referral | 952-985-5300 |
| Community Action Council (CAC) | 952-985-5300 |
| Dakota County Public Health | 651-554-6100 |
| First Call for Help | 651-224-1133 |
| First Call Minnesota | 800-543-7709 |
| Head Start/CAP Agency | 651-322-3500 |
| Neighbors, Inc. | 651-455-1508 |
| SSP Parks & Recreation | 651-366-6200 |
| SSP Public Library | 651-554-3240 |



SOUTH ST. PAUL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
PRESCHOOL FAMILY GUIDEBOOK 2023-24

earlylearning.sspps.org
651-457-9418