



**SCIENCE  
CENTER  
OF IOWA**

**Welcome to the  
Science Center of Iowa Preschool Universal Preschool Program**

**“The Science Center of Iowa engage and inspires Iowans along their  
journey of lifelong science learning.”**

For 50 years, the SCI Preschool has provided children with the opportunity to experience hands-on activities, explore a variety of topics, and learn positive social interaction skills in the unique science-based setting of the Science Center of Iowa.

The location of the SCI Preschool solidifies the Science Center’s commitment to preparing children for their future education, while also offering them opportunities for fun as part of the learning experience. As one of only a few science center-based preschools in the country, the SCI model has proven so successful that we are now serving second generation students and their families and preparing children to be lifelong learners, well-equipped for the adventures of their lifetime.

The SCI Preschool first received the torch of National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation in August of 2008. We maintained accreditation again in January of 2018. This was earned as a mark of the highest level of quality for early childhood education. With the unique distinction of offering quality preschool opportunities as a priority for the Science Center of Iowa, the benefits of NAEYC Accreditation will influence the local community, other national science museums and the future leaders in the field of science.

We look forward to sharing the rich traditions and exciting new opportunities provided by the Science Center of Iowa Preschool in the year ahead. If you have any questions or concerns about the program, please don’t hesitate to contact the SCI Preschool at (515) 274-6868 ext.239.

## **Science Center of Iowa Preschool Philosophy**

The Science Center of Iowa believes in promoting lifelong learners and the SCI Preschool is dedicated to establishing a passion for exploration, discovery, imagination, and curiosity during the preschool years. Early childhood education provides the foundation for developing critical thinking skills that will last a lifetime. The Preschool supports the individual potential of each unique child. Through a safe, encouraging atmosphere, we will engage and inspire your child and prepare him or her for the exciting future ahead.

## **Goals**

To assure quality care and ensure a positive learning environment, the Science Center of Iowa Preschool strives to:

- Spark an enthusiasm for learning by inspiring curiosity and wonder
- Encourage social interaction and the development of life skills such as sharing, caring, and respect for others and their property
- Provide hands-on, developmentally appropriate experiences in a variety of areas such as music, drama, art, literature, STEM, math and social studies
- Encourage growth in large and fine motor skills
- Help each child develop a positive self-image
- Stimulate language development and encourage appropriate communication skills
- Help each child develop an awareness and appreciation for the world we share

## **Science Center Preschool Staff**

All Master teachers hold a BA in Education and classroom associates have certifications or are working toward certification.

Both teachers and administration participate in professional organizations within the community. Additionally, all teachers comply with the Iowa Department of Human Services requirements and the highest level of professional development requirements from the NAEYC.

## **Curriculum and Assessment**

The Science Center of Iowa Preschool uses The Project Approach to carry out an integrated, interdisciplinary curriculum model Creative Curriculum 5<sup>th</sup> Edition and [Iowa Early Learning Standards](#). This curriculum provides SCI Preschool teachers the structure to provide interactive opportunities and lots of play to encourage discovery in a safe, friendly environment. Research supports the implementation of curriculum that is sensitive to the developmental capabilities and backgrounds of the individual children, addresses the multiple domains of children's development, and supports the view that children are active participants in the learning process, all which promote positive long-term achievement in academic settings.

Overlapping this with an emphasis in STEM curriculum is where the SCI Preschool's hands-on, inquiry-based learning builds a lifelong love for science and technology. STEM is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. STEM education is an interdisciplinary approach to learning through real-world experiences.

Assessment and Curriculum planning are an ongoing process. Teachers collect and analyze student work as well as evaluate your child's development. Using Teaching Strategies GOLD which is a reflective assessment process, the SCI Preschool Staff summarize what they learn and use the information to plan for each group of children. Teachers implement those plans, and then continue to observe and document what the children do, and the cycle continues. This is how curriculum and assessment are linked together.

Additionally, the SCI Preschool Teachers and Administrators encourage parents to understand and take active interest in the assessment of their child's progress and preparation for the primary grades. As a program, the SCI Preschool seeks out information from each family member initially in the form of the SCI Family Questionnaire. The teachers have the opportunity to make a home visit before school starts to make introductions, develop relationship bonds and identify family needs.

### **The Purpose of Assessment (Teaching Strategies GOLD)**

- Allows you to observe and document children's development and learning overtime
- Provides you with support, guidelines and informs your planning and instruction; as well as professional development
- To inform overall program improvements
- Allows you to communicate and report to families and administration
- Allows you to recognize children who might benefit from additional resources of further evaluation

### *Objectives for Development and Learning*

- Hierarchy
  - Objective
  - Dimension
  - Indicator
  - Example
- Color progression
- Not observed-use only in extreme case
- In-between
  - Emerging skills-some aspects but not all of an indicator is observed
  - Needs support to reach next level

### *Assessment Cycle*

1. Teacher will observe and collect facts
  - a. Ongoing, factual ideas, no judgements
2. Analyze and respond
  - a. Organize, informed decisions
  - b. What does this behavior mean?
  - c. Assign objectives to observations and artifacts
3. Evaluate
  - a. Teacher will level each indicator with 2,4,6,8 or in-between after reviewing documentation
4. Summarize, plan and communicate
  - a. Communicate with classroom team
  - b. Intentionally use assessment information when designing lessons and activities
  - c. Share at parent teacher conferences

### **Staff Professional Development**

Teachers attend in-service professional development regularly that promotes a blending of program goals to the curriculum offered. All staff receive more than 10 hours of training annually in curriculum, child development, health and safety as well as best practices in the classroom.

Teaching staff and Preschool Administrators work as a team to implement daily teaching and learning activities, including Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs), Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), and other individual plans as needed. This may include coaching and mentoring from staff and outside resources

### **Developmental Assessment and Screenings**

Science Center of Iowa Preschool staff utilize a variety of assessment tools to track developmental growth. Through our partnership with Des Moines Public Schools and Child Care Resource and Referral, we are able to utilize the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). This tool has two parts – one filled out by the parents and primary caregiver, the other is filled out by the teacher during normal classroom activities.

The ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE is used at the beginning of the year or within 3 weeks of starting at preschool to identify any areas of concern or developmental discrepancy. Staff will then help create an education plan that will provide the best experience for the child and family. This may include additional screenings, referrals to outside resources, or simply a plan of action with families to help the child succeed in school now and in the future.

## **Entrance Requirements**

Any child is eligible to be enrolled in the Science Center Preschool program provided he or she meets the following criteria:

- Children must be four on or before September 15 of the school year to enroll in the four-year-old program for Universal Preschool.
  
- The following SCI forms must be completed annually for all enrolled children includes:
  - Registration Form
  - Consent Form
  - Additional Contacts & Information
  - Health Information
  - Physical /Medical Form (signed by health practitioner)
  - Current Immunization Record
  - Family Questionnaire
  - Demographics Survey

**It is the policy of the Science Center of Iowa to not to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, marital status, disability or handicap, national origin, citizenship, or status as a Vietnam-era or special disabled veteran. All team members are accountable for strict adherence to this policy.**

## **Application Procedures and Registration**

A child must be born before a preschool waiting list application can be submitted. The waiting list application can be found on the SCI website. Parents will be notified once enrollment has begun for the upcoming school year. A non-refundable supply fee for each child will be required at registration to guarantee a place for all classes. There are no additional fees for UPK only students. Students who are enrolled in the 3-year-old program, siblings of current students and those who have all payments up to date will get priority for available classes for following school year, when that enrollment process begins.

An informational meeting for parents and a classroom visit day for students are held just before school starts. These dates and other information about the upcoming school year will be emailed out to families during the summer months and are subject to change.

## **SCI Preschool Classes**

The Science Center of Iowa Preschool provides a wonderful setting for the development of preschoolers while serving SCI's vision is to be the highest quality resource inspiring scientific exploration. With dedicated classrooms and complete access to the Science Center of Iowa programs, exhibits and theaters, children are

treated to live demonstrations, interactive experiments and hands-on activities that add even more fun and adventure to the learning experience.

Our preschool program is based on a real-world project approach for exploring the world. Projects are four to six weeks in length and may include tangible, real world topics such as water, insects, wheels, and family. Math, science, art, literacy, music, hands-on experiences and other related play all correlate to the project at hand, offering exciting and more in-depth opportunities for discovery. Each day also includes time when children may explore the Science Center of Iowa, participate in learning centers in their classroom, have a snack, or play outdoors (weather permitting).

### **Class Structure and Hours**

The Science Center of Iowa Preschool has six classrooms located in the Iowa Learning Center wing of the Science Center of Iowa. The facilities meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility requirements. To allow children individualized attention, three-year old classes enroll no more than 16 children, and four-year-old classes enroll no more than 20 children. A licensed and certified teacher is assigned to each class. Additional staffing may be included to meet the needs of each group of children.

The class meeting times are available in many locations. They include:

- With your enrollment packet
- By calling (515) 274-6868 ext. 239
- Or in person at SCI Preschool (west wing of the building)

### **School Year Calendar**

The Science Center of Iowa Preschool school year begins the Tuesday following Labor Day. The preschool only calendar closely follows that of the Des Moines Public School District in regards to winter and spring breaks.

Preschool classes are from September to May. Classrooms are closed only a few times each year. See school year calendar attached for specific dates.

### **Summer Care**

SCI Preschool will offer full time summer care during the months of June through August. Tuition rates are subject to change during the summer. Registration begins annually in January. Partial weeks will not be offered during the summer months.

### **School Closures – Due to Inclement Weather**

When weather conditions are such that Des Moines Public Schools cancel or weather related delay, SCI Preschool will delay or cancel class. If classes need to be cancelled for any other reason, parents will be contacted directly via email and phone message by the teaching staff. The first two snow days (if any) will not be made up.

## **Tuition and Payment**

Tuition rates are established six months prior to the beginning of the school year. First months tuition (September) is due at the end of July. Look for specific dates in the enrollment packet letter. Please keep in mind that there are a few months throughout the school year with five weeks. This can be calculated by how many Mondays fall in the month. Full tuition is required each month regardless of the number of days your child attends. If you find it more convenient, you may choose to pay in advance, weekly, or monthly.

Supply fee is to be paid at the time of registration and non-refundable no exceptions. This covers the cost for the following:

- SCI Preschool T-shirt
- Lab coat
- Child Portfolio and photos
- Field Trips
- Classroom supplies

We accept checks (made payable to the Science Center of Iowa Preschool), cash, and credit cards. You will set up a monthly payment option through the Playground System.

All families whose children attend the Science Center Preschool must maintain a current membership to the Science Center of Iowa during the duration of their enrollment. Membership fees vary and may be paid online at [www.sciowa.org](http://www.sciowa.org), at the SCI Box Office, or at the SCI Sales Office, located inside the Science Center hallway.

## **Discontinuation of Enrollment**

Parents wishing to discontinue their child's enrollment at the Science Center of Iowa Preschool must give the Early Childhood Director written notification two weeks prior to discontinuation.

**It is an expectation that families stay up to date on monthly tuition payments, for the child to attend preschool at the Science Center. If a family is one month overdue in tuition – a formal letter will be sent home as a reminder of the expectation. Should a tuition payment not be made, the child will not be allowed to return until the tuition is up to date.**

## **Drop-Off and Pick-Up**

Children will only be allowed to leave the preschool with persons designated by their parents or guardian on the "Additional Contact Information" form. **Designated people with permission to pick up must be 18 years of age or older.** Children will not be allowed to leave with siblings, family members, or others that have not been designated

by a parent. Any requested changes to the permission form must be made in writing.

Preschool is held in the western wing of the Science Center of Iowa. Children attending class must enter the doors on the northwest side of the building, and not through the main SCI entrance. The security doors on the east end of the preschool are locked at all times, families will not have access through these doors, unless escorted by a staff member. Preschool families will be provided two electronic proximity cards for access into the building during the normal preschool hours. Additional cards or replacement cards cost \$35 and lost or stolen cards should be reported immediately so that they can be deactivated.

When dropping-off and picking-up preschoolers, parents should briefly park heading east in the drop off lane immediately in front of the preschool entrance and escort their child to and from their classroom. For overflow parking, please park in the bus lane. We encourage all families to avoid leaving your vehicle idle in the drip off lane at any time, unless there is an extreme need to weather.

If you are picking up your child from the Science Center, look for their location by classroom door.

Please sign your child in and out of preschool each day using the Playground QR Code in the entrance way.

**Before and After Care Options:**

- Before Care 3-5's M-F 7:15-8:30AM \$15/week
- After Care 3-5's M-F 4:30-5:30PM \$15/week

**Late Pick up Fees**

Any child picked up more than 5 minutes late will be charged an additional fee according to the schedule below.

- 5-15 minutes - \$20.00
- 15 –30 minutes - \$25.00
- 30-45 minutes - \$35.00
- 45 – 1 hour - \$45.00
- 1 hour + - \$60.00

**Attendance Policy**

It is important to notify the Preschool Office or classroom teachers in advance if your child will be absent or tardy on a day that he or she is scheduled to attend.

Families should contact SCI Preschool by phone or email. Please communicate the child's name, class they are in and reason for absence or tardiness. If you child is



absent due to illness please specify what the illness is. If we do not receive a call you will be contacted by office staff.

According to our Des Moines Public School UPK agreement SCI Preschool is responsible to track 4-year-old attendance. Regular attendance is important for the growth and development of your child. If your child has more than 4 unexcused absences or tardiness we will need to meet to discuss a plan of action.

### **Transitioning to Preschool**

Sometimes children have difficulty separating in the first days or even weeks of school. This can also be true after the child has missed school due to absence or holidays. The best way to avoid unhappiness is to assure your child that he or she will have a good day and that you will be there to greet him or her when school is over. Then make a quick exit! Prolonging the goodbye only makes it more difficult.

If you wish to check on your child, please feel free to call your child's classroom or the Preschool Office at 515-274-6868 ext. 239. Should a child remain upset for an extended period of time, a parent or guardian will be contacted.

### **Parent Participation in the Classroom**

Parents are invited to their child's classroom at any time, please plan with the classroom teacher if planning to come other than drop off and pick up times. A parent volunteer board will be shared by the classroom teacher as needed. There will also be sign ups posted on the cubbies for special materials classes may need for projects or special events.

### **Field Trips**

Field trip transportation is a special resource that the SCI Preschool is privileged to have. The cost of field trips is included in the supply fee paid at time of registration which is separate from tuition. Any time a class plans to leave the Science Center of Iowa property a permission slip will be posted near the parent board. A parent signature is required to leave the property.

The SCI Preschool will provide a center-owned passenger van to transport children for field trips when possible, in which case parents must provide an appropriate car seat clearly labeled with each child's name. You may also choose to transport your own child to and from the field trip site. Transportation will always be up to the discretion of the parent.

\*Appropriate car seat must be in alignment with Iowa car seat safety law. Please see additional information below. The passenger van does not have headrests; if you plan to use a booster seat, it must have its own attached headrest. Booster seats must be in a seat that has both a shoulder strap and lap strap.



# For Your Child's Sake, Go Above and Beyond Iowa's Child Passenger Safety Law!

## IOWA LAW

## BEST PRACTICE



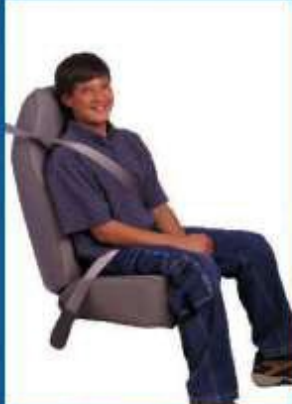
**1** Children must ride in an appropriate rear-facing safety seat until one year of age **and** at least 20 pounds.

Children should ride in an appropriate rear-facing child safety seat until the maximum weight limit of the safety seat is reached — this can be up to 40 pounds depending on the seat.



**2** Children must ride in a child safety seat or booster seat through the age of 5. (Seats must be used in accordance with manufacturer's directions.)

A child should be restrained in a 5-point harness system until the maximum weight limit for the seat is reached. This is usually 50-65 pounds, although some 5-point harness seats are now rated up to 80-90 pounds.



**3** Children must be in a booster seat or seat belt between the ages of 6 and 11, regardless of their seating position within a vehicle.

At maximum harness weight, a child should graduate into a booster seat. A child should ride in a booster seat until their knees bend over the edge of the vehicle seat and their feet touch the floor while sitting all the way back.

**4** Rear seat occupants up to age 18 must be secured by a safety belt.

Buckle Up for life! Regardless of your age, protect yourself and fellow occupants by buckling up every trip, every time, regardless of your seating position within the vehicle.

Best Practice Guidelines are per the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Protect your precious cargo by making sure they ride right at all times. For more information, visit [blankchildrens.org/cps](http://blankchildrens.org/cps) or call 1-800-258-6419

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## **Birthdays and Other Celebrations in the Classroom**

Parents are invited to celebrate their child's birthday with the class. If you choose to bring a birthday treat, we ask that it is a non-food item that can be sent home with classmates. In addition, we have many families with many different religions and cultural backgrounds; we ask that you be sensitive to their beliefs and customs. If your child has a summer birthday, you may choose to celebrate a half-birthday during the school year. These celebrations are not a requirement but are a nice way to share the special day with classmates and help build social skills.

When planning classroom activities, the staff will not focus on holidays or religious activities, but will plan an all-inclusive program that will support and emphasize the child's developmental achievements and social awareness. The goal of our developmentally appropriate curriculum will be to provide all the children with a wealth of opportunities to explore and appreciate experiences relevant to their daily lives. The teaching staff will continue to include the celebrations of learning that emerge from the children's learning and explorations.

### **A few notes about these celebrations:**

- No Helium balloons are allowed in the building at any time.
- **The SCI Preschool is a nut-free environment, so all food brought in must clearly list ingredients and not include any ingredient that is in the nut family.**

### **Confidentiality**

Information about children enrolled in the SCI Preschool is strictly confidential and is communicated within the Science Center only on a "need to know" basis. Any individual requesting a child's information will be referred to the Preschool Director. Before sharing information about a child with other SCI families, relevant family members or other providers such as nannies and outside agencies, the SCI Preschool shall obtain written consent release of information from the family at the time of enrollment.

Parents are also asked to respect the confidentiality of other children and families enrolled in the SCI Preschool. Information on class lists should not be shared with other organizations or individuals except with the permission of the SCI Preschool Directors. A classroom directory is provided for families that wish to provide their contact information to others in their preschooler's class.

**Please notify the Preschool Administrator if you do NOT want any of your contact information included.** These directories are only for the families in your child's class. These are often used for birthday parties, play dates, or other social functions.

## **Safety Procedures**

Safety is a core value of the Science Center of Iowa and the preschool will make certain that all activities are well-supervised and planned with your child's safety given the utmost consideration. Teachers design an environment that protects children's health and safety at all times, and children will be supervised within the facility and on outdoor excursions. First Aid kits are always well-stocked in the classroom, on fieldtrips and on the playground and are positioned for easy access for SCI Preschool staff members. In case of injury, parents will be notified appropriately and a written incident form will be provided to the parent at the end of the school day.

Children must understand all safety rules in order for them to be effective, so teachers emphasize the importance of safety for the children, their parents and the SCI staff. Teachers explain why even though rules sometimes seem limiting; they are worth following for safety reasons.

We are privileged at the SCI Preschool to have access to the Science Center a majority of the time. We recognize that this is a public museum and we have safety procedures that all staff follow in order to insure safety and security of all the preschoolers. We keep a close eye on the traffic flow each day and may choose not to go into the museum if it is extremely busy. Your child will be provided a lab coat that they will wear anytime that we go into the museum. This ensures that all staff, preschool and other science center staff, can identify the preschoolers. Please note the preschool has a security system that does not allow parents access to the preschool from the museum side.

Emergency plans in case of fire, active threats and tornadoes are posted by all classroom and outdoor exits and are practiced monthly in accordance with regulations set by the Iowa Department of Human Services. Policies and procedures are available in the classroom monitoring binders.

## **Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse**

All Science Center of Iowa Preschool employees are Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse, bound by the following:

*Section 232.69 of the Iowa Code requires that every employee of a licensed child care facility or preschool facility, who, in the course of employment, reasonably believes a child, has suffered sexual abuse, physical abuse, or denial of critical care, shall immediately contact the person in charge of the facility, or that person's designated agent.*

According to Iowa Code section 232.70, if there is suspicion that a child has been abused, a report will be made to the Department of Human Services. The law requires us to report suspected child abuse to DHS orally within 24 hours of becoming aware of the situation. A report in writing is required within 48 hours after the oral report. As a mandatory reporter, we are also required to make an oral report to law enforcement if there is reason to believe that immediate protection of the child is necessary.

The law requires the reporting of suspected child abuse. It is not the reporter's role to validate the abuse. The law does not require proof that the abuse occurred before reporting. The law clearly specifies that reports of child abuse must be made when the person reporting "reasonably believes a child has suffered abuse." Reports are made in terms of the child's possible condition, not in terms of an accusation against parents. A report of child abuse is not an accusation, but a request to determine whether child abuse exists and begin the helping process.

### **Access to Children**

Per DHS Regulations, centers are responsible for ensuring the safety of children at the center and preventing harm by being proactive and diligent in supervising not only the children, but other people present at the facility.

Any person in the center who is not an owner, staff member, substitute, or subcontracted staff or volunteer who has had a record check and approval to be involved with child care shall not have "**unrestricted access**" to children for whom that person is not the parent, guardian, or custodian, nor be counted in the staff to child ratio.

\*"**Unrestricted access**" means that a person has contact with a child alone or is directly responsible for child care.

Persons who do not have unrestricted access will be under the direct "**supervision**" and "**monitoring**" of a paid staff member at all times and will not be allowed to assume any child care responsibilities. The primary responsibility of the supervision and monitoring will be assumed by the teacher unless he/she delegates it to the teacher assistant due to a conflict of interest with the person.

\*"**Supervision**" means to be in charge of an individual engaged with children in an activity or task and ensure that they perform it correctly.

\*"**Monitoring**" means to be in charge of ensuring proper conduct of others.

Center staff will approach anyone who is on the property of the center without their knowledge to ask what their purpose is. If staff is unsure about the reason they will contact the Manager on Duty.

A sex offender who has been convicted of a sex offense against a minor (even if the sex offender is the parent, guardian, or custodian) who is required to register with the Iowa sex offender registry (Iowa Code 692A):

- a. *Shall not operate, manage, be employed by, or act as a contractor or volunteer at the child care center.*
- b. *Shall not be on the property of the child care center without the written permission of the center director, except for the time reasonably necessary to transport the offender's own minor child or ward to and from the center.*
  - i. *The center director is not obligated to provide written permission and must*

- consult with their DHS licensing consultant first.*
- ii. *If written permission is granted it shall include the conditions under which the sex offender may be present, including:*
- 1. The precise location in the center where the sex offender may be present.*
  - 2. The reason for the sex offender's presence at the facility.*
  - 3. The duration of the sex offender's presence.*
  - 4. Description of how the center staff will supervise the sex offender to ensure that the sex offender is not left alone with a child.*
  - 5. The written permission shall be signed and dated by the director and sex offender and kept on file for review by the center licensing consultant.*

### **Cleaning and Sanitation**

- Classroom materials are cleaned and sanitized on a regular basis. Each classroom has a frequency checklist that is initialed and dated by a staff member.
- All staff are certified in Universal Precautions, to protect against the spread of infectious disease through bodily fluids
- Tables and frequently used surfaces are cleaned and sanitized before and after each use
- Sinks and toilets are cleaned and sanitized regularly throughout the day
- All spaces receive regularly deep sanitation with electrostatic disinfection

### **Meals**

SCI Preschool menus meet the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) requirements mandated by the state of Iowa. Lunch and snack menus are planned and posted weekly in all classrooms for parents to review. All menus are subject to change and a record is kept of those changes. Special food may be brought from home for your child to substitute for the provided meals as long as the substituted food also conforms to USDA food dietary requirements and meets our nut-free requirement (see below). Parents with questions should see the Preschool Director for more information.

Special foods to share with other children may be brought into the classroom at the discretion of each classroom teaching team. Food brought in must be store-bought and factory sealed or whole, uncut fruits or vegetables.

**The SCI Preschool is a nut-free environment, so all food brought in must clearly list ingredients and not include any ingredient that is in the nut family.**

### **Food Allergies and Dietary Modifications**

SCI requires each child with a food allergy or sensitivity to have a special care plan prepared for SCI by the child's doctor to include but not limited to:

1. Written instructions regarding the food(s) to which the child is allergic and steps to be taken to avoid that food.
2. A detailed treatment plan to be implemented in the event of an allergic reaction,

including the names, doses, and methods of administration for any medications the child should receive.

A form is available in our office or on the website for this information. For a child identified with special medical needs for dietary modification or feeding techniques, written instructions from the child's parent or legal guardian and the child's doctor should be provided in the child's record and will be carried out accordingly.

If the dietary modification is a milk product allergy or a vegetarian diet, then special foods can be brought from home as a substitute for foods provided by the preschool. Any substitution must also meet the high standard of quality and nutrition as the food being replaced. Substitute foods can be stored in the preschool classroom refrigerator. Parents of all children in the child's class will be advised to avoid any known allergies in class treats or special foods brought to SCI.

### **Clothing and Supplies**

Be sure to dress your child in washable clothes that are comfortable for play in the wide range of activities included in the Science Center Preschool program. Tennis shoes or other athletic shoes are the best choice for footwear. Open-toed shoes/sandals or flip flops can present a serious safety issue. SCI Teachers will, at their discretion, ask children to change shoes if they become problematic. Classes also plan to spend time outside most days. Please send appropriate clothing for the weather. Keep in mind, the temperature may change throughout the day so jackets or sweatshirts are always a good idea.

In the winter, we will continue to go outside when the temperature is safe. Please send every day a coat, snow pants, hat, boots and gloves (waterproof preferred).

We ask that children do not bring toys from home unless you receive a note in the weekly newsletter or lesson plan asking for children to share a particular kind of toy. Items for our nature collections and the science table, such as pine cones, bugs or special rocks are always welcome, as are books that pertain to a particular unit being studied. All items brought from home should be labeled with your child's name (if you wish it to be returned) and given to your child's teacher so that it can be appropriately included in the day's activities.

We ask each day that you send a backpack with a full change of clothes. This includes shirt, pants, socks and shoes. Please change these items out as your child grows and seasons change.

Our program has a rest time each day to meet the requirements of state regulates. This quite downtime allows children to refresh and relax as a part of their full day of learning. While sleep is not a requirement for this time, children will be encouraged to rest and relax, while not bothering others. Parents are encouraged to bring a light blanket and a

small pillow. Please not stuffed animals. Items will remain on site for the duration of the school year, and sent home each Friday to wash once a week.

### **Toilet Training**

Universal preschool students do not have to be toilet trained to attend preschool. Toilet training occurs differently for every child and can last for an extended period of time. Accidents are to be expected and never met with disapproval. Please send all necessary items for assist with your child's toileting needs to preschool. Partnering with parents along this journey is critical.

### **Health and Illness**

Do not send your child to school if he or she has had a fever in the past 24 hours, has vomited recently, has an undiagnosed rash, bad cough, diarrhea, pinkeye, swollen glands and/or has other severe cold symptoms. If these symptoms prevent your child from fully participating in our preschool program, we ask that they stay home. We appreciate your cooperation so other children are not exposed. If your child becomes ill at school, we will notify a primary family member so the child can be taken home.

If your child is diagnosed with a contagious disease, please promptly notify the preschool and provide a doctor's note so other preschool families can receive accurate notification of potential exposure. Doctors' offices should fax a note to the SCI Preschool Director at (515) 274-3404.

Children, volunteers and teachers are expected to wash their hands upon entering the classroom. We also required children to wash hands before and after eating, after toileting, after blowing their nose or coughing, before and after playing in water or sensory tables, after returning from being outside and before and after handling pets and other animals or material such as sand, dirt or surfaces that might be contaminated. This is to insure the best health and safety practices.

For students who are under-immunized due to medical or religious reasons, parents will be notified if a vaccine-preventable disease occurs within the preschool. Students may be excluded from care if they are susceptible to the disease due to being under-immunized.

### **Handwashing procedure**

Below are the steps in which all staff and children follow to wash their hands. It is always helpful for families to practice the same at home. The sinks in classrooms are equipped with timers to help children know how long to scrub.

1. Wet hands
2. 1 squirt of soap
3. Scrubs hands, tops, bottoms and in between for 20 seconds
4. Rinse
5. Dry with paper towel and turn off facet with paper towel



## **Medical and Dental Emergencies**

An emergency form must be completed at enrollment to provide the preschool staff with vital medical and dental emergency information (Health Information Form).

## **Medication**

If your child requires prescription medication at any time during his or her preschool tenure, a completed medication release form must be filled out and submitted for each medication. Doctor authorization is required for all prescription and recommended treatments (this includes cold medicines, Tylenol or other pain relief, and allergy medications).

**We encourage families to work out a schedule for medications that allows the child to take these medications at home.**

All medication authorization sheets must include the child's name, medication, dosage, dosage time, doctor authorization, and parent signature. If the medication sheet is not signed, medication cannot be administered.

Prescription medication must be in the original container in which the medication was dispensed. Information on the label must include the child's name, the doctor's name, the date of prescription, the name of the medication, prescribed dosage, and any restrictions. Non-prescription (over the counter) medications must have the manufacturer's labels intact, be age appropriate, bear the child's name and the date that the medication was brought to the preschool.

## **Other Medical Conditions and Treatments**

If your child has asthma or other continual health condition that will need monitoring and treatment there is a separate form that the physician or doctor can fill out to give the staff a better picture of symptoms to watch for and administration of any needed medications.

## **Insect Repellent**

Only when public health authorities recommend use of insect repellents due to a high risk of insect-borne disease, repellents containing **DEET** are used.

## **Sunscreen**

Any sunscreen applied will be a predetermined common brand that is supplied to the classroom at the beginning of warmer weather. Permission for administration will be signed at initialed by parents at the beginning of each warm weather month. If you wish to supply a different brand, you will be responsible for making sure the classroom teachers have a supply to use.

**Please note that bug spray, lotion, lip balm, and sunscreen are all considered medications.** For routine use of these items an authorization sheet can be signed at the beginning each month during the school year.

### **Family Collaboration and Communication**

The Preschool encourages families to regularly contribute to decisions about their child's academic goals, classroom special activities and any services referred to or used by the SCI Preschool. Parents/Guardians will receive weekly communications that lists upcoming events and classroom activities through email. We encourage you to check your email daily. If you do not have access to email please let your classroom teacher know, and he/she will create an alternative communication plan for your needs. We also use a closed group on Facebook and a communication app called Playground, which will display photos of daily classroom happenings and invitations to special events. You can request to join group by searching group SCI Preschool Families. Teachers will send out invitations for the app at the beginning of the school year. If you do not want your child to appear in this group please indicate on Consent to Release form.

**All SCI Preschool communications are very important – please read them and keep them handy for reference.**

Parent/Teacher Conferences are held each year in the fall and spring, at which time you have the opportunity to formally identify your child's goals for learning. Should concerns or situations arise that need more immediate attention, parents will be notified by their child's teacher. The SCI Preschool teachers and administrators will proactively work with the families and students to address any challenges that may arise.

Should you or your child experience a problem, family trauma or other issue of concern, feel free to notify your child's teacher or preschool administrators since these events can significantly affect a child's behavior and attitude. All parent- teacher conversations will be kept confidential.

### **Behavior Guidelines**

Because social growth is so crucial for the successful learning and experience of a preschooler, the SCI preschool will focus on helping children learn appropriate behavior. Behavioral guidelines will be established with the goal of maintaining the physical and emotional well-being of each child. Positive disciplinary methods may include, but are not limited to, redirection and proactive behavior management. Teachers work to prevent challenging or disruptive behaviors through environmental design, schedules that meet the needs and abilities of children, effective transitions and engaging activities. The SCI Preschool conducts assessments to inform classroom instruction and to make sound decisions about individual and group curriculum content, teaching approaches, and personal interactions.

## **Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS)**

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) is an approach for changing a child's behavior that is based on humanistic values and research. It starts from the very beginning by setting a positive environment and building relationships between caregivers and children as well as from child to child. There is program wide expectations for routines and behaviors that help children to strengthen their social/emotional development.

It also offers an approach for developing an understanding of why the child might have challenging behaviors and teaching the child new skills to replace challenging behaviors. PBIS offers a holistic approach that considers all of the factors that impact a child and the child's behavior. It can be used to address challenging behaviors that may range from aggression, tantrums, and property destruction to withdrawing or repetitive behaviors.

PBIS provides a process for implementing expectations and identifying any challenging behaviors within the classroom. This method will allow teachers to focus on teaching positive behaviors and setting the right environment for social emotional growth. If needed, it can help to support staff, children, and families should challenges occur.

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) is different from traditional behavior modification in three ways. First, it is focused on the use of positive strategies that are respectful of the child. Second, the interventions that are developed are individualized and are based on an understanding of the child, the child's communication abilities, and the unique situations of the child. Third, the strategies that are used are focused on helping the child gain access to new environments, have positive social interactions, develop friendships, and learn new communication skills.

## **Handling of Biting Incidents**

Even in the best child care center, periodic incidents of biting can sometimes occur with preschoolers. This is an unavoidable consequence of grouping young children together. When it happens, it can be scary and very frustrating for children, parents and teachers. Understanding the reason for biting is the first step to changing a child's behavior. Children bite for a variety of reasons: cause and effect, imitation, crowding, seeking attention, frustration and stress. Childcare group situations are difficult: dealing with others constantly around, sharing attention and toys, and too much or too little stimulation are all very difficult for children. Biting is not something to blame on children, their parents or their teachers. When biting occurs, staff will immediately take action, not to blame the biters but to change the environment and help children change their behavior.

Staff will remain calm and in control of their emotions when biting occurs. Staff should not show anger or frustration towards the child. They should calmly respond to the child, letting them know that biting is not ok.

It is important to explore the reasons for biting when it occurs. The staff needs to work with parents to gather information about the child's behavior and begin observations to determine the reasons for biting. Examples of some triggers would be: communication deficits, transitions, hunger, lack of sleep, need for oral stimulation or teething pain. Once triggers are identified, staff can work on prevention strategies and start teaching replacement skills.

When children bite, their parents are informed personally and privately the same day. All information is confidential and names of the children involved in the incident are not shared between parents. In addition, biting is always documented on our standard incident form which is completed and signed by teacher, parents and an administrator is notified. One copy is given to the parent and one copy is kept in the child's file in the office.

We wish we could guarantee that biting will never happen in our program, but we know there is no such guarantee. You can count on us to deal appropriately with biting so it will end as quickly as possible. We want the best for all the children in our program. If you want more information on biting or have questions or concerns, please let us know- we are here to help you and your child on their journey to independence!

### **Challenging Behaviors**

The Science Center of Iowa Preschool is interested in the welfare of all children. We will always do everything we can to ensure every child's needs are met based on our resources. If a child exhibits a concerning behavior below the following sequence of actions that will be taken.

1. Parent/Guardians will be notified
2. If the concerning behavior becomes a common occurrence, classroom teachers will begin documenting the behavior and integrating accommodations to help support positive behavior.
3. After permission from parent/guardian, the child will be referred to DMPS special education services for support in the classroom.
4. If the parent/guardian does not give permission and SCI Preschool exhausts our resources your child's enrollment may be terminated
5. Once the referral is made, DMPS will contact the family and come to visit the child at school
6. Parents/Guardians, Teachers, Administrator and the DMPS Special Education Team will work together to create and carry out a plan that will support the child
7. After 4-6 weeks of interventions and data collection, it will be determined if an evaluation is needed to qualify for special education services.
8. The evaluation process takes up to 60 days concluding with a meeting, with parents/guardians, teachers, administrator and special education team to determine next steps.
9. SCI Preschool does not have resources for all levels of special education

services onsite, therefore, DMPS may recommend placing the child in a district preschool program with permission from parent/guardian (Please refer to #5 if parent/guardian denies)

**\*please note:** placement in a district preschool program could happen at any point during the school year. If your child qualifies for services they will not be denied at any point. Placement at the end of the school year may seem challenging but looking forward it will support your child in the best way moving into Kindergarten.

**Reasons for termination include, but are not limited to the following:**

1. Consistent lateness in picking up a child from preschool
2. Failure to make timely payments of fees and tuition.
3. Excessively disruptive behavior by the child or parent.
4. Failure to cooperate with the preschool policies
5. Severe behavioral problems which cannot be controlled and may endanger other preschoolers or staff members

\*The Science Center of Iowa reserves the right to change or adjust policies as needed throughout the year.