

Burr Oak  
GSRP  
Handbook

2015-2016

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## **PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT**

We believe every child is unique in terms of life experience, developmental readiness, and cultural heritage. We also recognize that parents are their child's first teachers. Partnership between family and school is essential to the optimal growth and development of young children. Our aim is to provide a safe, nurturing, stimulating environment that accommodates and embraces differences. Our goal is to promote the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of each child through a consistent daily schedule.

We use Creative Curriculum which is aligned with Early Childhood Standards of Quality for PreKindergarten (ECSQ-PK) and supports our belief that children learn through the integration of learning and play, as children learn best by doing. We strive for a balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. Child assessment is on-going and teachers develop meaningful experiences based on the needs of each child. Given opportunities to explore the world around them, your children become active, involved learners.

Teacher-child interactions are based around acceptance, respect and trust. Positive guidance is used to encourage caring relationships in our program. We believe that when children feel safe, they gain self-confidence and are able to make independent choices.

Our program is evaluated throughout the year using the Preschool Quality Assessment (PQA), which looks at areas such as the learning environment, daily routine, adult-child interaction and curriculum planning and assessment. In addition, our program works with our families as partners, seeking their input about the education of their children. Our teachers believe in on-going communication with parents, administration, and colleagues.

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

GSRP is Michigan's state funded preschool program for four-year old children with factors that may place them at risk of educational failure. Participation in GSRP helps strengthen positive child outcomes. Depending on income level, parents may be required to pay tuition, but parents are never charged additional fees for program elements. Through advisory committees, parents assist to evaluate and make recommendations about the program.

The Michigan State Board of Education criteria for GSRP requires adherence to the program implementation manual and the Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten. GSRP programs must also implement or use an approved comprehensive curriculum, an approved ongoing child assessment tool and the Preschool Program Quality Assessment.

## **ADMISSION POLICY**

The Great Start Readiness Program is a preschool program for children who are four years old by September first of the year they enroll. The program is funded by a grant from the State of Michigan Department of Education and is provided for children and families residing within the State of Michigan. To be eligible for the program children must meet grant criteria. This is determined by information provided on the enrollment forms by parents or guardian. Most

classes will consist of 16-18 children. Remaining eligible applicants will be placed on a waiting list and considered for enrollment if space becomes available during the school year.

Upon admission to the program, parents must complete a child information card, provide a copy of immunizations and have physical form completed and turned in within 30 days.

### **WITHDRAWAL POLICY**

Parents may withdraw their child at any time during the year by informing the classroom teacher, the principal or the center director. The Great Start Readiness program is licensed by the State of Michigan under the Department of Human Services, Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing. Families are required to assist the staff in obtaining all information and paperwork necessary for program compliance.

Children may be excluded when a short term injury or contagious illness endangers the health and/or safety of the affected child or other children. Children will NOT be excluded or expelled because of the need for additional medical or behavioral support or assistance with toileting.

### **SCHEDULE OF OPERATION**

The Great Start Readiness Program runs in conjunction with the local school district's daily schedule. A minimum of 2 home visits will take place within the district's calendar school year. The initial home visit will occur after the child is enrolled but before the child begins the classroom program. Because of this, each GSRP will have a later start date for students than their district's start date. The last home visit will occur before the district's school year ends. Because of this, each GSRP will have an earlier end date for students than their district's end date. A school year calendar will be given to parents at the orientation/home visit. Both full day and part day programs run Monday-Thursday. Friday is designated for staff professional development, planning and various home/school connections.

### **SNOW DAYS**

Occasionally winter weather may be severe enough for school to be called off or delayed for 2 hours. If the district is on a 2 hour delay, then full day programs will also operate on the 2 hour delay. If school is called off for kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, then we will not have school either. You can check with local TV stations for this information or go online to [www.wvmt.com](http://www.wvmt.com) and click on school closings.

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

In order for children to be most successful in learning new skills, consistent attendance is important. Children are expected to attend school Monday through Thursday. Please make every effort to have your child in attendance every day. When your child will not be able attend for any reason, including illness, please call the classroom teacher as soon as possible. Also if you know in advance that your child will not be attending please inform the classroom staff. If your child should become ill we will contact you or your emergency contact to come and pick up your child. We will make your child comfortable until you can come. Please see our health

policy for more information.

## **CURRICULUM**

St. Joseph County GSRP preschool programs use Creative Curriculum. Creative Curriculum is a research-based curriculum that is play based and uses exploration and discovery-based learning experiences. Each individual child is given the opportunity to move through specially designed learning centers at his or her own level of interest and ability. Every activity is planned with one underlying goal in mind...to allow the freedom of each child to grow and explore through first hand experiences in a warm, secure, and stimulating environment. Through our program, each child is given the tools needed to encourage the growth of the whole child.

## **CHILD ASSESSMENT**

Upon enrollment in the Great Start Readiness Program each child will receive a developmental screening called the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). The screening will be done and reviewed with the parent. The screening will give the program a better understanding of where the child is developmentally.

During the school year, the form of assessment used will be Teaching Strategies GOLD. Children will be continually assessed on a daily basis. As a part of this assessment system teachers will take on the following tasks:

1. Observe and collect facts through observation and documentation using anecdotal notes as a method for recording.
2. Analyze and respond to children by considering their skills in relation to specific objectives and then scaffolding their learning.
3. Evaluate by comparing a child's skills and behaviors to research-based indicators of learning and development.
4. Summarize, plan and communicate, making use of the collected information to plan experiences and share with others.

Three data collection points are scheduled for October, February and May. Information at these checkpoints is then shared with parents via conferences or home visits.

## **CHILD AND FAMILY REFERRALS**

St. Joseph County GSRP is committed to serving children who have special needs/disabilities. We work closely with families, the Intermediate School District and their Specialists serving your child, to ensure every child is participating in all of the classroom opportunities and receiving the appropriate services as indicated in their program plans. GSRP has a list of community resources to help parents and families in need which is given to every family.

## **FEE POLICY**

Families whose income falls at or below 250% of Federal Poverty Level (FPL) pay no tuition for GSRP. Based on revisions made to Public Act 60 in June 2013, any enrolled GSRP family with an income in excess of 250% of the FPL must pay tuition based on a SJCISD district-wide

common sliding fee scale (SFS). All tuition payments will be handled through the St. Joseph County ISD. Bills will be sent out the first full week of each month. Payment will be due the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. If you pay tuition and have questions, you may contact Deana Strudwick at 269-467-5308.

<b>Annual Tuition Rate:</b>	<b>250% of FPL and Below:</b>	<b>251% of FPL to 350% of FPL:</b>	<b>351% of FPL and Above:</b>	<b>Tuition for Ineligible Children:</b>
Part-day GSRP	No tuition may be charged	\$362.50 10% of GSRP allocation 8 monthly payments of \$45.00	\$543.75 15% of state GSRP allocation 8 monthly payments of \$68.00	Determined by the sub-recipient
School-day GSRP	No tuition may be charged	\$725.00 10% of state GSRP allocation 8 monthly payments of \$90.63	\$1087.50 15% of state GSRP allocation 8 monthly payments of \$136.00	Determined by the sub-recipient

### **EXEMPTION:**

- If a child who is eligible for special education and has an Individual Education Plan (IEP), then the family is exempt from sliding fee scale payment policy.

### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

We strive to make parents feel as much a part of their child's education as possible. Parents are their child's first and most important teacher. Parents are encouraged to visit or volunteer in their in their child's classroom at any time or to accompany their child on a field trip. We encourage parents to share any experiences or talents they have with the children. Other parent involvement activities may include family nights during the school year and family projects to do at home. Open and ongoing communication between teachers and parents is important. Parents may receive a newsletter, email, phone call or information about their child at drop off or pick up. We encourage parents to participate in any parent meetings including our county wide Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings and to also belong to the Parent Coalition.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

The employees and volunteer participants of GSRP are required to hold all information gathered in the performance of their duties in the strictest confidence. Staff should not to give out information regarding children and their parents. Such information should be held in strict confidence and should not be discussed with anyone outside the Center. Inside the Center, such information should be discussed only when it will benefit the care we offer the children and the parent. Refer any inquiries on children, their performance, and parents to the teacher. No information will be released to any unauthorized person.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Open positive communication is essential to the well-being and growth of your child. We will make every effort to keep you informed of your child's growth and development within our program. Please keep us informed when your child is experiencing any changes in his/her routine at home.

## **FOOD PROGRAM AND NUTRITION POLICY**

Breakfast, snacks and lunches are of sufficient quantity and nutritional quality as to meet the dietary needs of preschool children. Meals and snacks will be in accordance with the minimum meal requirements of the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Lunch will be served throughout each day for full day programs. Full day programs will also serve breakfast and/or snacks. Children in part day programs are served a minimum of 1 snack. If your child is present at the time one or more of these are served, he/she will receive whatever is being offered. Children are offered each meal component and make their own choices based on individual preferences. Weekly menus, with noted food substitutions, are posted for parent's review. GSRP complies with rule 400.8330(3) to ensure that children with special dietary needs receive meals/snacks in accordance with the child's needs. If your child has a food allergy please let us know what foods they need to avoid so that we may make appropriate substitutions.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Our discipline is age appropriate. We use positive methods of discipline which encourage self-control, self-direction, self-esteem and cooperation. Adults treat conflict situations with children as matter of fact. Adults diffuse the conflict situation before moving into problem solving. They approach children calmly, stop any hurtful actions and acknowledge children's feelings. Adults involve children in identifying the problem by gathering information from the children (what happened, what upset the children). They restate the problem and involve children in the process of finding and choosing a solution for the problem. Adults ask children for solutions and encourage them to choose one together. They are also prepared to give follow up support when children act on their decisions.

The following behaviors WILL NOT take place in the classroom:

- Corporal punishment (measures intend to induce physical pain or fear)
- Restricting a child's movement
- Threatened or actual withdrawal of food, or use of the bathroom
- Abusive or profane language
- Any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment.
- Any form of emotional abuse, including shaming, rejecting, terrorizing, or isolating a child.
- Excluding a child from outdoor play or other gross motor activities or from daily learning experiences.

## **BITING POLICY**

We want to insure that every child is safe while in our care. Our program provides an environment that encourages and promotes cooperative interaction, respect for others, and non-aggressive problem solving between the children. Biting is a normal stage of development for young children who are teething and are still developing their language skills. It is usually a temporary condition that is most common between thirteen and twenty-four months of age.

For safety and health concerns, we take biting seriously. When it happens, it's very scary, frustrating, and stressful for children, parents, and teachers. It is also not something to blame on children, parents, or teachers, and there are no quick and easy solutions to it. Children bite for a variety of reasons: simple sensory exploration, panic, crowding, seeking to be noticed, or intense desire for a toy. Repeated biting becomes a pattern of learned behavior that is often hard to extinguish because it does achieve results: the desired toy, excitement, attention. Knowing that the effect of their biting will hurt another person is not yet a part of a child of this ages' mindset, so the "cause-effect" relationship is not internalized. Our teachers plan activities and supervise carefully in order for biting not to happen. There are times, however, when everyone cannot be within immediate reach to prevent a bite.

Our policy for handling a biting incident is the following:

- The biter is immediately removed from the group with a firm NO. The bitten child is consoled and the bitten area washed with soap and water. If necessary, ice is applied to reduce any swelling or bruising. The biter is not allowed to return to play until he/she is talked to on a level that he/she can understand, and then is redirected.
- A written incident report is given to the parents of all children involved when they are picked up that day. The name of a biting child is not released because it serves no useful purpose and can make an already difficult situation more difficult.
  - We look intensively at the context of each biting incident for pattern, in an effort to prevent further biting behavior.
  - We work with each biting child on resolving conflict or frustration in an appropriate manner.
  - We try to adapt the environment and work with parents to reduce any child stress.
  - We make special efforts to protect potential victims.

We try to make every effort to extinguish the behavior quickly and to balance our commitment to the family of the biting child to that of other families.



## **PARENT NOTIFICATION OF THE LICENSING NOTEBOOK**

All Great Start Readiness Programs are considered child care centers under Michigan law and need to maintain a child care license from the Department of Human Services. All child care centers must maintain a licensing notebook which includes all licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports and all related corrective action plans (CAP). The notebook must include all reports issued and CAPs developed since May 28, 2010.

This Center maintains a licensing notebook of all licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports and all related corrective action plans.

The notebook will be available to parents for review during regular business hours.

Licensing inspection and special investigation reports from at least the past two years are available on the Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing website at [www.michigan.gov/michildcare](http://www.michigan.gov/michildcare).

## HEALTH POLICY

Parents usually know best when their child is ill. We assume the demonstration of good judgment by parents when illness dictates keeping a child home. **Please keep in mind that every child in attendance will be expected to participate in outdoor play.** As part of our responsibility in maintaining a safe environment for all children and staff, the following Health Guidelines have been established.

### EXCLUSION POLICY FOR ILLNESSES

No child will be allowed to attend school with any of the following symptoms:

1. Fever (100.5 degrees F or above) In order to return to school, the child needs to be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication; ie, Tylenol, Acetaminophen, Ibuprofen.
2. Persistent cough
4. Undiagnosed Rash
5. Vomiting
6. Diarrhea
  - \*Diarrhea being described as 3 or 4 loose stools in 6-8 hours, not just one watery loose stool.
7. Eye discharge
8. Lice

Should your child develop any of the above symptoms while at school, you will be contacted immediately. Arrangements will need to be made for you to pick-up your child promptly.

**Exposure to communicable disease (chicken pox, strep infection, etc.) should be reported to Teacher/Director. She will inform you if your child has been exposed to a communicable disease while at the center.**

If your child is unable to attend the center due to sickness, please remember to **contact us**.

### MEDICATIONS

**All medication** should be brought in the original container and must be checked in at the office. Parents must write a note giving directions that include dosage and time the medication is to be given at school! Without a written note the medication cannot be administered. Please include a spoon or instrument to give your child medication.

## **PARENT NOTIFICATION OF ACCIDENTS, INCIDENTS & ILLNESS**

Accidents to students, no matter how slight, must be reported to the teacher, the recess supervisor, or the office as soon as possible.

Should a student be injured, an effort will be made by the available personnel to contact the parents for information and instructions. If the parent cannot be contacted and the illness or injury is believed to be serious enough to require medical attention, the school shall arrange for the student to be taken to a doctor or to a hospital for treatment. This information will be taken from the student's emergency form that is filled out and signed by the parent, returned to the school and kept on file in the office for such reasons. Please have all information kept up-to-date on the emergency form kept in the office. Call (269) 489-5181 for changes and/or updates. This action on the part of any school personnel does not obligate the personnel or school to assume financial responsibility for the treatment of the student.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

Should a medical emergency arise, resulting from either serious accident or some other cause, we will take the following immediate actions:

1. The staff person in charge will assess the extent of the injury. First aid will be administered on site.
2. Parents will be notified immediately using all possible methods until parent is successfully reached. In the event that a parent cannot be notified, a staff member will accompany the child to the Three Rivers Emergency Room and insure that the child information record is present.
3. Another staff member will continue to attempt to contact the parents to join the child.
4. The staff person will remain with the child until the parent/guardian arrives.

## **EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING**

Occasionally the school has to be closed once the school day has begun. It is therefore necessary that your child know where they are to go under those circumstances. Please make sure your child has that information. It will make everything run smoother for everyone involved.

## FIRE AND TORNADO DRILLS

(These are guidelines and could change with assessment of the procedure.)

**Fire:** When the fire drill alarm sounds, a student is to leave his books and leave the building according to the established routes and to follow the teacher's direction. He/she is not to go to his locker to get his/her coat.

Students should leave in a rapid but orderly manner, do not return to the building until directed to do so by a teacher. The first student outside is to hold the doors open.

**Tornado:** In the event of a tornado warning or drill, the following procedure will be followed:

1. Keep Quiet
2. No Running
3. Students should get textbook for protection.
4. Once at your assigned station:
  - a. Sit with a book protecting head
  - b. Teacher should take attendance
  - c. Wait for the all clear on intercom

Assigned Areas: (ALSO NOTE MAP ON NEXT PAGE)

All rooms in the Elementary/High School building should evacuate rooms to the hallway according to the established routine. Be sure to stay away from glass, glass display cases and lockers.

**During Lunch Time:** The cafeteria evacuates to the area South of Room 27 and East of Room 17.

**During Lunch Time IF Students Are Outside:** Return to above designated areas.

## **VOLUNTEERS/SUPERVISION**

We strive to make parents feel as much a part of their child's education as possible. Parents are their child's first and most important teacher. Parents are encouraged to visit or volunteer in their in their child's classroom at any time or to accompany their child on a field trip. We encourage parents to share any experiences or talents they have with the children. Open and ongoing communication between teachers and parents is important. Parents may receive a newsletter, email, phone call or information about their child at drop off or pick up. We encourage parents to participate in any parent meetings including our county wide Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings and to also belong to the Parent Coalition.

## **SCREENING POLICY OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

Any volunteers will have an ICHAT clearance completed prior to unsupervised interaction with children.

## **SUPERVISION OF VOLUNTEERS**

All visitors must report to the office, sign in and receive a badge before moving throughout the school. All must sign out when leaving.

## TYPICAL DAILY ROUTINE (W/TIMES)

Burr Oak  
Great Start Readiness Program  
Routine

- 8:00-8:15      Arrival/Greeting Time - Children enter the classroom at their own pace. Parents/guardians are encouraged to stay until children are ready for them to leave. Children have choices about whether to spend time with books, or interact with adults and one another. Once all children have arrived, adults share the daily announcements.
- 8:15-8:30      Large Group Time - All adults and children participate in activities planned around children's interests, developmental levels, music and movement, cooperative play and projects; and events meaningful to children.
- 8:30-8:40      Small Group - An adult-initiated learning experience based on children's interests and development where children explore, play, work with materials, and talk about what they are doing. Individual children explore and use the same set of materials in their own way.
- 8:40-8:50      Plan Time - Children indicate their plans to adults in a place where intimate conversations can occur and where people and materials are visible. Adults use a range of strategies to support children's planning (e.g., props, area signs, tape recorders, singing, planning individually, in pairs, in small groups).
- 8:50-9:50      Choice Time - Children always initiate activities and carry out their intentions. Children make many choices about where and how to use materials. During Choice Time, adults participate as partners in child-initiated play and encourage children's problem solving both with materials and during times of social conflict.
- 9:50-10:00      Recall Time - Gathered in small group settings, children choose Choice Time experiences to reflect on, talk about, and exhibit. Adults provide a variety of materials and strategies to maintain interest as they follow children's lead and encourage children to share (e.g., individual props such as puppets, telephones or periscopes, group games using a hula hoop, ball or spinner, re-enacting, drawing, showing and describing a structure or painting). Adults are unhurried in their approach and may complete Recall Time with four or five children each day.
- 10:00-10:30      Outside Time - Children have many choices about how they play in the outdoor learning environment, much as they do during Choice Time Indoors. Adults supervise children for safety and also join in their active outdoor play, supporting their initiatives and problem solving.
- 10:40-11:20      Lunch - Family-Style meals support children doing things for themselves (e.g., serve themselves, pour beverages, distribute napkins, wipe up spills). Children choose whether to eat, what to eat, and how much to eat. Adults eat and have meaningful conversations with the children. Children are

encouraged to clean their own space including disposal of leftovers, wiping of tables, and pushing in their own chairs.

11:20-11:30 Plan Time- Children indicate their plans to adults in a place where intimate conversations can occur and where people and materials are visible. Adults use a range of strategies to support children's planning (e.g., props, area signs, tape recorders, singing, planning individually, in pairs, in small groups).

11:30-12:30 Choice- Children always initiate activities and carry out their intentions. Children make many choices about where and how to use materials. During Work Time, adults participate as partners in child-initiated play and encourage children's problem solving both with materials and during times of social conflict.

12:30-12:40 Recall Time - Gathered in small group settings, children choose Choice Time experiences to reflect on, talk about, and exhibit. Adults provide a variety of materials and strategies to maintain interest as they follow children's lead and encourage children to share (e.g., individual props such as puppets, telephones or periscopes, group games using a hula hoop, ball or spinner, re-enacting, drawing, showing and describing a structure or painting). Adults are unhurried in their approach and may complete Recall Time with four or five children each day.

12:40-1:50 Rest Time - Resting is a time for sleeping or quiet, solitary, on-your-own-cot play. Rest Time plans should be individualized to meet the needs of each child. Quiet play could include books, soft music, baby dolls, or fine motor manipulatives.

1:50-2:00 Awake - As children wake up, adults and children work together to put away cots and prepare for plan time.

2:00-2:15 Snack- Family-Style snacks support children doing things for themselves (e.g., serve themselves, pour beverages, distribute napkins, and wipe up spills). Children choose whether to eat, what to eat, and how much to eat. Adults eat and have meaningful conversations with the children. Children are encouraged to clean their own space including disposal of leftovers, wiping of tables, and pushing in their own chairs.

2:15-2:30 Read Aloud - An adult-initiated learning experience, where adult reads a story that is related to the topic of the class's current study. Adult will ask questions and involve children in the reading.

2:30-3:00 Outside Time - Children have many choices about how they play in the outdoor learning environment, much as they do during Choice Time indoors. Adults supervise children for safety and also join in their active outdoor play, supporting their initiatives and problem solving.

