

# Randolph Southern School Corporation

## Preschool Program Handbook



## Welcome to the Randolph Southern School Corporation Preschool Program!

Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of your child's early childhood education. This preschool handbook is designed to answer many of the questions you may have about our program. Here are some highlights:

- ❖ Our Randolph Southern Elementary Preschool is a **Paths to Quality Level 3** program.
- ❖ Our preschool teachers are required to hold a Child Development Certificate (CDA) credential within their first year of employment.
- ❖ Currently, our building principal serves as the Preschool Director and works together to assure a quality early learning experience is accessible to ALL children.
- ❖ The preschool is open every day of the Randolph Southern School Corporation calendar and tuition is charged by the session with the expectation that preschool students are enrolled for 180 days.
- ❖ Randolph Southern School Corporation Preschools accept CCDF vouchers and are eligible to take On My Way Pre-K vouchers. If you need information about these state programs, we are here to help!
- ❖ Students eligible for preschool under IDEA Part B (special education law) pay no tuition for the half day program in which he/she is enrolled. These preschoolers have the option to stay for the other session the day at a cost of \$10.00 per day.
- ❖ Roundtrip transportation is provided.

## **About Our Program**

Randolph Southern School Corporation offers a fully inclusive Preschool Program. We understand that a child's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development is best nurtured among caring adults and peers within an environment that extends curiosity and enriches learning. Our program is child-centered while providing the structure needed for children to feel safe within predictable routines. We respect that each child is uniquely individual and eagerly watch for and celebrate learning milestones as a natural outcome of play and guided learning activities.

We want your child to enjoy coming to preschool! We use positive classroom practices as the foundation for building a joyful community of learners. Our teachers and support staff take every opportunity to honor creativity and wonder as primary means for cultivating self-confidence and self-expression. Conversation, observation, and patient listening are the tools used by our entire Preschool team to develop the relationships children depend on as they work through challenges and share their accomplishments.

We know that parents, grandparents, and other caregivers rely on our communication. We promise to do our personal best to keep you informed of all special events, school celebrations, upcoming topics related to curriculum, and other important information through our weekly newsletter.

## **About Our Curriculum**

Our preschool curriculum is based on the 2023 *Indiana Early Learning Standards*. During each class session, children move through a series of specially designed learning centers where they may participate at their own personal level of interest and ability. The curriculum focuses on learning basic concepts and skills through hands-on experiences and activities. Some centers are designed to develop large and small motor skills while others are more academically oriented. By using the 2023 *Indiana Early Learning Standards* as our guide, we provide a comprehensive approach to addressing the development of the whole child. We use the DIG Pre-K curriculum, and Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum. Teachers make decisions each day as they observe children and respond in appropriate ways. The observations require teachers to think about each child and consider how best to provide support.

## **Enrollment Process**

Children must be 3 years of age to attend the preschool program. Enrollment is rolling, so children are welcome to enroll and attend on or after their third birthday at any time during the school year. A completed RSSC Preschool Enrollment Packet is required for all students. The packet must be received by school office personnel. Evidence that all immunizations are up to date and a copy of the child's birth certificate must be presented with the completed enrollment packet. Proof of application in process for Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) or On My Way (OMW) must be presented at the time of enrollment. The parent is responsible for payment of a child in attendance between the enrollment period and acceptance into the CCDF or OMW programs. An enrollment fee of \$75.00 is due prior to the student starting school.

Families who plan to transition from the First Steps Program should communicate their decision to enroll their child in the Randolph Southern Elementary Preschool Program at their 30-month transition meeting. A Case Conference will be held prior to the child's third birthday to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Families are contacted by the school their child will attend to schedule a Case Conference date and time.

### **Toileting Requirement**

General education preschoolers must be completely toilet-trained and be capable of using the bathroom independently **at the time of enrollment**. Preschoolers with developmental disabilities and a current Individual Education Plan (IEP) do not need to meet this requirement.

### **Confidentiality Commitment to Families**

Confidentiality plays a vital role in promoting respect for every individual and fostering a strong community. Communications among staff and parents about children should be kept confidential at all times. We believe that conversations about a child, their behavior, or an incident should be conducted in private, away from the child and other members of the school community. If a parent has a question or concern, we suggest first contacting the child's teacher via email or in-person to arrange a time for a productive discussion. Our goal is for communication between staff, parents, and administrators to be open and accessible.

Parents should expect that all children are cared for in a safe, supportive, respectful, and trusting environment. Behavior management will be fair, equal, and respectful of the individual development of all children. Educational experiences will be engaging and children have plenty of choice time and playtime.

### **Attendance & Tuition Fees**

Regular attendance in preschool is highly encouraged. However, if your child must miss a day due to illness or for any other reason, please contact the school office to report the absence. Children must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to preschool. Our Preschool Program follows the Randolph Southern School Corporation calendar. Children are expected to attend for the 180 days which is the equivalent of 5 full days per week. **Fees are charged each day regardless of attendance and listed below:**

- \$100 per week/\$400 per month for full day (4-5 yr. old).
- \$50 per week/\$200 per month for half day (4-5 yr. old) PM.
- \$36 per week/\$144 per month AM M, W, F (3-4 yr. old).
- \$75 per week/\$300 per month full day M, W, F (3-4 yr. old).
- Payments will be made weekly and on the first day of the week.

## **Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) Participants**

Families using CCDF vouchers to pay for preschool tuition are required to slide their participation cards weekly. When your child is sick, parents must enter the day as a sick day into the system. Under NO circumstances may a staff member do this on behalf of a parent/guardian. We are happy to assist, but we are not permitted to keep a card, copy a card, or copy a card number or its pin. It is the parent's responsibility to complete and submit the CCDF application each year to the Family & Social Services Administration. Our staff is happy to assist. Students must be in attendance at least 25 hours per week to qualify for reimbursement.

## **On My Way Pre-K**

Families using On My Way Pre-K grants to pay for preschool tuition are required to pay the difference of the weekly preschool tuition verses the amount approved by the State of Indiana. Students must be in attendance at least 25 hours per week to qualify for reimbursement.

## **Transportation/Release Policy**

The school corporation will provide transportation to all preschool students. **The policy for release/special pick-up is as follows:**

- ❖ Please inform the school office with a note or phone call if someone other than those you have originally authorized will be picking up your child (a photo I.D. is required).
- ❖ Children can only be released to parents and adults whose names are designated in the RSSC Preschool Enrollment Packet. Be prepared to show proof of identification upon request.
- ❖ Any additions to the authorized list must be made in person in the school office.
- ❖ For safety reasons, we are unable to release a child to another minor.
- ❖ Both parents can pick up their child from preschool unless we have court order documentation stipulating otherwise in the school's main office.

## **Arrival/Dismissal**

**Please arrive promptly for preschool! We begin to engage in activities as soon as school starts!**

The preschool staff will meet the buses when doors open at 7:45 a.m. If you are dropping your child off at 7:45 when doors open, please follow the elementary drop off procedures. Parents drop off students at the back door. Do not operate your vehicle in the bus loading area when buses are present.

If you arrive at school after the preschool staff has returned to the classroom, please sign in at the office. For dismissal, preschool staff walk students to their designated pickup location.

## **School Entry and Security**

The school is equipped with a video entry system enabling the school building to be locked during the school day. You or someone on the authorized pick-up list may be required to ring the video monitor located at the main entrance to be admitted into the building. If you have any questions about this process be sure to ask the office staff or school principal.

## **Student Meal Prices**

Student meal prices are \$1.35 for breakfast and \$2.35 for lunch. Parents may also opt to send a packed lunch or breakfast. All full day will be required to bring a snack. Please do not send soda or pop of any kind to your child's packed lunch.

## **Home Connections (Family Involvement)**

One of our goals is to help your child connect *you* with their preschool classroom. A communication folder will be sent home in your child's book bag daily. Here you will find important information about what's going on at school, activities your child has completed at school, and papers that may need a signature and return to school. **Please check book bags/folders every night.** Preschool parents will receive weekly Newsletters.

## **Visitors and Program Observation**

RSSC Preschool welcomes volunteers and classroom visitors. A criminal history check is required and confidentiality agreements may be required as appropriate. If a person wishes to confer with a member of the staff, s/he should call for an appointment prior to coming to the school in order to prevent any inconvenience. In order to properly monitor the safety of students and staff. Each visitor must enter at the main office doors to sign in and receive a visitor's pass. Any visitor found in the building without signing in and wearing a visitor's pass shall be reported to the principal.

## **Supplies**

Every child must have a complete change of clothing at all times, including socks and underwear. If your child has changed clothing during the day, please take home the soiled items and replace them the next day. All clothing items must be labeled with the child's full name. **If your child is still in the process of toilet training, additional pull-ups, wipes, and backup sets of clothing must be provided daily. A general supply list will be provided.**

## **Lost and Found**

Please mark all personal items with your child's name. We will make every attempt to locate and return lost items. This task is much easier if your child's name is on the items. We cannot be responsible for any personal items that your child may bring to school. There is a lost and found area in the school. Please call the office secretary.

## **Snacks**

Snacks are provided each day. Students may bring a water bottle containing plain water.

## **Nap/Rest Time**

Students who attend all-day preschool will have **1 hour of rest time** each day. During this time, students will have their own space to lie on. Please place a clean blanket in the backpack daily. Calming rest music may be played during this time.

## **Birthday Parties**

Children are allowed to bring in snacks to celebrate birthdays. Only store-bought foods can be served, and the food provided must include a completed list of ingredients and food label notifications. Healthy treats are encouraged.

## **Illness**

Colds, flu, & other contagious diseases seem to occur frequently and spread easily among preschool and toddler children. To help protect your own child's health and to minimize the possibility of contagion at school, please keep your child home if you observe any of the following symptoms:

- ❖ Nasal discharge that is green or yellow
- ❖ Complaints of ear pain
- ❖ Severe sore throat
- ❖ Eyes that are pink, burning or itching or producing discharge
- ❖ Diarrhea or vomiting
- ❖ Fever or chills
- ❖ Cough
- ❖ Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- ❖ Muscle or body aches
- ❖ Headache
- ❖ New loss of taste or smell

If these symptoms of possibly contagious conditions or other conditions deemed contagious are observed in your child during the day, you will be called to come to pick up your child.

When your child has a fever, please keep him/her at home until their temperature returns to normal and he/she stays fever free for 24 hours without Tylenol or ibuprofen. Children also must be free from diarrhea and vomiting for 24 hours prior to returning to preschool. If there are any lingering signs of illness, i.e. glassy/watery eyes, listlessness, and/or drowsiness, etc., please keep your child home an additional day. This will help to ensure that the illness has actually passed and that your

child will be well enough to resume school activities. Please call the main office if your child will be absent.

## **Medications**

Any student needing to take medication at school must have a form filed in the office with the direction for giving the medication. The proper form may be picked up at the school. The medicine must be kept in the office and must be in the original prescription bottle bearing the pharmacy label and the student's name. School personnel cannot be expected to administer medication that requires skill beyond their qualification. Parents may come to school to administer medication instead of having the forms filled out. Any changes in medication shall be documented by written authorization from the physician.

## **Discipline Practices**

### **Use of Positive Measures to Produce Acceptable Behavior**

In order to maintain a happy, healthy, disciplined environment, the children are taught the importance of safety, care of the property, good habits, rules of conduct, consideration, and respect for others.

Constructive methods of discipline are used to maintain group control and handle individual behavior. Our main focus on discipline (teaching/training) is preventative in nature, as we aim to build self-discipline in the child.

### **Use of Constructive Measures to Discourage Unacceptable Behavior**

When a child exhibits unacceptable behavior or attitudes, he/she is instructed as to what is wrong and then directed to a positive alternative approach/behavior. Along with these new attitudes and behaviors, the child is guided in the direction of self-discipline by encouraging him/her to make as many decisions as possible within limits. **The limits are as follows:**

- ❖ If a child hurts another child, he/she and the other child are respectfully separated. Each child is asked to explain what happened (define the problem). After each child has verbally given information, they are asked to help solve the problem, talk to each other, reconcile with one another, and are redirected to another activity.
- ❖ If a child is disruptive, he/she will be respectfully asked to stop the behavior. If the child persists to the point of disruption again, he/she is reminded of his/her behavior and how it affects others. If the disruption continues, and the child willfully refuses to yield to instruction, he/she will be separated from the other children. After the child has been separated from the class activity for a short period of time (2 to 5 minutes) he/she will be invited to rejoin the class.
- ❖ If a child continues to misbehave and disrupt the class, the parents will be asked to attend a conference to discuss how we can best meet the needs of the child. At this time, the Suspension and Expulsion policy may be utilized as a form of discipline.

### **Suspension and Expulsion Policy**

- Suspension: The Principal may deny a student the right to attend a school or take part in any school function for up to ten (10) school days.
- Expulsion: An expulsion is a denial of the right of a student to take part in



any school function for a period greater than ten (10) school days and separated from school attendance for the balance of the current semester or current year.

### **2-Hr. Delay, Early Dismissal, eLearning Days, & Closings**

In the event of bad weather that leads to school closings and school delays, the following is the 2-hour delay policy for preschool students:

- ❖ NO Preschool for AM only students.
- ❖ Students who attend ALL DAY and are transported by their parents may attend beginning at 9:45 a.m.
- ❖ **Fees will remain the same for a 2-hour delay, early dismissal, unplanned eLearning days, and school closings.**
- ❖ In the case of an early dismissal, parents will be contacted through the school messaging system.

### **Termination of Enrollment**

In certain circumstances, it may be necessary for the preschool staff to decide to discontinue a child's attendance. Such a decision would be based on whether it is in the best interest of that child. Every effort will be made to correct a problematic situation before a final decision is made. Termination of enrollment may be the result of the following:

- ❖ Enrollment will be terminated at the discretion of the school for non-payment of tuition
  - After two weeks of non-payment
  - Unless payment arrangements are made and **adhered to**.
- ❖ Pattern of unexcused absences
- ❖ Disruptive or dangerous behavior
- ❖ Abuse of other children, staff, or property

### **Ages & Stages Questionnaires-3**

Students will take part in developmental screenings twice per school year. Randolph Southern Preschool utilizes the Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) screening tools. The ASQ-3 measures communication, gross and fine motor, problem solving, and personal-social skills, while the ASQ: SE-2 assesses social-emotional development.

## **5 Areas of School Readiness**

Randolph Southern School Corporation Preschool measures and addresses readiness for school across five distinct but connected areas:

### **1. Physical Well-Being and Motor Development.**

- a. Children's physical development (e.g. growth patterns of height and weight)
- b. Health status (the ability to see and hear)
- c. Physical abilities (e.g. ability to move to get needs met, assisted or unassisted)
- d. Proper nutrition and rest have a strong impact on readiness to learn, providing children with the energy and mobility to explore their environment and increase their ability to concentrate.
- e. Early identification of needs and provision of intervention services are critical for children with disabilities.

### **2. Social and Emotional Development.**

- a. Children's knowledge of their own feelings and those of others
- b. The ability to develop positive relationships
- c. An interest in and demonstration of interpersonal skills needed to maintain positive relationships with adults and peers
- d. The capability of engaging and cooperating within a group
- e. The ability to demonstrate the skills needed to get along with peers (e.g. managing conflicts in a positive way)
- f. Highlights of this domain serve as a foundation for later school success and meaningful life experiences as an adult and consist of developing and maintaining friendships, appreciating differences, solving conflicts, and functioning effectively in groups.

### **3. Approaches to Learning.**

- a. Curiosity
- b. Enjoyment of learning
- c. Confidence
- d. Creativity
- e. Attention to task
- f. Reflection
- g. Interests and attitudes

### **4. Language Development.**

- a. Expressive (e.g. expressive speech that is understood or use of a nonverbal system of communication)
- b. Understanding skills to effectively interact with others
- c. Early literacy skills are a part of language development (e.g. an awareness of print, and an understanding that writing has a purpose).
- d. Language development and early literacy skills are correlated to how effectively children can communicate their needs, interact socially with others, and describe events, thoughts, and feelings.

## 5. Cognition and General Knowledge.

- a. Basic knowledge of concepts and the workings of the environment in which the child participates (e.g. knows his/her own name, understanding basic science concepts)
- b. Cognitive competencies like early mathematical skills (e.g. number sense, discriminating shapes and colors, simple patterns, size, location, and time)
- c. Basic problem-solving skills (e.g. acknowledging similarities and differences, identifying solutions, and increasing attention and focus to challenging tasks.)
- d. A child's innate sense of curiosity and the ability to acquire, organize, and use information in increasingly complex ways are indicative of how the child acquires new knowledge and learns about the impact he/she has on others and the environment.

Although these areas are separate and distinct, there is a constant overlap of skill acquisition in early childhood development. Skills in one domain are reinforced as skills are gained in another domain, (e.g. increase in communication skills builds confidence and a positive self-image). Kindergarten teachers support all five domains of child development.

Child development occurs at varying rates, and as such, we should not expect all children to reach a common “standard” of readiness. Children come from different cultures, with unique life experiences, and a range of ability levels. Therefore, it is anticipated that children may demonstrate competencies in individual ways and should be expected to show different patterns of development.

The concept of “readiness” includes much more than children’s readiness to learn kindergarten standards. As defined by the National Education Goals Panel, the School Readiness Indicators Initiative (<http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/negp/reports/99rpt.pdf>), and others, “readiness” includes ready children, ready families, ready communities, ready early care and education, and ready schools. Readiness at every level is necessary so that all children will experience success.

It is the responsibility of schools to meet the needs of children as they enter school and to provide whatever services are needed to help each child reach his or her fullest potential.

Indiana has developed the Indiana Academic Standards for Young Children from Birth to Age 5. The standards are based on the latest national research and findings for all content areas and domains. By outlining specific skills and concepts and giving examples of instructional strategies, these standards will support teachers, parents, and caregivers as they develop appropriate experiences for young children to help ensure success in kindergarten.

[A copy of the Indiana Early Learning Standards can be viewed here:](#)

<https://media.doe.in.gov/news/2023-early-learning-standards-final-5-25-23.pdf>