

SCHOOL HANDBOOK



Preschool

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**Courtney Ende
Director**

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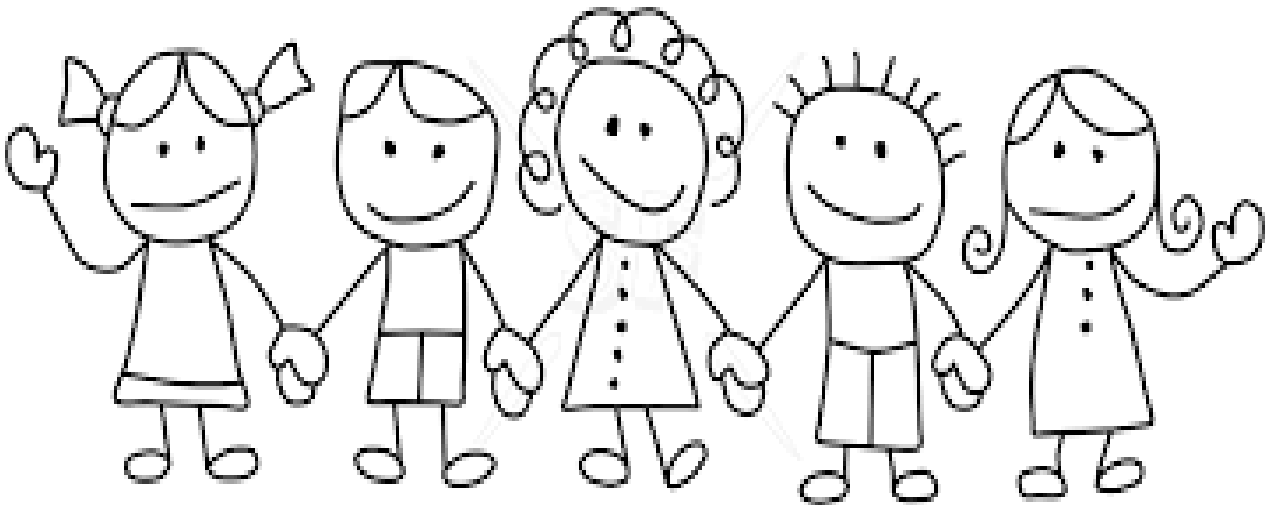
A Note from the Director

Welcome to another exciting year here at Smile-A-While Preschool! We are so pleased that you have chose us for your child's first school experience.

We strive for the highest degree of excellence, and work hard to make sure that your child has all the skills they will need for success in Kindergarten. Our day is fast paced and full of fun learning adventures.

Smile-A-While is a private LLC half and full day preschool open to all children, regardless of race, nationality, or creed, who may benefit from our type of program. Children must be between 3-5 years of age and fully potty trained.

Thanks again! It's going to be a great year!!



Philosophy of Education

As an Early Childhood Educator, I have had the opportunity to listen to many different theories and approaches to programs and curriculum. A teacher's job is to pull from each of those theories and find the parts that will best suit the needs of their students. I must be flexible and open to suggestions and new strategies for the betterment of our students. Listed below are just a few of my beliefs and core values:

*Children will not learn...

- strict academics
- to never speak
- to never touch
- corporal punishment or shame

*Children will learn...

- pro social behavior
- self discipline
- that they are unique
- everyone deserves respect
- hand on learning
- conflict resolution skills
- compassion and empathy

I believe that every child is a precious gift waiting to be opened.

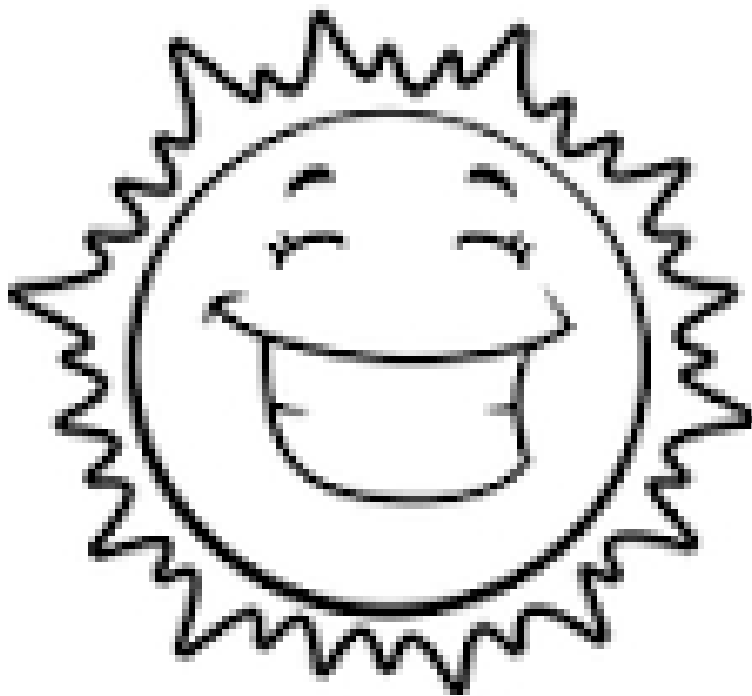
If children come away with nothing else from my classroom except the knowledge that they are valued and important; then I have done my job. Life skills and academics can be taught, but true success begins within the heart!

Mission Statement

Smile-A-While Preschool exists to serve the developmental and social needs of children as they prepare to attend kindergarten. We assist children as they explore the world around them and help them to find their place in it. We value and respect each child as a unique individual.

Vision Statement

Success is seeing the light in a child's eyes as they grasp different educational concepts and meet developmentally appropriate goals. We will continually work to grow as citizens and as a school to meet the needs of students entrusted to our care. We are committed to being the best first school experience for your child.



Qualifications and Ratios

All persons working in a child care setting must obtain a state certified background check, a health examination by a licensed doctor, and complete at least 15 hours of Continuing Education every year. Whether serving as Director, Teacher, or Aide; all persons must comply with the Standards set up by the Department of Children and Family Services and meet all Illinois requirements for said positions. Smile-A-While is committed to hiring only the most qualified and dedicated people. For preschool children ages 3 to 5, the child/teacher ratio is 1 teacher for every 10 students. We believe in small groups to promote more one on one learning time for each individual student.

Confidentiality

No personal information concerning a student will ever be given out without the express permission of their parent/guardian. The only exception to this rule would be in the extreme case of an emergency and only to proper authorities involved (ex. Health, abuse, custody).

Kindergarten Readiness

Our program is focused on providing learning opportunities in language, reading, large and small motor skills, math, science, and social skills. We follow the guidelines of the Creative Curriculum approach to teaching.

Enrollment and Tuition

Enrollment is on a first come, first served basis. All students enrolling at Smile-A-While Preschool must fill out and return the following forms as required by DCFS:

- Enrollment Form
- Enrollment Fee
- Child History Form
- General Consent Form
- Health Physical (which includes Lead Testing & TB)
 - Discipline Policy
 - Medication Policy
- DCFS Standards booklet form
 - Emergency Contact Form
 - Tuition Agreement
- Copy of student's Birth Certificate

Tuition is due ON or BEFORE the 5th of every month. Payment may be mailed to the school, or handed straight to the Director.

Below is a schedule of fees:

- Annual Enrollment Fee - \$40
- Monthly Tuition for 2 ½ Day Program - \$160
- Monthly Tuition for 3 ½ Day Program - \$220
- Monthly Tuition for 5 ½ day Program - \$370
- Monthly Tuition for 2 Full Day Program - \$310
- Monthly Tuition for 3 Full Day Program - \$425
- Monthly Tuition for 5 Full Day Program - \$700

Hours of Operation

All of our programs run from 8:45am to 11:45am for the half day program and between the hours of 7:30am and 5:00pm for the full day program.

*The 2 day program runs on Tuesdays & Thursdays

*The 3 day program runs on Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays

*The 5 day program runs Monday through Friday

School Year Calendar

A calendar listing of holidays and activities will be distributed at Open House and at the beginning of the school year. A monthly calendar will be included with every newsletter. Smile-A-While preschool is mainly open between the months of late August –

May. Below is a listing of the major holidays we observe:

*Labor Day * Veterans Day * Thanksgiving *Spring Break

*Winter Break *MLK Jr Birthday *Presidents Day

*Easter Holiday *Memorial Day *Columbus Day

Programs and Parties

Our Christmas program is held after school hours before Winter Break. In May we will host our annual graduation ceremony. During the school year we hold Halloween, Feast Day, Valentine's, and Easter parties during the school day. All events are always in the newsletter for their month. Please see the newsletters for more information on each event.

Daily Routine

(Subject to Change)

Center Choice Time
Creative Learning
Clean up and Daily Jobs
Morning Meeting
Potty Break
Snack
Story Time
Lesson of the Day
½ Day Dismissal
Center Choice Time
Lunch
Rest Time
Potty Break
Afternoon Snack
Afternoon Meeting
Center Choice Time
Full Day Dismissal

Arrival & Departure

Students need to be inside the building by 9:00 AM. Drop off is at the front door. If no teacher is at the door please ring the bell and we will promptly let your student inside. Grown ups dropping off are not to enter the building with the student as it makes transitions much harder. Once students are inside the building they will need to put away their belongings, place their folders on their shelves, and wash their hands before entering the classroom.

Unless otherwise arranged, do not bring your child to school before the start of school or more than 10 minutes before class begins (for ½ day students).

Please make sure your students have breakfast before arriving at preschool. No food or drinks (other than water) will be allowed in the building.

At the end of the day, pickup is also at the front door to the preschool. You may either ring the bell and wait outside for your student to get ready or you can send Ms. Ende a Remind message letting her know you have arrived (or are on your way) and we will get your student ready and message you when they are ready to leave. Promptness is appreciated. This helps both you and your student's day go smoother.

Please refrain from picking up full day students between 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM unless needed for an appointment. It is very disruptive to have students leave during rest time.

Communication

There are many ways to get a hold of your child's teacher or center director if you are not wanting or able to speak at the door at drop off or pickup. You may send a message through Class Dojo, a message on our Facebook page, or call the school. Please refrain from contacting any of the teachers on their personal Facebook or phone numbers.

Teachers will also utilize notes home as needed for parents.

Field Trip Policy

Throughout the course of the school year, we will be taking several educational field trips. Due to DCFS, State of Illinois, and Insurance Company Guidelines there are several rules that we are required to follow. Here's how it works:

- Parents are required to either attend or find transportation and supervision for their child during all non-walking field trips. This is required by insurance company guidelines.
- If an agreement between parents is made for a field trip attendance, the director must be notified and a copy of the parent's driver's license and insurance card must be provided. A letter from the student's parents giving the other parent permission to transport their child must also be presented. This is a State of Illinois requirement.
- A bag with emergency information and a first aid kit will be brought by the director on all field trips. This is required by DCFS.
- We will always meet at the Field Trip destination unless otherwise stated. A signed permission slip form is required for all trips outside of school grounds. This is a Ms. Ende requirement.

I know it seems like a lot of rules and regulations, but it is well worth the extra effort. Field trips are a fun and educational experience that you and your child can share together. The children enjoy learning and being with friends in an environment different than our classroom.

Discipline Policy

Children at our Preschool are not allowed to do anything that would hurt themselves, others, or school property. Students will not be disciplined for toilet accidents. We believe that the ultimate goal of discipline should be to help children develop self-control and to assume responsibility for their own actions. Preschool students will be given reasonable opportunities to resolve their own conflicts when it is appropriate.

Keeping the program at an age appropriate level, providing the children with knowledge of what is expected of them, and not allowing opportunities for misbehavior are some of the basic steps we employ to help prevent the need for discipline. When discipline is needed however, we use a 1-2-3 approach.

1. The child is asked to stop the inappropriate behavior.
2. The child is redirected to another activity area.
3. The child is required to take a time out that is appropriate for their age (1 minute for every year old)

Behavior Issues

If your child is showing signs of aggression towards other students or any teachers they will be sent home. We will call the same way we do for illness and the child will have 1 hour to be picked up upon placing the phone call. Late pickup charge will accrue after 1 hour if child is not picked up. If a child is sent home three times they may be dismissed from the program on the teacher and director's discretion.

Discharge Policy

Under DCFS licensing standards (407.25) “Any child who, after attempts have been made to meet the child’s individual needs, demonstrates the inability to benefit from the type of care offered by the facility, or whose presence is considered detrimental to the group, shall be discharged from the facility”. While we try our best to help each and every child in our care we must have a policy in place for situations when your child is unable to fit into the preschool setting due to behavior issues. After utilizing personal resources and our attempts of connecting to the child and correcting behaviors have not been successful, attempts for a qualified professional resources can be utilized. If your child is evaluated by an Early Intervention Program and/or BHASED Screening done at Smile-A-While documentation will be kept on file whether your child was found to be eligible or ineligible to receive services. Early intervention services received by your child shall be documented in the behavior support plan. If parents attempt qualified professional resources then signed consent will be obtained, but in the event that our interventions are not successful and repeated behaviors continue we will proceed with termination of your child from preschool to ensure the safety of all children as a group. Parent conferences may be conducted to decide the actions most beneficial. If it is determined that dismissal is in the best interest of all parties involved, a one week written notice shall be given except for extreme cases (at the director's discretion). In the unfortunate event that this does happen, Smile-A-While Preschool will provide you with information of other local daycare centers in the area. You may also utilize the website for Child Care Resource & Referral for a full list of available providers in your area.

Delinquent and Late Fees

All tuition is due **on or before** the 5th of every month. There will be a late fee of \$5 per day your child would normally be in attendance **for all tuition not paid on or before the 5th of every month**. If you pay late please add these fees onto your regular monthly tuition.

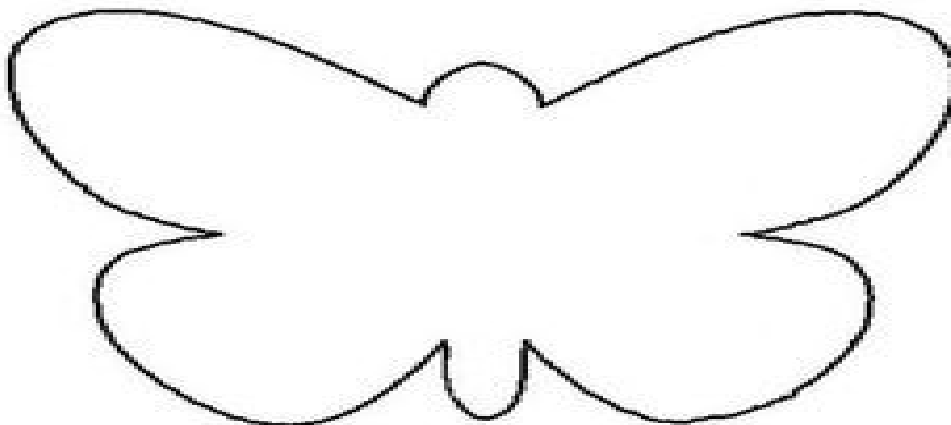
Any tuition/fees that are more than two weeks delinquent could result in dismissal from the program.

Extenuating circumstances are given careful consideration.

Please contact the director with any problems or to make payment arrangements.

If you are late picking up your child there is a \$2 per minute fee (after 11:45 for ½ day or 5:00 for full day)

If you need to drop off your child before normal start time you may do so at the cost of \$5 per 15 minutes before the normal start time.



Illness and Accidents

Please keep sick children home. See the list sent home separately for all symptoms/illnesses they must stay home for. The health of the whole group is important. We ask that you **call the school if your student will be absent**. If your child arrives at school with symptoms we feel are not appropriate and could possibly affect other children we have the right to not allow them into the classroom until provided with a doctor's note. If your child become ill while at school, you or a person from your emergency contact list will be notified. Please be sure to keep this list up to date with us. Accidents do occur occasionally. All staff are trained in First Aid and CPR. Appropriate actions will be taken and parents/emergency contacts will be notified. An accident report will be filled out and a copy given to parents. We take your child's safety very seriously.

Closing and Cancellations

In the event that Smile-A-While Preschool should have to close on an unannounced date, please tune in to KWQC-TV 6 Cancellations will be running across the screen by 7:00 AM. You may also check our Facebook page for updates. Non-weather related closing will also run across the screen, and a personal phone call before the start of school will also be given when possible. A Class Dojo message will also be sent.

Insurance

Smile-A-While Preschool has an insurance policy that meets DCFS guidelines. This policy covers students and school belongings while on school grounds. Your own personal policies are responsible for injury off of school grounds and while away on field trips. Thank you for your understanding.

Integrated Pest Management Plan

Due to State of Illinois legislation related to pest management control in schools the following should be noted:

- Smile-A-While Preschool has a spray control plan implemented by a licensed pest company
 - The building is treated approximately every three months starting before the school year in August
 - A separate company contracted by Trinity United Methodist Church does grounds, weeds, and fertilization in the fall and spring
- Neither grounds nor building pest management is done during the hours that children are present
 - A 48 hour time span has been set as the time between spraying and any contact with students

Therefore, if your child would be affected by these applications in any way and you wish to be notified as to when building/grounds will be treated, please contact Courtney Ende at (309)787-6353 for specific details. Thank you!

Dress Code

Spills and accidents happen frequently at preschool. Please make sure your child has at least one weather appropriate change of clothes in a ziploc bag in their cubby. We often do not have any extra clothes at school if your child does not have their own spare clothing. If your child has an accident and soils their underwear it will be discarded into the trash. If your child needs a change of clothes and does not have any available we will call and ask you bring a clean outfit.

Book Orders, Charities, & Fundraising

Opportunities will arise throughout the school year for you and your student to participate in activities in the community or home.

Book Orders are an excellent source for getting good books at a family friendly price. We also get points for every order to earn items for our classroom!

We host a St. Jude Trike-A-Thon each year which helps to teach the students empathy and understanding as well as allowing students to help those in need.

Participation in book orders, fundraisers, and charity events is optional but highly encouraged and greatly appreciated.

We have some parents ask for other things they can do to help. Donations for supplies or supplies such as paper plates, plastic cups, napkins, cleaning supplies, art supplies, etc are always welcome and greatly appreciated!

If we all do a little...we can achieve a lot.

Thanks for your help!

Personal Belongings & Show & Share

We ask that children do not bring toys and other such items from home outside of their show and share day to school as these can get lost, broken, or cause problems in the classroom. Smile-A-While Preschool is not responsible for personal belongings brought into the building .

We have Show & Share days where the children can bring an item of interest to share with the class. Please keep the items in the child's bag until it is time to share with the class. Limit show and share items to only 1 item and items that must fit in their home bag. We also welcome scheduled “live” show and share visits other than the 2 weeks before Christmas Break and 2 weeks before Graduation.

Students may bring a water bottle. Water bottles must be leak proof and sweat proof as they are in bins with paper. No sippy cups or water bottles with exposed straws (or drinking apparatuses) are allowed. Only plain, unflavored water is allowed in the water bottles (no juice or other liquids are allowed to be brought to school). Students may also keep chapstick, lotion, and sunscreen in their bins if needed.

Snack Calendar

A Snack/Show calendar will be sent home for every month. This is a treat for the children and they all enjoy having a turn and being my “helper”.

Snacks should either be fresh (such as fruit and vegetables) or pre-packaged (such as granola bars and raisins). All snacks must be store bought, be sealed, and list the ingredients (this is a requirement from the health department). All snacks must be sent in the original unopened box/container. They may be individually wrapped or a large box/boxes enough to serve the entire class. Send enough for all students and keep nutrition in mind when making snack choices. **Please save cupcakes, cookies, etc. for birthdays and class parties – if these are brought for a “regular” snack day they will be sent home.** The school will provide the afternoon snack. If there are any classroom food allergies Ms. Ende will send a note home with parents and she will ask to refrain from bringing snacks that include such ingredients.

If your child is absent on a snack helper day please bring a snack on their next day at school to replenish our classroom snack stock.

Pictures & Screenings

Preschool vision, hearing, speech, and developmental screenings will be held in the fall. This is required by DCFS and done by the Rock Island County Health Department and Black Hawk Area Special Ed Department. All results are confidential.

School Pictures are taken in March by a local photographer. Package options are given. Purchasing them is at your discretion.

More information will be coming out closer to the date of that monthly newsletter. We will also offer the option to purchase digital pictures of our graduation program in May.

Open Door Policy

We have an open door policy. Please feel free to stop in and visit anytime. The hours of 1:00-3:00 are reserved for our rest time. All visitors at Smile-A-While Preschool are under staff supervision the entire time they are at our school. Questions, suggestions, or ideas are always welcome. The health and education of your child is our first priority.

Newsletters

A newsletter will be posted in our private Facebook group and Class Dojo monthly to keep you informed of all themes, parties, days off, field trips, and other activities. If you'd prefer a printed copy please let a member of the staff know.

Please read it carefully!

In Closing

This is your school! We are so very thankful that you have entrusted your child's first school experience to us. We promise to always do our best to further the academic, physical, and social growth of your students to the best of our ability. My door is always open and I welcome your comments and help!
Thank You.....Ms. Ende

***“Learn to Count;
Learn What Counts”***

