

ST. PAUL'S PRESCHOOL

PARENT HANDBOOK



2011 – 2012 SCHOOL YEAR

Ferguson Center: 412-486-5591

McKnight Center: 412-364-6438

Website: stpaulspreschoolumc.org

Email: kidsrus@nauticom.net

Revised 7/01/2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUBJECT	PAGE NUMBER
Non-Discrimination of Services	4
Family Cultural Policy	5
Mission Statement	5
Program Philosophy and Goals	5
Relationship of Church and School	6
Curriculum	6
Separation	6
Parents	7
General Information:	
Arrival and Departure Times	8
Security System	8-9
Discipline	9
Name Tags	9
Health Rules	9-10
Medical and Dental Emergency Procedure	10-11
Child Abuse and Neglect Policy	11
Dress	11-12
Show and Tell	12
Snacks	12-13
Special Day Celebrations	13
Safe Transportation	14
School Closing	14
Child Care	15
Communication	
Newsletter	15
Notes	15
Phone Policy	15
Hall Bulletin Board	16
Sibling Policy	16
Conferences	16
Confidentiality Policy	16
St. Paul's Preschool Assessment Policy	17
Support and Evaluation Services	18-19
Financial Information	19
Refund Policy	19-20
Scholarship Information	20
State guidelines for financial assistance	20-21
Tuition Payment and Overdue Accounts Policy	21
Advisory Board	21-22

Classroom Volunteer Opportunities

Party Committee	22
Library Committee	22-23
Holiday Shop Committee	23
Equipment Committee	23
Parent Helper Committee	23
Volunteer Teachers Assistant	24
Vision Screeners	24
Field Trips	24-25
Photo Program	25
Summary	25

***This handbook may be provided in a family’s primary language, if their knowledge of English is limited.**

NONDISCRIMINATION OF SERVICES

Admissions, the provisions of services, and referrals of clients shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, or sex.

Program services shall be made accessible to eligible persons with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to, equipment redesign, the provision of aides, and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods.

Any student (and/or their guardian) who believes they have been discriminated against, may file a complaint of discrimination with:

St. Paul's Preschool
1965 Ferguson Road
Allison Park, PA 15101

Department of Public Welfare
Bureau of Equal Opportunity
Room 223, Health & Welfare Building
PO Box 2675
Harrisburg, PA 17105

PA Human Relations Commission
Eleventh Floor
300 Liberty Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

U. S. Dept of Health and Human Services
Office of Civil Rights
Suite 372, Public Ledger Bldg.
150 South Independence Mall West
Philadelphia, PA 19106-9111

Bureau of Equal Opportunity
Department of Public Welfare
Western Field Office
Room 702 Pittsburgh State Office Bldg
300 Liberty Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

FAMILY CULTURAL POLICY

St. Paul's Preschool will make every effort to meet the needs of your child physically, emotionally, intellectually, and socially within our abilities based on our staffing, ratio, and facility resources. We will work with families in making necessary plans to accommodate your child in our program.

To that end, we encourage our families to share with the staff your preferred child-rearing practices and any information you wish to share about your linguistic or cultural background.

We look forward to working with you at every stage of your child's development to ensure a warm, secure environment for your child to grow and learn.

Please let the staff know if you need any materials translated into your preferred (home) language.

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Paul's Preschool will provide a warm, loving environment in which children can learn and grow. Admissions, the provisions of services, and referrals of clients shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, or sex. We will reach out to the community to be inclusive, non-judgmental and accepting.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

We believe that all young children can benefit from a developmentally appropriate program designed to help them reach their full potential. We believe that each child is unique, special and capable of learning. St. Paul's staff strives to provide each child with skills and self-confidence they need to succeed.

St. Paul's staff functions as facilitators to accomplish the above goals. We believe that play is a child's way of discovery and learning. Children are provided with opportunities to learn through play using techniques such as floor time, parallel to group play, creative play and role play.

We believe that a developmentally appropriate program provides opportunities for children to choose educational experiences, which enhance their growth and abilities. It is the goal of St. Paul's Preschool to provide activities and materials designed to promote "hands on" learning to achieve the following goals:

1. achieve a positive separation from home
2. foster positive self concept and self understanding
3. encourage children to think, reason, question and experiment
4. develop social skills and ability to function in large and small groups
5. encourage language development
6. encourage physical development and motor skills
7. encourage sound health, safety and nutritional practices
8. encourage creative expressions and music/art appreciation
9. respect cultural diversity
10. gain understanding and appreciation of the world in which they live

11. engage in appropriate readiness activities

Parents are an integral part of our program. We believe that parents are their child's first and most important teachers. Their input and information about their child is continually sought and valued. Parents are involved in every part of the St. Paul's program.

RELATIONSHIP OF CHURCH AND SCHOOL

What better place could there be for a child to begin the love of learning than in a church setting. McKnight and St. Paul's churches provide space and support for our Preschool. We were developed as an outreach ministry for the community. Our curriculum is different from the educational programs of the churches. The churches' staff provides support for Preschool families by prayer chain support. The schools are maintained by tuition funds and have a budget separate from the church's budget. The Preschool programs pay utility fees for the use of the church building.

CURRICULUM

St. Paul's Preschool follows the Pennsylvania State Early Learning Standards as the basis of our curriculum. The teaching staff uses these standards to create a framework (scaffolding) when creating their daily lesson plans. This framework remains flexible due to the individual needs of the children. Teachers use their observations and assessments of the students to augment their teaching support. Teachers change their lesson plans and learning activities based on the skill levels of the students and their interests. The curriculum is underlying the various learning centers and units...the manner of presenting the material varies from class to class and from teacher to teacher in response to their students.

As the children gain competence and understanding of the material, the teachers create new challenges (build on the scaffolding) and present new learning opportunities for the children to use their base knowledge. Learning centers with materials to extend the concepts encourage hands on learning experiences.

SEPARATION

Let's face it—everybody wants to stay in bed some days. Sometimes being part of a group is not as much fun as staying home with mom and dad. Unexpected visitors, going out for the morning, having a relative "stay over" make it difficult for the child to want to come to school. Children have difficulty leaving exciting events at home. A day off for an important event can't hurt, but a child needs to be taught that attending school regularly is important and fun.

Here are some hints for helping children overcome this separation:

1. Sometimes prolonged discussions make the problem worse. Explain that your child will be going to school...that school is your child's "work".
2. Notify the teachers if the problem occurs frequently. Make an appointment with the director to talk over concerns.

3. Suggest that the child bring a favorite toy for Show and Tell or free play.
4. Mention a school activity that is going to be happening that day.
5. Have another parent drive to school and you pick up the children.
6. Most often children stop crying minutes after their parents leave. The teacher will call you and let you know how your child is doing.
7. Leave your keys or purse with a picture in it; children know you will be back for these.

***8. Read the story “The Kissing Hand”.**

Leave your child with a smile even if he or she is fussing. The teachers are willing and able to help the child through this stage. If your child is crying **don't linger**. Leave and call in about 15 minutes to check on him/her. Within a few days things should be back to normal. If the problem persists, **make an appointment to talk with the director**.

PARENTS

Parents are an important part of our Preschool program. We are proud that you have chosen to share your children with us. We would like you and your child to have a successful year. Teachers and families work together to help children participate successfully in preschool with respect to each family's values and practices. Teachers are always willing to schedule times to discuss strategies for blending school and home practices.

Since St. Paul's is not a cooperative preschool, we don't **require** parents to participate in the program. We do encourage you to participate as you wish and offer many opportunities for you to do so. Please see pages 21, 22 and 23 for information about our Parent Advisory Board and other committees.

We provide a parent library and have books which help to work with children on critical issues such as death, illness and divorce.

Parents are kept informed during the year with orientations, sing-a-longs, parent conferences, and family fun nights.

You may come and visit your child's class at any time during class hours. Please contact your child's teacher to set up a time.

You will receive a survey at the end of the year. Please share your comments and feelings about our program at anytime. Your feedback helps us improve our program.

A list of resources for children such as speech therapists, play therapists, and testing services are available in the Preschool office.

A Family Resource Guide is now available online and contains great information for families. It is a guide of medical, developmental, therapeutic, education, support and recreational services in

Southwestern Pennsylvania for children with medical and developmental needs. Visit the website at: <http://www.familyresourceguide.org/index.html> .

Check your center's newsletter and parenting boards for parenting tips.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Arrival and Departure Times	morning: 9:00am – 11:30am afternoon: 12:30pm – 3:00pm
2Day/2Year old classes	9:00am-11:00am (first ½ of the school year) 9:00am-11:30am (last ½ of the school year)

Welcoming Children and Families

Thank you for bringing your child into school. As children come into the room, each child is greeted by a teacher. Please deliver and pick up your child at the stated times. While we don't expect every child to arrive at the same moment, we like the children to begin the day together. Children feel "put on the spot" when entering after the class has begun. Teachers, although they arrive at least a half-hour before class time, are often busy with planning or setting up rooms. Rooms will be open for children **5 minutes before class begins.** **PLEASE DO NOT ENTER YOUR CLASSROOM WITHOUT YOUR TEACHERS.**

Please bring children inside and leave them with their teachers. We enjoy sharing information and saying hello to you. Check the door for calendar, last minute information and snack for the day. Each class will have an area displaying your child's work. Please visit this area often with your child.

At the end of each day, a staff member will give you a summary of what has happened during the day so we encourage parents to arrive at least 5 minutes before dismissal time. If you are going to be late picking your child up we ask that you please call and let the office know. Children become very worried whenever you are not there at dismissal time with all the other parents. If we know you will be running late we can tell your child that you have called to let them know you will be here shortly. If you are running later than 10 minutes after dismissal time we will take children to Child Care if they are registered. Those not registered for Child Care will be charged \$5.00 for every 15 minutes after dismissal time.

SECURITY SYSTEM

The McKnight Center locks its doors during the preschool day. Teachers will unlock the doors five minutes before class begins and ends. A staff member will lock them within 15 minutes. A staff member is always at the door to view families arriving and departing. If you want to gain access to the building at any other time, there is a doorbell at the child care door. Child care staff will open the door for you.

The Ferguson Center has a security fob system. Families need to purchase fobs for a one time fee of \$35.00. Additional fobs can be purchased for family members at \$10.00 each. To gain entry to the building the fob must be swiped across the pad at the door. When your child completes the

program, you will be issued a \$10.00 refund on all fobs purchased. Fobs work between the hours of 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE

Children want and need limits. Young children can learn how to meet their own needs while being considerate of needs of others. Helping them learn this may be our greatest and most important job. This can only occur in a well organized classroom where a trust level between teachers and children has been formed. This works best when children are in small groups.

Helping children develop self-discipline takes a great deal of time initially, but is very rewarding in every way when it starts working.

- A. Modeling Behavior: Teachers talk to children and interact with the children as a way of modeling how they should talk and interact with each other in positive ways.
- B. Alternative. Children are given a chance to cooperate in a no-lose situation. “You have to pick up, but would you like to do blocks or the cars?” “Shall we put on your jacket or boots first?” “You may put your toy on the shelf, or I’ll keep it for you.” “You may sit next to your friend as long as you both can sit quietly.”
- C. Redirection: Teachers help children turn attention to other tasks, toys or activities.
- D. Problem solving: Teacher help children decide how best to solve problems. This is reviewed at the end of the day with the children.

The better a child feels about himself, the better he will be able to see the needs of others. Teachers stress (with exact examples) good behavior. As a child learns how to behave he will make mistakes and will analyze why a mistake was made.

NAME TAGS

You will notice all staff members wear special name tags. Children are taught that people wearing these name tags are “safe people”. **All parents who are working in the school should get a name tag from the Preschool office.**

HEALTH RULES

Please see that your child has a complete physical before starting school. The state requires that all immunizations be up to date. All children must be properly immunized for their own protection. A physical exam is required by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for all children attending accredited and state licensed preschools.

To prevent spreading disease, please do not send your child to school with a fever, bad cold, cough or upset stomach. If a child becomes ill during school hours, then the child is made comfortable in a location away from other individuals and supervised by a familiar caregiver. The family will be immediately notified and asked to pick up the child as soon as possible.

If your child has a communicable disease, such as **pink eye, chicken pox, etc.**, please notify the school so that the teachers may then provide information to other families about the signs and symptoms, transmission communicability and prevention measures.

Although it is not necessary to call for short illnesses, we would appreciate a note stating why your child was absent when the child returns to school. Please notify us if the child will be out for a prolonged period of time. **Please make sure you talk with the Director about any special health problems or needs.** If a child's health needs change during the school year, please tell the teacher and write down any additional information for your child's file. We have forms to fill out if a child needs medicine while at school. This requires both a doctor's and parent's signature on the permission form.

MEDICAL AND DENTAL EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

1. An Emergency Medical Contact/Parental Consent form will be given to each child's parent or guardian to be completed before the child begins school. One will go into the child's school folder and the other will go into a class binder that will be used for emergency situations where the school needs to be evacuated or to be taken on field trips for the 4 and 5-year old classes. The final copy is placed in a binder to be taken to the gym or the playground area. **We must have these completed forms before your child's first day of class or they will not be permitted to attend.**
2. If an accident should occur at school that requires emergency medical or dental attention the following steps will be taken:
 - a. One of the classroom teachers will pull the child's Medical Emergency form from the child's folder and proceed to the hospital. The remaining class teacher will inform the director immediately of the situation. An ambulance will be called if the child cannot be removed and taken to the closest medical facility, UPMC Passavant Hospital, unless the driver feels it is necessary to go to a trauma center.
 - b. Another member of the staff will pull the child's Permanent Record from the child's file and will begin to call the child's home number, then parent/guardian's work number and will then proceed to the three emergency names and numbers given on the form. The staff member will continue to call all numbers until someone is reached.
 - c. The staff member will inform the parent or emergency person as to what happened and where the child has been taken and who has accompanied the child to the hospital.
 - d. At the end of the session, the teacher who remained behind will fill out an accident form and leave it with the director. and a copy will be placed in the child's folder. A copy will be sent to the Pennsylvania DPW department.

In cases of minor accidents which don't require emergency procedures the following steps will be taken:

- a. A member of the class teaching staff will bring the child to the preschool office to administer the necessary first aid and inform the director of the situation.
- b. If it is felt the accident warrants, a call will be made to the parents to let them know what has happened. If no call is needed, the parent is to be notified immediately upon arrival of picking the child up that an accident involving their child has taken place and inform the parent of what happened. A copy of the accident report will be given to the parent.

The accident form will be given to the director to be filed and entered into the injury tracking log. A copy will be placed in the child's folder.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICY

St. Paul's Preschool is a mandated child abuse reporter. We are required by law to report suspected child abuse. The reporting procedure is:

- All observations and/or suspicions of child abuse or neglect will be immediately reported to the child protective services agency no matter where the abuse might have occurred.
- The preschool director will call Childline/1-800-932-0313 to report suspected abuse or neglect.
- The preschool director will follow the direction of the child protective services agency regarding the completion of written reports.
- If the parent or legal guardian of the child is suspected of abuse, the preschool director will follow the guidance of the child protective agency regarding notification of the parent or legal guardian. Reporters of suspected child abuse will not be discharged for making the report unless it is proven that a false report was knowingly made.
- Staff who are alleged perpetrators of child abuse may be suspended or given leave pending completion of an investigation.
- Parents/legal guardians of other children in the program will be contacted by the preschool director so they may share any concerns they have had.
- It is important to note that no accusation or affirmation of guilt will be made until the investigation is complete. Caregivers found guilty of child abuse will be summarily dismissed or relieved of their duties.

DRESS

Your preschool is a busy place with a variety of activities each day. Children learn best when they are totally involved in a learning experience. Our art experiences include painting, finger painting, use of markers, paste, scissors, play dough and sand and water play. Needless to say, we sometimes get messy. While we do protect the children with smocks and use "washable" paint and markers, paint still seems to escape and get on clothes. Please send an extra set of clothes in your child's book bag in case of any accident. Preschool has extra clothes but children are more comfortable in their own. Since we also do a lot of physical activity and large motor play, we

suggest comfortable, sturdy **clothing and tennis shoes.** Dress shoes slip when climbing and running. Please DO NOT allow your child to wear flip flops. They can be dangerous on large motor equipment.

As the weather begins to change, please send sweaters and sweatshirts to keep children warm on chilly days. Classes will go outside often so dress your child accordingly. The playground has both sunny and shady areas. Sunscreen should be applied to your child before coming to school.

Please label sweaters, coats, boots, and mittens. They all look alike at dismissal time.

SHOW AND TELL

One of our most important tasks in preschool is to work on language development. Show and Tell allows the children to bring something from home to share with the other children.

Children work in small groups for this activity. They learn to listen to one another. Each child has a turn to talk about what he/she brings. Sometimes we will ask children to bring in an object that may be used in the unit they are studying. This will be mentioned in your class newsletter. You will be told when your child's Show and Tell day is during your orientation meeting.

If your child is bringing a live show and tell please notify your child's teaching team ahead of time. **Guns or toys which depict violence are not permitted.**

SNACKS

All foods and beverages brought from home should be labeled with the child's name, class color and date. If any snack needs to be refrigerated there is a refrigerator in each center's kitchen.

Snack time is a time for nutritional snacks and fellowship. Children are assigned a snack time during the year. During your snack week you will provide **drinks, snacks, cups and napkins for that time.** You will receive a sheet with your assigned time for bringing snacks. During this week, children will pass them out. It is even more special if they help to make the snack. We thank God for food and the opportunity to be together before eating. You will receive a sheet to write snacks and drinks for the week. This will be posted at your classroom door. Please indicate your child's special day on that sheet.

Some nutritious suggestions for treats are:

cheese cubes
jello in a cup
fresh fruit
home-made cookies

celery and carrot sticks
pudding in a cup
granola
breads

fruit juice popsicles
pretzel rods

graham crackers

Children younger than 4 may not be served the following foods: hot dogs, either whole or sliced into rounds, whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, spoonfuls of peanut butter, large pieces of carrots that cannot be safely swallowed whole, whole and large hard pretzels.

Children with severe food allergies will be constantly monitored by their classroom teachers and their parents. Teachers and administrators will meet with parents at the beginning of the school year to review what needs the child has as a result of food allergies. Food allergies will be clearly posted in the snack room. Parents of children with food allergies will check snacks each day. Children will receive the day's snack only if the parent signs the snack permission form. The child's classroom teachers will be the only adults allowed to distribute the snacks. Accommodations to your child's allergies will be dealt with on an individual basis and considered as needed to maintain a safe classroom environment. If your child has a severe food allergy, please call the preschool office to set up a time to meet with the administration to discuss your child's needs.

Water, juice and milk are all good drinks. **ABSOLUTELY NO CARBONATED DRINKS, PLEASE.** If carbonated drinks are sent in, they will not be served. Please send in at least 6 oz. cups. We don't fill them, but smaller cups spill too easily.

Mark the bag and drink with your child's name and class color and take it to the kitchen.

SPECIAL DAY CELEBRATIONS

You may choose one day in your snack week to celebrate your child's birthday. This is his/her special day. This is a good day for the special treat. **Please remember snacks should be of a nutritious nature.** An attempt is made to coordinate the child's treat week with his/her birthday. This is not always possible (since most children seem to be born in December or June!) Therefore, you may choose a day during your child's week to celebrate his/her special day. Please let the teachers know **AT THE BEGINNING OF THE WEEK** which day will be your child's "special day." Many parents have been kind to us and donated a favorite book or toy to the school in honor of their child's birthday.

SAFE TRANSPORTATION

We would be happy to supply you with class lists for the purpose of setting up a carpool. It often helps a child feel more comfortable if he can come into school with a group of children. For your child's safety please give your teacher a list of all children in your car pool. **We will not release a child to anyone other than the person you have authorized.**

If a problem should occur and you will be late, please call the school to make arrangements for the care of your child.

If someone other than you or your carpool partner is to pick up your child, we **must** have that information in writing. Please describe the person who will be picking up your child. When that person arrives at Preschool they must present a photo ID and will sign a form before they can leave with the child.

SCHOOL CLOSING AND DELAYS

In case of school closings or delays, local television stations (KDKA, WPXI and WTAE) will be notified and the preschool's answering machine message will be changed to reflect these changes. These changes will also be noted on the television stations' web sites. **If three out of the following districts** are closed or delayed, St. Paul's Preschool will be closed or delayed. These school districts are Hampton, North Allegheny, North Hills and Shaler.

If three out of four of the districts are delayed we will use this delay schedule for classes:

Morning Classes - 10:00am – noon
Afternoon Classes - 1:00pm – 3:00pm

School closings and delays are placed on the phone answering system at the Ferguson Road Center office and can be listened to starting at 7:30 a.m. The phone number is **412-486-5591**.

If your class meets 3 or more times a week and it has been canceled **more than 2 sessions** during the year, make up days will be scheduled. If your class meets 2 times a week, missed classes will be rescheduled after 1 cancellation.

CHILD CARE

There is a drop-in child care service at the Ferguson Road Center. This is a separate service from the preschool. Your child must be registered with the child care to use the facility. You should contact the Child Care Center at 412-486-4595 for more information.

At the McKnight Center, drop in child care is also available. The hours are 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday – Friday. Contact 412-364-6438 for more information.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

COMMUNICATIONS

NEWSLETTER:

You will receive a monthly letter and calendar from your children's teachers telling you about coming activities. **This is written after the teachers have their planning meeting. It will not be the first day of each month.** Please keep this handy as it will contain a list of special events. If your child is absent, the newsletter will be mailed to you. We will work with families who need the communication from the school translated into their preferred language. Please contact the director for assistance.

NOTES:

Please check the child's school bag and mailbox **each day** for notes. A calendar of events will be posted outside your child's classroom door. This helps us to keep you informed. Outside each classroom area is an envelope for notes to the teachers.

If you have any comments or concerns, please contact your classroom teachers first. If the issue cannot be resolved, please contact the director.

Please feel free to call if you have any questions. Our answering machine will take calls from 4 P.M. to 8 A.M. They will be returned promptly each morning. Our main office number is 412-486-5591.

The McKnight Center number is – 412-364-6438

PHONE POLICY – HOW TO CONTACT YOUR CENTER:

McKnight Center (412-364-6438) – If you are unable to reach one of the staff members you may leave a message on the McKnight preschool's answering machine. It is checked regularly.

Ferguson Road Center (412-486-5591) – If you are unable to reach one of the staff you may leave a message on the answering machine. (In the case of an **emergency** please call the church office at 412-486-7006 and someone there will reach a staff member or will take a message).

HALL BULLETIN BOARD

Please check the hall bulletin board each time you come into school. This will have up to date information and schedule changes. If you are in a carpool let, other parents know of new information on the board. There is also a bulletin board with tips on parenting. Please drop off parenting tips and articles you would like to share in the preschool office. No items can be posted without office approval. There will be an envelope and paper and pencil to receive written comments, concerns and information for teachers outside each classroom door.

SIBLING POLICY:

Our preschool is dedicated to serving the family while working with your individual child. Activities for the whole family include Sing-A-Longs and Family Fun Nights.

Several times a year there are activities only for the parents and their preschool child. These are field trips, parties, and the end of the year picnic. These are limited because of size and the activities and interaction of child and parent.

CONFERENCES

There are several types of Preschool conferences:

1. **Informal** – Any time a problem arises, call your teacher. Teachers can be called at home. Their numbers are in your preschool directory.
2. **Scheduled** – There will be two conferences scheduled for you during the year. During the first conference, children's individual screening results and assessment information will be shown and explained to parents in order to mutually set goals. The second conference will be a review of those goals and results of additional assessment.

Individual children's records are kept in a locked cabinet in the office. The children's family, classroom teachers, office manager and the director are the only individuals to have access to these records.

Students' assessments and screening results are kept in their files and are only viewed by the staff and parents when being interpreted for goal setting purposes. **Parents must complete forms for the release of these records and assessment results to any other party, including school districts, consultants or therapists.**

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY FOR ST. PAUL'S PRESCHOOL

Individuals with access to the children's records:

- parents...at all times
- teachers of the current school year only
- preschool director...at all times
- office manager

The **teachers of the current school year** have access to the records because they are adding information to these records and are using the assessment information in the records to help in their evaluations of the children's progress and to write individualized educational plans based on these evaluations.

The **director** has access, as the administrator who needs to make sure the records are correct and include all information required by the state and by NAEYC accreditation criteria. When called in for conferences with parents, the director may also need to review the child's progress and evaluations to be able to participate fully in the process.

The **office manager** has access to the files in order to put forms into the files as they are received in the mail or hand delivered to the office. The office manager also routinely checks the files to make sure the medical and emergency release forms are up to date and will often update phone numbers, etc. as requested by parents.

1. Parents have the right to review their child's files at any time. They have access at all times.
2. Children's files are kept in locked file cabinets in the preschool office. The only people who may open the locked files are the preschool director, the teachers of the current school year, and the office manager under the eyes of the parents who request access to the files.
3. Parents need to sign and date a third party release form before records can be reviewed by anyone other than the person listed in #1. This includes school districts, therapists, and agencies working with the children and the families.

ST. PAUL'S PRESCHOOL ASSESSMENT POLICY

Assessment...the use of a comprehensive evaluation system to determine the quality of a program or the progress of a child.

Assessment of individual children:

1. Should always reflect as much information about the child as possible.
2. The purpose should be clear
3. The technique should be appropriate for children of a given age.
4. Should be embedded within the child's normal day as much as possible.
5. Should reflect the child's previous experiences and cultural background.
6. Effective assessment of a child should be ongoing.
7. Both the information from individual evaluation procedures and the cumulative information gleaned through an assessment program should be used to plan for more effective learning experiences for the children.

Techniques for assessment:

1. Anecdotal records
2. Checklists and rating scales
3. Time/activity samples (if needed for behavioral observations)
4. Samples of children's work (portfolios for the parents)
5. Detailed conference forms

SUPPORT AND EVALUATION SERVICES

St. Paul's has a special education consultant on staff who is available for classroom observation and consulting with families on child development issues. If you would like to use her services, please contact your child's teacher or the office. If you feel your child may be delayed, either in speech or with development, the following services are available to you.

Please note, St. Paul's does not endorse or recommend any specific agency. They are provided for our families' information only and the school does not take any responsibility for advice or suggested programming done by any of the agencies listed below.

These materials can be provided in the family's primary language, if their knowledge of English is limited.

DART - Call 412-394-5904 to arrange a **free** screening/evaluation. Once your child is eligible for Early Intervention Services, you will most likely have more questions regarding the program. For these as well as questions regarding your child's IEP, talk to a DART Special Education Supervisor. If you don't know who your child's Special Education Supervisor is, call 412-394-5736.

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL – a thorough evaluation for a variety of delays and issues.
General Information – 412-692-5325
To schedule an appointment, call 412-692-5560.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES

(This is a list of the ones of which we are aware of in the local area. These programs may be able to give you additional information. Again this is provided for your information only and St. Paul's does not endorse or recommend any specific agency.)

NORTH HILLS OUTREACH CENTER – Assistance with housing issues, food and nutrition, financial planning, referrals for medical services. 412-487-6316

NORTH HILLS YOUTH MINISTRY –Counseling services, parenting programs, referrals to the appropriate agencies for community resources for children and families. 412-366-1300

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND BEHAVIORAL SERVICES – EARLY INTERVENTION

NORTH HILLS PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATES

4068 Alpha Building – corner of Mount Royal and Duncan Ave 412-492-0644

ALLEGHENY INTERMEDIATE UNIT – (ask for behavioral evaluation) 412-394-5700

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL 412-692-5325

THE WATSON INSTITUTE 412-741-1800

EASTER SEALS – special needs, workshops on disability awareness
412-281-7244

SCHOOL DISTRICTS – Call your local school district. Many times they can suggest appropriate agencies. The preschool office has information on local school districts.

If you have a need, please contact either your classroom teacher or the director and we will try to find more information for you.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Tuition – Tuition shall be paid in any of the following schedules: (These payments are based on the annual tuition and not on the number of classes in any given month.)

1. One payment – Those paying the total tuition by June 15th .
2. Trimester – Three payments payable on June 15th , September 30th , and January 31st .
3. Nine payment plan – Nine payments beginning June 15th and running through February 28th .

REGISTRATION – THIS IS A YEARLY PROCESSING FEE. This fee is **NON-REFUNDABLE** and is not pro-rated if a child registers late. There is a discount on the registration fee for members of St. Paul's United Methodist and McKnight United Methodist Churches and St. Paul's Preschool Advisory Board Members

REFUND POLICY – The following refund policy was adopted by the Preschool Advisory Board.

- A. **Two (2) months tuition is NON-REFUNDABLE after August 1st.**
This policy was established for two reasons;
 - a. It usually takes a student, whether new or returning, at least two months to become acclimated to the school setting. We feel that if the child is not given a two month chance to settle in, it is unfair not only to the student, but also to the teaching staff who work so hard at separation issues.
 - b. Waiting lists are usually diminished or non existent in August
And we may be unable to fill a vacant spot.
- B. **After August 1st , two months tuition will be non-refundable, and a written request must be submitted to the preschool office stating the reason for the refund request.** Preschool administration will review the request and determine what amount, if any, may be refunded.

C. No refund requests will be accepted after February 1st.

THIS REFUND POLICY MEETS OR EXCEEDS ALL REGULATIONS MANDATED BY THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA.

SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION

St. Paul's has a scholarship program available. The Preschool Advisory Board has various fund raising projects during the year to fund the scholarship program. **No tuition dollars are used for scholarships.** Donations from church members and Preschool parents are welcome. It is our goal that no child should have to drop out of school for financial reasons. To secure scholarship applications call the Preschool office at 412-486-5591. All information is strictly confidential. The Federal Government guidelines for family to receive discounted or free lunches is one way we determine eligibility for scholarship. Other considerations are also taken into account. Scholarships will not be granted for the following classes: 2day/2 year old classes, Literary Day, and Lunch Bunch.

County Assistance office (CAO) Department of Public Welfare

The Department of Public Welfare (DPW) helps parents pay for child care. DPW manages the subsidized child care program for low-income working families and families receiving cash assistance. The subsidy fund help eligible parents pay for their child care cost. **For more information, call the Child Care Works helpline at 1-877-4-PA-KIDS or visit: Child Care Works.**

CCIS

CCIS agencies offer information to all parents on selecting child care which meets their family's needs, as well as helping parents pay for child care.

Allegheny County – City

Phone number – 412-255-1281 or Toll-free phone number – 1-800-392-3131

Allegheny County – Northeast

Phone number – 412-246-4540 or Toll-free number phone number – 1-800-392-3131

Allegheny County – South

Phone number – 412-349-0303 or Toll-free phone number – 1-800-392-3131

The preschool office has a list of zip codes served by each area.

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

A federal tax benefit for families or individuals working full or part time and earning a low to moderate wage

Questions on Tax forms OR eligibility? Contact the IRS at 1-800-829-1040 or visit www.irs.gov (search Earned Income Tax Credit)

Pennsylvania Tax Back/Tax Forgiveness

Working families may get back some or all of their state income tax back using the state's Tax Forgiveness program.

You must file a PA-40 Personal Income Tax return and complete PA Schedule SP

A state tax benefit for low to moderate income workers – please check the website or call the PA Department of Revenue.

Contact the PA Department of Revenue with questions at 1-800-362-2050 or www.revenue.state.pa.us.

CHIP – PA's Children Health Insurance Program

If your child(ren) need health insurance, CHIP is worth looking into. CHIP covers everything from regular checkups, immunizations and well-baby visits to emergency care, prescriptions, and dental – just to name a few. Call 1-800-986-KIDS or visit www.state.pa.us, PA Keyword: CHIP

TUITION PAYMENT AND OVERDUE ACCOUNTS POLICY

1. All first payments are due **no later than June 15th**
2. Subsequent payments must be received no later than the last day of the month in which they are due. **Students may not be Permitted to attend class if payments are more than 15 days Past due.**
3. Payments must be current by the first day of school for the child to begin class.
4. **Accounts must be paid in full by March 15th** or the child will not be permitted to attend class until the account is paid in full. If there is a balance due after March 15th, registration fees for the following school year along with the student's reserved class spot will be forfeited.
5. Any account with a balance due at the end of the school year must be paid in full before the child or siblings can attend preschool the following year.

THE PARENT ADVISORY BOARD

Parents are an important part of our Preschool program. The Parent Advisory Board is the parent support group for the Preschool and the teachers. Any parent without regard to race, color,

religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency) age or sex is encouraged and welcomed on the Parent Advisory Board.

The Parent Advisory Board oversees the coordination of fundraisers. The Board works together with the school and teachers to promote quality education for our children. You have an opportunity to see other ways you can contribute to the program.

All fundraisers must directly benefit the children. You will not be asked to sell candy bars, pizzas, pie or fruit. During the month of December we hold our largest fundraiser of the year, Sundaes With Santa. Monies from this and other fundraisers will go to the scholarship fund and the school's general fund.

Meetings are held throughout the school year. You will receive a list of dates and times.

The Board appreciates and welcomes the help of all parents. Please consider giving a little bit of your time and skills to help our children's preschool.

CLASSROOM VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Party Committee (For 3, 4, and 5 year old classes)

This committee plans and directs all activities, decorations and food for parties, except in the 2day/2year old class where the teachers will run the parties. The teaching staff will be available to assist parents as needed. Any needed art materials can be taken from the preschool's supply. A party chairperson is needed from each class as well as helpers. In the 3 year old classes, the party committee will organize and run the Christmas and Easter parties. In the 4 year old classes, the party committee will organize and run the Christmas, Valentine and Easter parties. In the 5 year old classes, the party committee will run the Halloween, Christmas and Easter parties. **NO SIBLINGS ARE PERMITTED AT PARTIES.** Please notify child care in advance if you need it for siblings.

The chairperson will meet with the Director to discuss the school party policies and procedures. The chairpersons will coordinate and chair the party committee planning meetings. They will schedule the workers for each party.

The helpers will plan and implement activities for the parties and help out at the party.

No money is to be collected from parents without notifying the school office.

Library Committee (For 3, 4, and 5 year old classes)

Parents are needed to check in books being returned by the children, organize and maintain the library. This will be scheduled by the teachers beginning in October.

Library

Our library program supports many pre-reading activities. We again appreciate your support of this very important program for preschoolers. Ways to augment our program are:

1. Help on the library committee
2. Buy your child's favorite book and donate it to the preschool in his/her honor
3. Donate to the library fund
4. Check the teacher's wish list and buy a book wanted for the classroom

Interest in books and pre-reading skills are achieved in the following ways:

- Most important** –
1. Reading stories to children
 2. Having books available for children to read and enjoy with friends
 3. Providing library time where children bring books home to share with their families. It is helpful to have a special place to keep school library books where they are safe from younger siblings

Holiday Shop Committee (For 3, 4, and 5 year old classes)

Several years ago, we were asked by parents to have a holiday shop for the children. This sale is organized and run by parents. Each family, who wishes to participate, is asked to donate six items. The children can then buy these items for Christmas and Holiday presents for members of their family. The items are wrapped at school. The children can join in on having surprise presents for the family. Proceeds go directly back into the school in the form of large equipment and learning tools. This is a wonderful way to experience Christmas through the eyes of a child.

Classroom chairperson is responsible for collecting class gifts, pricing and setting up of tables along with the other classroom chairpersons.

Helpers will assist in escorting children to shopping area, help them to select the presents and wrap them.

Equipment and Repair Committee

If building is your hobby, please help us to build and repair equipment.

Parents who can sew or knit are needed to make doll clothes, and smocks for painting and dress up clothes.

Parent Helper Committee

Parent helpers work in the classroom assisting with art, cooking projects, and other activities. The parent helps the teacher directly. You will be contacted in advance by the chairperson when help is needed.

Volunteer Teachers Assistant

We ask volunteers to work in the classroom when a Teacher Assistant is absent. **This is a volunteer job.** There will be a training session with the director.

Vision Screeners

This is one of the most important committees that is offered at St. Paul's. Volunteers attend two training sessions offered by the Pittsburgh Blind Association on how to screen. They then help screen the children for possible vision problems. Within the past three years, over 30 children were referred for professional evaluation and treatment of a vision deficiency!

FIELD TRIPS

The four and five year old classes will each have several field trips. You will be asked to drop off and pick up your child at the field trip site. If you are unable to transport your child to the field trip location, please contact your teacher so other arrangements can be made. Teachers always have cell phones with them on trips as well as first aid supplies and emergency forms with contact numbers. If there is an emergency during the trip, parents will be notified and emergency vehicles will be called if necessary.

We have planned several field trips this year at off site locations for our 4 and 5 year old classes. Due to stringent Pennsylvania guidelines about car seats, we have adopted the following field trip policy.

1. There will be a sign up sheet posted outside your classroom door for parent helpers. Parent helpers will assist the teachers as extra hands on the field trip. There will only be a certain number of parent helper slots available per field trip. Please sign up **only** once so that other parents have an opportunity to help. Be aware that **NO SIBLINGS** are allowed to attend field trips, so you may **NOT** bring siblings if you stay as a parent helper.
2. Parents not acting as Parent Helpers will drive their children to the field trip site and drop them off. The teachers will be there waiting for the children. Maps will always be provided. You will also be responsible for picking your child up at the field trip site when the class is over.
3. If you are unable to provide transportation or find another classroom parent to transport your child, please see your classroom teacher to make arrangements. All children will be able to attend all field trips.
4. Please call the school if your child will not be attending the field trip. The teachers will be waiting for him/her and the field trip can be held up if they think your child is coming.

We are sure our field trips will be an exciting learning experience for the children and we appreciate your help in making our policy work.

PHOTO PROGRAM

One of the teaching techniques we use to help children structure their thinking, learn sequences of events and remember what they have learned is the use of photographs. We take pictures of rooms they will use during the day. We also take pictures of them working, going on field trips, attending parties, playing and sharing with their friends. They recall sharing an activity with a friend and see themselves as part of all that is happening.

As a parent you can enjoy the pictures and talk over what was happening with your child. You can help us with the program in the following ways:

1. Share duplicate copies of pictures you take of school activities.
2. Make a contribution to the film budget
3. Donate photo print paper or ink

SUMMARY

Preschool should delight and excite children and increase their interest in learning. We appreciate you choosing St. Paul's Preschool for your child. We welcome your comments. If you have a concern you should:

1. Contact your teacher and relay the concern to her.
2. If you are not satisfied with the response you can contact the Director, Laurel Webster at 412-486-5591.
3. If you are still not satisfied with the response, you can contact the minister at St. Paul's United Methodist Church at 412-486-7006.

Or you may contact NAEYC AT 1-800-424-2460.