



# Early Childhood Education Program Overview

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We offer children from fifteen months to five years a range of preschool programs designed to make the most of each child's natural desire to learn. As part of the Family Center, our Early Childhood Education Program offers families many opportunities to participate in their child's education, both in and out of the classroom. We encourage you to apply for the 2018-2019 school year now. The initial application deadline for currently enrolled children and siblings is February 16, 2018. Families who are interested in newly enrolling a child also are invited to apply now. See the back cover for application process information. Please call the Family Center at 854-6900 with questions, visit [www.claytonschoools.net](http://www.claytonschoools.net), or make an appointment to observe our classrooms in action and learn about our curriculum.

## **How Our Early Childhood Classes Are Organized**

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The Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program offers the weekly options shown below. All of our classrooms include two early childhood educators. To serve the needs of all children, in some of our classrooms, an early childhood special education educator is part of the teaching team. Families and university practicum students often work in the classrooms as well. Class size increases with each age group. Classes may be reorganized around enrollment preferences of families.

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### **On Gay Avenue Campus**

Two-morning class: Children must be 15 months and not yet 28 months by 7/31/18.

Tuesday/Thursday 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Three-morning class: Children must be at least 24 months and not yet 36 months by 7/31/18.

Monday/Wednesday/Friday 9:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Four-morning class: Children must be 36 months by 7/31/18.

Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**Optional** second semester Tuesday/Thursday extended days to 1:30 p.m.

Five full school day class: Children must be 36 months by 7/31/18.

Monday - Friday 8:45 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.

### **On Clayton High School Campus**

Five-morning, two-extended day class: Children must be 36 months by 7/31/18.

Monday/Wednesday/Friday 8:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Tuesday/Thursday 8:45 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

**Optional** Extended Tuesday/Thursday until 3:15 is available for this class.

**Kid Zone** – This before and after school program is available on the Gay Ave. campus only.

Separate registration is required.

Morning: 7:30-8:45/9:00 a.m. for all classes

Afternoon: 3:15-5:30 p.m. for five full day classes

## **Program Curriculum**

Our play-based and integrated curriculum is influenced by Missouri Early Learning Standards, the National Association for the Education of Young Children and current child development theory. We are inspired by the innovative public preschool system of Reggio Emilia, Italy, that emphasizes respect for each child and the child's ability to influence his or her own learning. Children's prior experiences, backgrounds and early theories are starting points for this inquiry-based education.

We believe young children learn to make sense of their world through play, exploration, inquiry, collaboration and interaction with others including peers, teachers, families and their environment. When given the time and space for play, children practice regulating their emotions and further develop their social and cognitive skills while gaining self-confidence to engage in new experiences. We invite children to explore and solve problems independently or in small groups where cooperation, collaboration and disagreements intermix through an environment that is rich with possibilities and provocations.

We believe in reciprocal learning relationships among children, teachers and families. We value all children's capabilities and intelligence, teachers as researchers, and families as their child's first teachers. We are a community of learners. Children, teachers and families work together to create trust and connections with others and the environment that surrounds them.

Our Family Center teachers work closely with Clayton kindergarten teachers and other district colleagues. These relationships support children's transition from pre-kindergarten to kindergarten, ongoing curricular development and teacher professional learning.

## **Daily Experiences**

Through daily play, children learn and practice the social-emotional and problem-solving skills they will use throughout their lives. Children eat snack, make plans for their day during morning meeting, listen to stories, play in the classroom, and explore outdoor spaces, including our playgrounds, local parks and nature areas. We offer opportunities to explore block construction, dramatic play, drawing and writing, as well as music and movement, and science and nature exploration. Children take responsibility for caring for their classroom and their friends.

Teachers carefully listen to and observe children. Children's current understandings and ideas are shared with families through a daily journal or class blog and the classroom webpage. This process supports children as they revisit and reflect on their experiences. It also makes the children's learning visible to families.

Children in the extended day classes and the five full school day classes have additional time to explore, play and eat lunch. Afternoon rest is also part of the daily routine in full day classes.

## **Gay Avenue and Clayton High School Campuses**

We offer early childhood classes with the same curriculum framework at two locations in our community: the Gay Avenue campus and the Clayton High School (CHS) campus.

The CHS campus includes two classrooms for children three to five years of age and additional outdoor space, including access to the nearby Shaw Park and playground. We value our connections to the high school faculty, students and activities on this campus. We also use the gym and swimming pool at the Center of Clayton.

On the Gay Avenue campus, children enjoy cooking in the kitchen, growing vegetables and herbs in the gardens and exploring our nature trail and surrounding grounds. This campus includes classrooms for children fifteen months to kindergarten entry.

## **Family Involvement**

Involvement by family members is a vital component of our program. At school, parents, grandparents, caregivers or other significant adults and teachers often work together in small group experiences such as moving to music, working with clay or accompanying children on walks on the nature trail. Each family is required to send an adult several times each semester to work alongside the teachers with the children in the two- and three-morning classrooms. Parents are encouraged to work inside or outside the classroom in the classes for children three to five years of age. Parents may organize events, serve on committees, collect materials, or undertake other responsibilities of their choice. Whatever form it takes, parents are encouraged to share their many talents, as family involvement benefits everyone: it familiarizes parents with the program; it increases resources available to children; and, it demonstrates to children that their families care about their education.

Parenting education is another crucial component of our early childhood program. Families enroll in our Parents as Teachers (PAT) program and participate in personal visits with a PAT educator. We encourage participation in our Family Center parenting workshops and family events.

## Enrollment Requirements

Children must be within the age parameters designated for each class (see front page.) Age ranges coincide with the State of Missouri's kindergarten entrance dates.

## Parenting Education and Residency Requirements

The District is committed to a PK program that reflects the diversity of our community and includes the following:

1. School District Resident Families: reside in the School District of Clayton.
2. Voluntary Transfer Program Families with children in Clayton's K-12 program (are charged the same rate as School District residents).
3. Families of School District Employees: parent(s) employed full time by the School District of Clayton and who have received Board Grant approval (are charged the same rate as School District residents).
4. Non-resident families.

## Application Process

Families with **currently enrolled children** and **siblings** are asked to meet the initial application deadline by returning the application form to the office by **February 16, 2018**. An **enrollment deposit** is required with this application. The deposit is 1/9 of the total tuition. If we cannot accommodate your first choice and you do not accept placement in your second choice the deposit will be returned. **Otherwise it is nonrefundable.** Class placement will be determined prior to **March 7, 2018** when we then begin accepting new families.

- Children who are currently enrolled in any of the 2017-2018 ECE classes are given first priority. Siblings are given second priority.
- Families who are interested in **newly enrolling a child** into an ECE program are invited to apply as well. New resident applicants are given third priority, and will be informed of the status of their application (enrolled or wait-listed) beginning **March 7, 2018**. New non-resident applicants will be informed beginning **March 27, 2018**. Non-refundable deposits will be due upon acceptance of class space.
- If your child has special education needs (IEP, First Steps enrollment), please address questions to Jean Das, Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator.

## Financial Assistance

We strive to make our programs available to all interested families. If you are in need of financial assistance to meet the cost of the ECE programs, we have these possible options available: PTO Scholarship grant for residents only (see number 1 and 2 above) and individualized payment plans. Please address your questions to either Bridget Hihn, administrative assistant, or Debbie Reilly, Director, at 854-6900.

| <b>Tuition for 2018-2019</b>  |   |
|---|---|
| <b>R = Resident, NR = Non-Resident</b>  |   |
| <b>3 – 5 Year Old Classes</b>   |   |
| Four-morning  | R \$4473 NR \$4927  |
| <u>Optional second sem. T/TH until 1:30</u>   | R \$515 NR \$569 <u>(one time payment – non-refundable)</u>   |
| Five-morning (T/TH until 1:30)  | R \$6910 NR \$7602  |
| <u>Optional extended T/TH until 3:15</u>  | R \$1532 NR \$1686 <u>(one time payment – non-refundable)</u> |
| Five Full School Day  | R \$10139 NR \$11152  |
| <b>15 – 35 Month Old Classes</b>  |   |
| Two-morning   | R \$2296 NR \$2637  |
| Three-morning   | R \$3410 NR \$3918  |
| Initial deposit due upon acceptance.<br>First trimester payment due August 15, 2018.<br>Second trimester payment due November 1, 2018.<br>Third trimester payment due February 1, 2019. |   |
| <b>Separate registration and fees required for Kid Zone.</b>  |   |

Running of classes is subject to minimal enrollment. Families will be kept informed of enrollment status.