

**THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF CLAYTON**



**THE FAMILY  
CENTER**

**Family Handbook  
2019-2020**

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CENTER

**Welcome**

Along with the Family Center staff, I welcome you to a new school year! This year may be your child's first year in our early childhood program or it may be a continuation of your experiences at the Family Center, including Parents as Teachers, our parenting workshops, early childhood classes, and Stay, Play and Learn. We are excited about your participation in our program(s) and look forward to a terrific year of learning.

This handbook contains important information about our school. Please review our policies, guidelines, beliefs, and values. It is our hope that this handbook encourages a strong home-school connection for the school year. You may also access this information on the Family Center website, <http://www.claytonschools.net/Domain/784>. Click on the parents drop-down menu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debbie Reilly". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Debbie Reilly  
Director

## **District Connections and School Offerings**

The Family Center is the early childhood and family resource component for the School District of Clayton. We opened our doors in 1975 out of a commitment to support the growth, development and well being of parents and children in our community. This public school program model of parenting and early childhood education has inspired many similar programs in the St. Louis area and throughout the country.

Families participate in an array of programs offered.

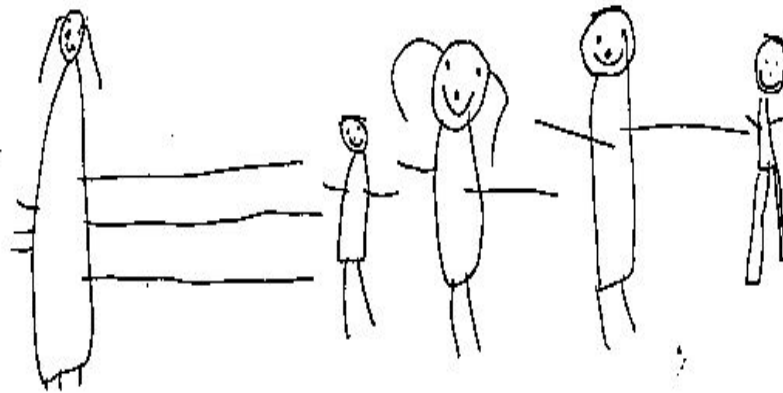
- **Early Childhood Education:** We offer a full early childhood preschool program for children 15 months through kindergarten entry.
- **Parenting Workshops:** We offer workshops for parents of children 0-18 years of age, on a range of topics from toddler tantrums to the tricky teen years. We read and discuss topics of interest, frequently based on books from our extensive parenting library.
- **Parent Coaching:** We offer short-term parent coaching for families who could use a neutral, compassionate ear and some fresh parenting strategies.
- **Parents as Teachers:** This is a free program for parents and children prenatal through kindergarten entry. A parent educator will visit you in your home or at the Family Center to discuss parenting questions, offer community resources and share developmental information to prepare you for upcoming milestones. PAT also offers annual developmental screening and fun family events.
- **Stay, Play and Learn:** This playtime for parents, grandparents, caregivers and children ages birth to kindergarten entry meets in our open and airy playroom full of places to climb, draw, pretend, paint, build with blocks, make friends and much more!
- **Early Childhood Special Education:** The School District of Clayton provides free and appropriate education to children identified as eligible according to the MO state education plan.

The Clayton School District is a PK-grade 12 school district. Our early childhood curriculum is linked to the District elementary curriculum. Family Center staff members serve on District curriculum, professional development and leadership committees.

## Accessing the School's Website

To access the Family Center website:

- Open an internet browser and go to [www.claytonschools.net](http://www.claytonschools.net).
- At the top of the page, click on **Our Schools**.
- A list of the schools will drop down; click on **Family Center**.
- You are now on the Family Center website and can find information about parenting workshops, PTO news, Stay, Play and Learn schedules, and Family Center events.



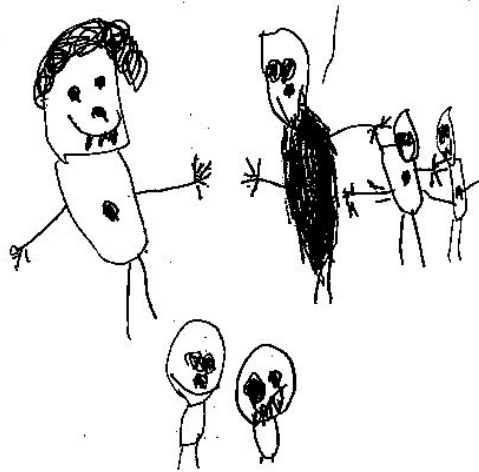
## Family Center Contact Information

[www.claytonschools.net/FamilyCenter](http://www.claytonschools.net/FamilyCenter)

Hours: Monday-Friday      7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Family Center front desk      314-854-6900

Kid Zone office      314-854-6910



## School Year Calendar 2019-2020

Tuesday, August 13	Stay, Play & Learn begins and Early Childhood Education visit day (Two-, Four-, Five-Morning and Five Full Day classes)
Wednesday, August 14	Three-Morning early childhood education classes visit day
Friday, August 30	No School - Professional Development Day for Staff (Center closed)
Monday, September 2	Labor Day (Center closed)
Thursday, September 5	Family Center Parent Night Open House 7:00 p.m.
Friday, September 13	Early Release at 12:00 p.m. - Professional Development for Staff
Friday, September 27	Early Release at 12:00 p.m. - Professional Development for Staff
Saturday, September 28	Tons of Fun Vehicle Fair, 9-11 a.m. Gay Avenue campus
Friday, October 11	No Early Childhood Education classes - Conference Prep day Stay, Play & Learn is on!
Thursday, October 17	Early Release at 12:00 p.m. - Parent/Teacher Conferences
Friday, October 18	No School for Students and Teachers (Center closed)
Friday, November 1	Early Release at 12:00 p.m. - Professional Development for Staff
Tuesday, November 8	No School - Professional Development for Staff
November 27-29	Thanksgiving Break (Center closed)
Friday, December 6	Early Release at 12:00 p.m. - Professional Development for Staff
Friday, December 20	Early Release at 12:00 p.m - Winter Break begins
Mon. Dec 23 – Fri., Jan. 3	Winter Break (Center closed)
Monday, January 6	All classes and programs resume
Friday, January 17	Early Release at 12:00 p.m. - Professional Development for Staff
Monday, January 20	No School for Students or Staff – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (Center closed)
Thursday, January 30	No School for Two Morning classes – Conference Prep
Thursday, February 6	No School for Two Morning classes – Parent/Teacher Conferences
Friday, February 14	Early Release at 12:00 p.m. – Professional Development for Staff
Monday, February 17	No School for Students or Staff – President’s Day (Center closed)
Friday, February 28	Early Release at 12:00 p.m. - Professional Development for Staff
Friday, March 6	No School for Students – Conference prep day, Stay, Play & Learn is on!
Thursday, March 12	Early Release at 12:00 – Parent/Teacher conferences
Friday, March 13	No School for Students and Teachers – Conference Comp Day
Mon., March 16 - Fri., March 20	Spring Break (Center closed)
Friday, April 3	Early Release at 12:00 p.m. – Professional Development for Staff
Friday, April 10	No School for Students and teachers - April Break (Center closed)
Friday, May 8	Early Release at 12:00 p.m. – Professional Development for Staff
Monday, May 25	Memorial Day (Center closed)
Wednesday, May 27	Last day for Three Morning Classes and Stay, Play & Learn
Thursday, May 28	Last day for all other classes - Early Release at 12:00 p.m.

## **Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program**

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.

### **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 classroom blog. 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.



## **Parent Education Program (parents of children 0-18 yrs)**

Healthy families support children's academic success in school and in life. Out of our dedication to excellence and to provide the best support possible for our students, the Clayton School District is committed to supporting parents in their very challenging role through The Family Center Parenting Education program.

- **Parenting Workshops** at the Family Center offer a dedicated time to explore new ideas and tools for parenting and to discuss questions and concerns within a supportive learning community. Our aim is to support parents in integrating strategies that help families thrive. These fee-based workshops are offered throughout the school year.
- **Parent Coaching** with a Family Center counselor is offered when meeting on an individual basis would be helpful to discuss concerns about your child or family. We will focus on increasing understanding and awareness, work to clarify useful strategies to help your family thrive, and connect you to reading material, parenting workshops or other resources that may be helpful. Fee information is available online.

Workshop offerings, tuition and coaching fees can all be found on our Clayton Schools' Family Center website under the Parent Ed drop-down menu, or call the Family Center at 854-6900.

## Parents as Teachers (PAT)

Parents as Teachers is a state sponsored and school district supported program for expectant parents and parents of young children who have not yet begun kindergarten. All residents of the School District of Clayton as well as families enrolled in our preschool may participate. New families may enroll at any time during the year.

Enroll by contacting the Family Center at 314-854-6910 or complete the application on our website. Access Parents as Teachers on the Parent Ed drop-down menu.

As a PAT participant, you'll receive the following services:

- **Personal Visits:** A parent educator meets with you and your child in your home or at the Family Center to share child development information, address your concerns, and prepare you for upcoming developmental milestones.
- **Group meetings/activities:** Share parenting experiences, learn about parenting issues of concern, and have new and fun learning experiences with your child at events such as Tons of Fun Vehicle Fair, Messy Play, parenting presentations (sleep, PK-K transition), and the Ice Cream Social.
- **Annual Developmental Screening:** Educators provide free screening at the Family Center for children age 3 years to kindergarten entry to assess conceptual, motor, and language development as well as vision, hearing, and health. Parent educators provide screening for children 3 months to 3 years during personal visits.
- **Resources:** Information is provided about activities and special services available in your community. Clayton's PAT program also includes use of the Family Center library and a PAT punch card for one free visit to Stay, Play and Learn.

## **Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)**

Parents of children who are 3-5 years old or approaching 3, who suspect their child may have a developmental delay that may affect them educationally, should contact their PAT parent educator. Families not participating in PAT should contact the Family Center directly at [314-854-6900](tel:314-854-6900).

## **Developmental Screening**

We provide free developmental screenings for children three years to kindergarten entry who live in our district or are enrolled in our early childhood classes. The assessment includes a series of activities to determine progress in fine and gross motor, concepts, speech, language, hearing and visions and health.

Screenings are available, by appointment, between 8:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. on select weekends from October through April. Parent educators discuss all screening results with families at a scheduled Parents as Teachers visit.

To schedule an appointment, please call 314-854-6910.

## **Stay, Play & Learn**

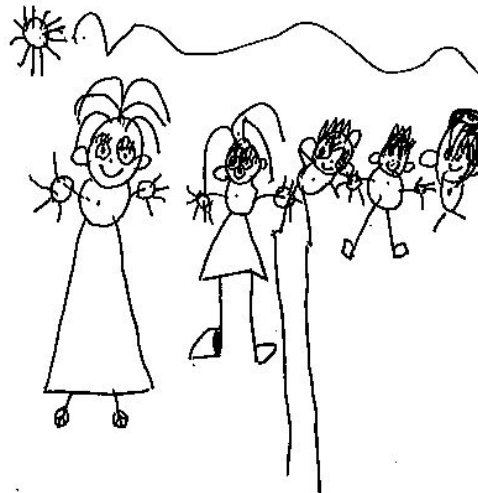
Stay, Play & Learn is a wonderful gathering place for adults, and a fun, educational place for young children to explore. Children use big muscles to climb and slide on the climber, learn about spatial relationships as they build tall block towers or have fun creating masterpieces with paint or clay in the art studio. Imaginations are engaged in the play kitchen where a child can “cook” dinner or play dress up. Social skills are enhanced as children practice taking turns with a favorite toy or the rocking horse. Digging in the sand table with a friend is all kinds of fun for the senses. For a little slower pace, our library provides a quiet corner to read one of our many wonderful children’s books. The perfect book on bedtime routines, temper tantrums or fun, family meals can be found there too, along with a wide variety of other helpful titles for parents. In addition to all this great learning, Stay, Play & Learn is a place to meet and make new friends. They might be from your neighborhood or from anywhere in the big wide world. You may hear Russian, Mandarin, Spanish, French or many other languages, given the rich ethnic diversity of our community.

Friendly staff and parent educators are on hand to help you feel welcome, introduce you to new friends, suggest a great parenting book or discuss any parenting questions you might have. Parents and caregivers supervise their own children. Each play session ends with clean up and special Family Center songs.

In addition to scheduled times during the week, Stay, Play & Learn is available from 10:00-11:30 on all screening dates for parents with siblings to enjoy while your child is being screened. Access the website or call 854-6900 for information about membership fees, including the preschool discount, and program times.

### **Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)**

The PTO is a fantastic way to directly impact and improve our school. Enhance your children's education, network with other parents, connect to the Family Center, and build friendships! All are invited to monthly PTO meetings. Parents receive membership information and opportunities for participation upon preschool enrollment.



## **Kid Zone Before and After School Care Program**

Clayton Kid Zone Program is based on the idea that the before-and after-school experience is an extension of the child's school day. Staff works in collaboration with the building level administrators, counselors, support staff and teachers to ensure a smooth transition from one experience to the other. Children experience similar expectations, school guidelines, caring adults, and quality materials and equipment.

Kid Zone is available at the Gay Avenue campus from 7:30-8:45/9:00 a.m. for all Gay Avenue classes and 3:15-5:30 p.m. for the five full school day classes only.

## **School District of Clayton Children's Illness Guidelines**

We are aware of how difficult it is to decide whether or not to attend a Family Center program because you or your child may be ill and/or contagious. However, for the protection of everyone at the Center we ask you to take a conservative approach in making this decision. In other words, if you are in doubt, wait another day or two before returning to the Center. For the ECE program, if a child becomes ill during class, the parent or caregiver will be called. For your child's well being and the health of others, please pick up your child as quickly as possible. Your child along with a staff member will wait in a quiet area for your arrival. For parenting classes and Stay, Play and Learn, the staff will ask you to leave if they feel your child is not feeling well and/or may be infecting other children. Guidelines we use in making this decision are as follows:

- 1) **FEVER:** Students with 100 degree Fahrenheit or above should not attend school. Students must be fever free for 24 hours without the aid of medication before they may return to school.
- 2) **CONJUNCTIVITIS/PINKEYE:** Students with red, watery eyes, with or without purulent drainage, must remain at home until 3 doses of antibiotic eye drops have been administered and eyes are clear of purulent discharge.
- 3) **IMPETIGO:** This condition is highly contagious and requires treatment. Unless under the care of a health care provider, the student may not attend school.
- 4) **HEAD LICE:** The school must be informed if your child has head lice. Any live lice or nits within ¼" of the scalp, must be treated. Treatment is required before returning to school. The student must be "checked in" by the school nurse before returning to class.
- 5) **PINWORMS:** This condition is easily transmitted and requires treatment before attending school.
- 6) **VOMITING/DIARRHEA:** If a student has vomited or had diarrhea during the night or just before school, he/she should not attend. Students should remain at home until symptom free and able to tolerate regular food.

- 7) **SORE THROAT:** A sore throat may require medical attention to determine if a strep infection is present and an antibiotic needed. If a throat culture is done, student should remain at home until results are known. If culture is positive, student may return to school after 24 hours of antibiotics, if no fever is present.
- 8) **RASH:** A student with a rash may be excluded until the cause of the rash has been determined. A physician's note may be required for re-admission to school.
- 9) **RINGWORM of SCALP AND SKIN:** Student will be excluded from school until effective treatment is started. This may require a physician's note.
- 10) **RUNNY NOSE:** If drainage is profuse and not clear, student should remain at home until symptoms improve.
- 11) **COUGH:** A cough following a cold is not necessarily contagious and may be prolonged. If the cough is croup or is productive with non-clear discharge, student should remain at home until symptoms improve.
- 12) **CHICKEN POX:** Students are excluded until all lesions have been crusted and there are no new lesions, generally day 6 after onset of rash.

If a child seems tired, listless and/or exhibits a change in behavior, he/she may be experiencing the early stages of an illness.

Please report any communicable disease such as strep throat, chickenpox, etc. to the office for the protection of the children attending. If you have any questions about your child's attendance at school, contact the office at 854-6900.

## **Sick Siblings**

**Please do not bring sick siblings (either younger or older) into the building.** We understand this can be difficult. If your child's sibling is sick and you are arriving on the:

Gay Ave. campus

- Arrive at the top parking lot/front doors.
- Call the main number at 854-6900.
- A staff member will meet you at your car and bring your child to his/her early childhood classroom. We can do the same at the end of your child's school day.

CHS campus

- Call the classroom by 8:30 a.m. A teacher will meet your child at the car and escort him/her to the classroom. We can do the same at the end of the morning or afternoon.

On both campuses, parents may be able to support one another by carpooling or walking children together from the parking lot...please remember to hold hands.

Thank you for helping to keep all children healthy!

## **Safety Precautions**

Your child's safety is important to us! We need your help to make arrival and departure time safe. Help your child remember our school-wide safety rule: **Adults open doors and children hold hands.** Please share this with anyone who brings or picks up your child.

### **Entering and Leaving the Building**

Children always walk into or out of the building with an adult. **Adults open doors and children hold hands.** You will notice a visual reminder for children (and adults) at our doors. This visual can be helpful to remind your child of this important safety rule. Children should not use the handicap accessible push button to automatically open the doors. Riding or hanging on the door handle is dangerous.

### **On the Parking Lots**

Our parking areas are very busy, especially at arrival and departure times. Please use extra caution. It is difficult to see children, especially when cars are backing up in the parking lot. **Hold your child's hand as you walk in the parking lot.**

**It is NEVER safe to leave children unattended in your car, even if they are secured in a car seat.**

### **Entering and Leaving the Playground**

Gates with child safety locks are located at playground entrances. **Adults open and close gates.** Please close the gate fully each time you enter or exit the playground.

## **PETS**

Please do not bring pets into the school or on our playgrounds.

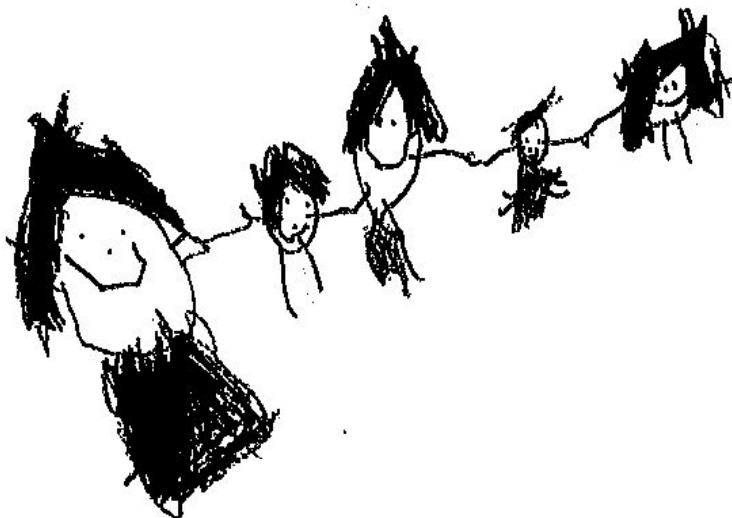
## **Cell Phones**

Please refrain from texting and talking on cell phones in our school. Phone conversations distract from the life of the classroom and your time with your child. We want and need you to be fully present when you are at school. Do not text or talk on cell phones when driving into or out of our parking areas.

## **Cameras**

We understand that you may wish to take photos or videos of your child on special school days, such as birthdays or holidays. Please do so; there will be some great photo opportunities. In the classroom, asking your child to pose, or staging photos, can interrupt the daily learning.

Teachers document your child's experiences and learning using digital photography. These images are given to families at the end of the school year and are for your own personal use. Out of respect for the privacy of other families at the Family Center, please do not post them on the internet (blogs, family websites, Facebook, etc.)





# Early Childhood Class Information

## Personal Visits

Before the beginning of the school year, teachers meet with families during a personal visit at the child's home or at the Family Center or by telephone conversation. This is an opportunity for teachers and families to meet and get to know each other before the first day of school. During these conversations, teachers talk about the school day, share any additional materials and answer questions.

We schedule personal visits with families of children who are either newly enrolled or returning children who will have two teachers who are new to them. For those families previously enrolled in the early childhood program with at least one of the teachers being the same, the teacher will make a phone call to catch up and answer any questions.

## Home-School Connections and Communications

Your participation in our school and your child's class is essential to its success.

We communicate with families in a variety of ways, including Google sites, blog entries, announcements at closing circles, classroom updates, family information boards, and fall and spring conferences. Your input is important; please share your thoughts and ideas with us.

One of the first ways for families to share with us is by completing the questionnaire, *Please Introduce Your Child to Us*, which you will receive before the beginning of the school year. The information you provide will help us get to know your child and support his/her learning and development.

## Snack Time

Families provide snack for all the children in the classroom on a rotating basis. We appreciate your support. Teachers will ask each family to sign up to bring snack.



Snack is offered mid-morning. Although serving sizes vary, a general rule of thumb is to think of a portion equal to the size of your child's hand. You are welcome to purchase large containers (to portion out) rather than individual serving cups.

Talk with teachers, as they generally know what types of foods the children in this year's class enjoy. Please bring a healthy snack.

Our goals for working, learning and dining together are to:

- Support children in learning about healthy eating and healthy food choices.
- Instill a curiosity in the children to learn about and try new foods.
- Involve parents as partners with teachers in providing healthy choices at snack time.

We are a PEANUT and TREE NUT RESTRICTED building. When choosing a peanut/tree nut free snack, it is important to always check the package. It is NOT safe to bring items with these warnings into the Family Center:

**“May Contain Peanut or Tree Nuts”**

**“Processed on shared equipment with Peanuts or Tree Nuts”**

**“Manufactured in a plant with Peanuts or Tree Nuts”**

**“Contains Peanut or Tree Nut Ingredients”**

Please no popcorn in classrooms with children under three years of age as it can be a choking hazard.

Below is a list of usual peanut and tree nut safe snack ideas. There are other safe items available in stores. **It is essential that you read labels each time before buying, as ingredients change.**

Fresh fruit (most dried fruits have peanut warnings-check labels)

Vegetables (if precut, check labels)

Applesauce

Yogurt/Go-gurts

String cheese (Sargento)

Kraft cheese cubes or sliced cheese

Pretzels (Rold Gold)

Raisins (not yogurt or chocolate covered)

Nutra-Grain Bars (Kellogg)

Cheerios (General Mills)

Kix (General Mills)

Life Cereal (Quaker)

Pita bread or chips (check labels)

Goldfish

Cheez-its

Jello Gelatin

Sun Chips

Hummus (check labels)

Soy-nut Butter

Biscoff Spread

Marzetti's Dips (Veggie Ranch, Caramel, Chocolate)

Marzetti's Buttermilk Ranch salad dressing

Hidden Valley Ranch salad dressing

Annie's Organic:

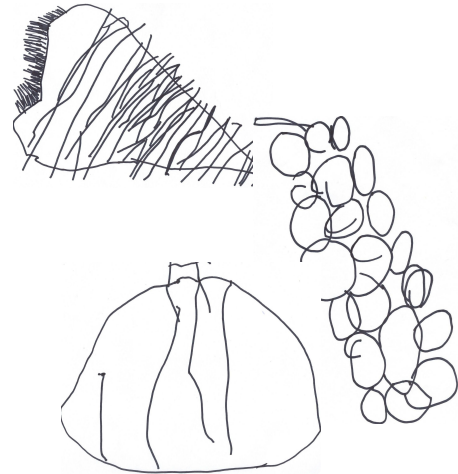
Cheddar Bunny Crackers, Traditional Snack Mix, Whole Wheat Bunny Crackers, Sour Cream and Onion Bunnies, Bunny Grahams, Fruits Snacks

Nabisco:

Cheese Nips, Teddy Grahams, Nilla Wafers, Barnum Animal Crackers, Honey Maid Graham Crackers, Triscuts (plain), Premium Saltines, Ritz Crackers (not Ritz Bitz), Ritz Chips, Wheat Thins

Keebler:

Vanilla Wafer (golden, mini), Elf Grahams (honey, cinnamon), Scooby Doo Graham Crackers, Wheatables (original, honey wheat), Toasted (Wheat, Butter Crisp), Town House, Club Crackers



## **What to Bring the First Day of School**

- Any forms needed by the office that have not already been turned in (*Authorization to Release, Enrollment, Emergency Information, Immunizations, PTO volunteer form, Sunscreen Permission*).
- A box of Kleenex and a roll of paper towels for each child you have enrolled.
- A complete change of clothes (shirt, pants/shorts, dress/leggings, underwear, socks) for your child. Label with your child's name and store in cubby.
- Sunscreen labeled with your child's name.
- Photo Album (birth to three year old classes) or Family Book (classes for three to five year olds).
- Bike helmet (classes for three to five year olds).

## **First Day of School**

The first day of school is a short visit day for children and families. You will receive information about this visit day in August.

For many children, the first days of school are exciting, but some children may need time to warm up. We will work closely with you and your child on this transition from home to school.

## **Adjusting to School and Saying Goodbye**

- Be sure to say goodbye to your child. Please do not slip out unnoticed.
- Prepare your child ahead of time by explaining your leaving in concrete terms.
- Remind your child about some of the fun play activities at school.
- Settle your child into an activity.
- Be calm and positive.
- Assure your child that you will come back to pick up him/her.
- If your child is having difficulty saying goodbye, please initiate the physical transition to a teacher, rather than asking a teacher to reach for your child.

Most children settle in to play a few minutes after their parent leaves. However, if your child continues to cry beyond the time we have mutually agreed upon, we will ask the office to call you. If you haven't heard from the school, you can assume that no news is good news. Additional thoughts and strategies related to separation are available by talking to classroom teachers and your PAT parent educator.

## **Early Childhood Class Arrival**

It is important that families arrive on time. This facilitates a positive day for your child and for the entire group. If you happen to arrive a few minutes early, you may play outside, take a short walk, or read books provided outside the classrooms.

Teachers want to greet you and your child in a way that makes for a smooth transition between home and school. It is our intent to balance time spent talking with parents and beginning play with children.

A sign-in sheet will be in a standard location. It is critical that we have a phone number of someone who is easily reached and is listed on your child's Authorization to Release form.

Please call the office or email your child's teacher in advance if your child will be absent or arrive late.

Arrival time for children in the birth to three-year-old classes is as follows:

Two Morning 9:00  
Three Morning 9:00

Arrival time for children in the three to five year old classes is as follows:

Four Morning 9:00  
Five Morning (CHS Campus) 8:45  
Five Full Days 8:45

Kid Zone before care starting at 7:30 is available for all classes at the Gay Avenue campus.

### **Early Childhood Class Dismissal**

It is important that parents/caregivers be on time. The children expect you to be there and may worry if you are late. We ask that adults picking up children arrive five minutes before the end of class. Should you need to pick up early, please let us know so we can prepare your child.

Pick up time for children in the birth to three-year-old classes is as follows:

Two Morning 11:30  
Three Morning 11:45

Pick up time for children in the three to five-year-old classes is as follows:

Four Morning M-Th-12:00  
Optional second semester extended days T/Th 1:30

Five Morning with Two Extended Days (CHS campus)  
MWF 12:00  
T/Th 1:30 or 3:15 (depending upon option)

Five Full Days 3:15

If you have younger siblings who wait with you prior to pickup, please enjoy the outdoor grounds or the toys and books in the hallway. On the Gay Avenue campus, please do not use other classrooms. No running in the hallways. Be courteous of classes still in session.

Kid Zone after care is available until 5:30 p.m. for the five full day classes only.

### **Late Pick Up Policy**

We expect children to be picked up on time. We understand that circumstances beyond your control may prevent your child from being picked up on time. On those rare occasions please call the office as soon as possible, so that the staff can inform the classroom teachers.

If the child is picked up late more than once, the family will be charged \$1.00 per minute late. Teachers will record the adult's time of arrival and submit the information to the office. All payments of late fees must be made to the office. If a parent/caregiver is late three times, teachers will inform the Center director, who will contact the parent.

Families of children enrolled in the full day classes may wish to register for the afternoon Kid Zone program. This option provides a place for the child to go if the adult is running late. Please see the Kid Zone options for more information.

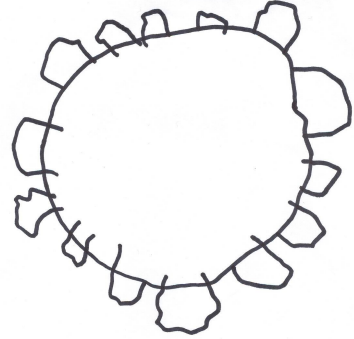
### **Early Release Days**

Classes will end at regular class ending time if before noon, or at noon for all other classes, so staff may attend professional development. Kid Zone will be available at the Gay Ave. campus for the five full day classes only.

## **Dress for Weather**

Outdoor play is an essential experience for all children. Please send your child ready for playing on the playground and exploring our nature areas by dressing them in:

- Clothes that can get dirty
- Closed toe shoes with a sturdy grip for running and climbing (avoid sandals, flip flops, or crocs)
- Winter coats/jackets and mittens/gloves or sunhats/hats (as appropriate for weather)



## **Lovies and Comfort Items**

Children may bring comfort items to class. Typically, these include pacifiers, blankets and stuffed animals. All “loves” need to be clearly marked with your child’s name. Please do not bring bottles; children use sippy or open cups when drinking water at school.

## **Confidentiality**

In your role as a participating or co-oping adult, confidentiality is critical. In respect of each family’s privacy, staff members are not permitted to share any information about another child or family in the program. We ask that you do the same.

Information that concerns a preschool child’s physical, emotional, intellectual, and/or social welfare may be shared with Clayton School District staff members who are involved with your child.



## **Birthday Celebrations**

Children's birthdays are an opportunity for the classroom community (children, teachers and parents) to create a unique and meaningful celebration. Classroom teachers will share specific information about how your child's class will celebrate birthdays and how families will participate.

Since this is truly a celebration of the child with their friends at school and not a birthday party, please do not bring party items, such as balloons, a birthday cake, party bags, a gift, or paper products to school.



## **Common Experiences**

Specialists in the areas of nature education and music and movement work with children and teachers in the classrooms. Our residency arrangement with Metro Theater Company of St. Louis provides unique experiences for children and valuable professional development for teachers.

### **Nature**

Children benefit from daily hands-on nature experiences. Our nature educator works collaboratively with children and teachers to care for school gardens and nature areas. These outdoor experiences promote children's observation, investigation and problem solving skills. Children gain knowledge of the living world, foster their imagination and develop a sense of wonder.

### **Music**

Our music educators visit each classroom to sing songs and finger plays and experiment with instruments. At other times, teachers and children sing favorite songs and finger plays, play instruments, and move to a variety of music.

### **Metro Theater Company**

The January-March Metro Theater residency provides opportunities for children three to five years of age to enjoy music, creative drama and movement experiences with their classroom teachers and the teaching artists. The structure varies each year and in each classroom. Experiences might include developing an imaginative storyline (pirates, space explorers), exploring body control (moving like different animals, moving to varying musical rhythms), or acting out stories.

## **Curriculum**

Our inquiry-based and integrated curriculum is influenced by the 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 school system in Reggio Emilia, Italy that emphasized 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 a starting point for this inquiry-based education.

Each child's learning is supported by the relationships among children, educators, parents and the community. As partners in the learning process, children's wonderings support teachers in framing questions that follow a course of in-depth investigation and learning across multiple disciplines over time. This learning cycle supports a process of self-and collective-discovery when children and teachers represent and communicate learning to others in multiple ways. Teachers listen to and document children's ideas, understandings and strategies through observation. Learning is assessed, extended and deepened through the interpretation of observational data (photographs, video, transcripts of conversations, artifacts that represent children's understandings and feelings).

Our social and physical environments are viewed as the third teacher. Teachers design classroom spaces with intentionality to cultivate learning and relationships. These environments play a significant and powerful role in children's development.

Our curriculum framework includes five strands/units of study:

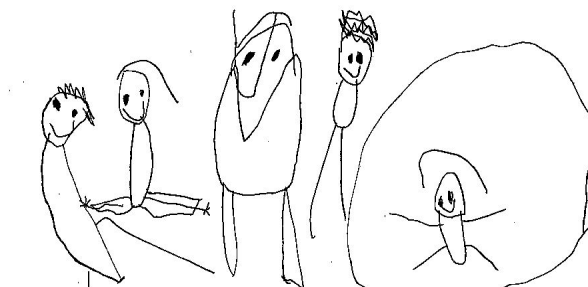
- Social Emotional Development and Approaches to Learning
- Language and Literacy
- Science and Nature Education
- Mathematics
- Music, Movement, and Dramatic Play

## **Family Involvement in Birth-Three Year Old Classroom Co-oping Responsibilities**

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.

Your contribution to the classroom on the mornings you co-op is valuable and a special time for you and your child. You may experience some difference in your child's behavior since he or she may not be accustomed to sharing you in a classroom setting. This generally improves each time you co-op. We are ready to work with you to make this a good experience. We have developed some practical suggestions and particulars about our program, its philosophy and some suggestions for working with young children that will be available on visit day.

- Please note that siblings cannot be accommodated on co-op days.
- Touch base with the teachers prior to each time you co-op.
- Let teachers know if there is a special activity you would like to do with the children.
- If you are unable to co-op as scheduled, please find a substitute by trading with another parent from your class.
- Remember our confidentiality guidelines. Avoid discussing children's behaviors casually outside of class.



## **Family Involvement in 3-5 Year Old Classrooms**

Involvement by family members and caregivers is a vital component of our program. Families join teachers and children in the learning. 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.

Involvement might include:

- Looking at classroom blogs with your child and talking about the school day.
- Serving on PTO committees.
- Collecting and donating materials for areas of the classroom such as the message center and the pretend play area.
- Reading a book to the class.
- Eating snack or lunch with the class.
- Visiting the classroom and working with a small group of children in a variety of ways such as playing a game, doing an art project, doing a science experiment, cooking, etc.

Whatever form it takes, parents are encouraged to share their many talents as family involvement benefits everyone: it familiarizes families with the program; it increases resources available to the Family Center children; and, it demonstrates to children that their families care about their education.

## **Buying Lunch at School**

Children enrolled in classes which include lunchtime, may purchase a school lunch for \$3.10 from the high school cafeteria. The school lunch program includes a hot entrée, sandwich or bagel option each day. All meals are nutritionally balanced and include milk. Menus are provided each month. Children may also purchase milk (\$.60) to drink with their lunch from home. Families indicate on the classroom sign-in sheet if their child will be ordering a school lunch that day and will be charged for each lunch purchased. **School lunch orders must be placed by 9:15 a.m. each day.** Call the office, 314-854-6900 to order lunch if your child will be arriving after that time.

To participate in the lunch program, you will be given an ID number to use to set up an account on [myschoolbucks.com](http://myschoolbucks.com). A link to the website can be found on our website, [www.claytonschools.net](http://www.claytonschools.net) under Quick Links. Along with the ID number, enter your child's date of birth, school site (Family Center) and the grade (pre-K) to set up the account.

If you have any questions concerning your child's account or the lunch program contact: Stephanie Robbins at 314-854-6640 or [stephanierobbins@claytonschools.net](mailto:stephanierobbins@claytonschools.net).

## **Rest Time (full day classes only)**

Rest time is an important part of a young child's day. It gives the children a chance to physically rest and emotionally unwind. Approximately one hour each afternoon provides the children with a time to calm their bodies and recharge for the rest of the day's learning.



While not all children are expected to sleep, teachers do ask that children stay on their rest mats and maintain a calm and quiet disposition. Children may bring a small blanket, pillow and one small lovie from home to use during this time. Teachers provide a small bag to store these items at school.

## **Clayton High School Campus Parking**

We share the parking lot with Center of Clayton patrons and CHS students and faculty. For a safe arrival and departure, follow these guidelines, allow plenty of time and bring your patience and good manners!

- Use the Greyhound entrance on the north end of the building. You will see large silver metal greyhounds on the outside wall by the doors. The entrance is just east of the entrance to the Center of Clayton.
- Always yield to the school busses and do not park in the curb cut if waiting busses are lined up there.
- Do not park in the delivery area near the bicycle wheel-like sculpture; it is a fire lane.

### 8:45 Morning Arrival

Park in the curb cut at the Greyhound entrance or in a parking space on the lot.

### 12:00 and 1:30 Afternoon Departure

Park in the curb cut at the Greyhound entrance or in a parking space on the lot.

### 3:15 Afternoon Departure

Park in a parking space on the lot. The curb cut area will be reserved for busses at this time.

Safety is our primary concern. Thank you for being cautious.

## **Clayton High School Campus Entry/Access**

Each family is issued two cards to use both on the keypad at the Greyhound entrance and outside the classroom suite door. (If one parent works for the School District of Clayton, the code for entry to the Family Center suite has been added to his/her current District keycard.)

Please keep this card safe and use it for the school year. The keycards are individually coded for each family. At the end of the year we will collect the cards to reprogram and use next year. There is a \$5 fee for lost cards.

We hope that you can find a way to share cards. We don't want to have too many cards out there! However, if you need another card, complete a "Request for New/Additional Card" form and return it to Bridget at Gay Ave. with \$5 and we will request that another card be made. Please allow 2-3 days for this process.

Please make it a routine to have your card available when you come to the classrooms, but we recognize that it is easy to forget a card. If you forget your keycard, you may gain entrance by checking in at the Globe entrance, at the front of the school on Mark Twain Circle. As you know, we cannot hear a knock at the classroom suite door when class is in session. We have worked out a plan with the Clayton High School (CHS) staff. If you do not have your keycard, please go to the CHS office located on the second floor, above the Commons (cafeteria). You'll need to show a photo ID and your name will be checked on a classroom list. Someone will escort you back to our classroom suite and open the door for you.

Teachers cannot leave their work with children to answer the door. In order to keep from interrupting the learning or compromising the safety of the children, please do not knock on the windows or outside doors. Although this process is inconvenient, it offers our children the safest environment. Thank you for your understanding.



## **Clayton High School Campus Outdoor Spaces**

Children enrolled in the early childhood classes at the Clayton High School Campus benefit from a variety of spaces for outdoor play and learning. Doors leading from the classrooms open to a play yard where children may ride tricycles, run, climb, observe the gardens, explore and create in the mud kitchen, and use their imaginations for open-ended games.

These classrooms are also in walking distance to Shaw Park, one of Clayton's city parks, where children and teachers enjoy their time using the different playgrounds, going for nature walks and enjoying the walking trails.

## **Clayton High School Campus Swimming Days**

Starting in the fall, children enrolled in classes at the Clayton High School campus visit the Center of Clayton's indoor pool on designated days two times per month for splash and play. For safety, the Center of Clayton provides a lifeguard, and teachers join the children in the water. This is an excellent opportunity for family participation, as we require one adult for every three children. Thank you for participating in our swimming days.

- Please send your child with a swimming suit, towel and a backpack.
- Children will change into swimming suits in the classroom before walking over to swim at the Center of Clayton.
- At the end of our swim time, girls will dress in the women's locker room; the boys will use the family locker room. If possible, please arrive a few minutes early to assist your child in changing out of swimwear.
- The day will end at the pool. Pick up time will be the usual time.

Teachers appreciate any help you can offer by arriving a few minutes early to assist with changing.

