



## **Sparklers Community Preschool Program Parent Handbook**

### **Our Mission**

Skagit Preschool and Resource Center (SPARC) provides individualized services for families and their children with unique needs, from birth through age 5 in Skagit County, helping build the foundation for lifelong success.

### **Our Vision:**

That children and families feel supported and our community is aware of the unique gifts of all children.

### **About our Sparkler Community Preschool Program**

SPARC has contracted with the Mount Vernon School District since 1974, to provide Special Education preschool services. It's our pleasure to now welcome students with all abilities through our Sparkler Preschool program. This program is designed to offer inclusive early learning opportunities to kids 3 to 5 years of age. In our program your child will have the unique opportunity to learn alongside peers with different development abilities. Research shows that all students benefit from inclusive early learning experiences such as this.

### **Registration**

Completed registration form and a \$50 registration fee will be due upon registration  
\*\$25 registration fee for each additional child.

### **Tuition**

Tuition is due the first of the month (September - June). We accept cash, check or card payments.

### **Late fees**

A late fee of \$10.00 per day will be charged if payment has not been received by the 10th of each month. If payment is not received or if arrangements have not been made by the 15th, your child will be disenrolled from the program until full payment has been received.

### **Attendance & Absences**

In order for us to maintain consistency and an optimum adult/child ratio, your tuition reserves your child's placement in our program. This is non-refundable even if your child is absent from the Center. This enables us to employ caring, consistent staff ensuring quality services for all the children using the Center.

## **Sick Policy.**

Children with any of the following symptoms are not permitted to attend or remain in class:

1. Fever of at least 100°F as read under arm (axillary temp.) accompanied by one or more of the following:
  - diarrhea or vomiting
  - earache
  - headache
  - signs or irritability or confusion
  - sore throat
  - rash
  - fatigue that limits participation in daily activities
2. Vomiting: 2 or more occasions within the past 24 hours.
3. Diarrhea: 3 or more watery stools within the past 24 hours or any bloody stool.
4. Rash, especially with fever or itching.
5. Eye discharge or conjunctivitis (pinkeye) until clear or 24 hours of antibiotic treatment.
6. Sick appearance, not feeling well, and/or not able to participate comfortably in daily routine and activities.
7. Open or oozing sores, unless properly covered and 24 hours has passed since starting antibiotic treatment, if antibiotic treatment is necessary.
8. Lice or scabies:
  - Head lice: until no nits are present.
  - Scabies: until after treatment is begun.
9. If the illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.

**Following exclusion for vomiting or diarrhea, children must be symptom free for 24 hours in order to return to care.**

## **Inclement Weather**

SPARC follows the inclement weather transportation announcements of Mount Vernon School District. Announcements start on local radio and TV stations at 5:00am, or posted at the Public Schools Emergency Communications System Website. If Mount Vernon School District has a one or two hour late start all SPARC morning classes will be canceled. We may also close some programs when the school district remains open. In the event that SPARC is closed when the District remains open families will be notified by a phone call, text or email, depending on the families preferred method of communication or through the Seesaw web based platform.

## **When Hazardous Conditions Arise While Class Is In Session**

The team leader will call the Lead Teacher or the Executive Director immediately to report local conditions. An administrative staff member will decide if an early dismissal should take place. A staff member at each site will stay on site until it is known that all children from that site have been picked up by an authorized adult.

**Scheduled Closure Dates:**

- Labor Day
- Veteran's Day
- November 22 - 24, 2023 (Thanksgiving Break)
- December 18 - 31, 2023 (Winter Break)
- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- President's Day
- April 1 - 5, 2024 (Spring Break)
- Memorial Day

**Emergency Management Plan**

SPARC's Emergency Management Plan is specifically designed for each of our locations. In the event of an emergency, staff will take measures to keep children, guests and other staff safe. This is an outline of those measures if the following emergencies were to occur: Fire, Earthquake, Tsunami or Threat of Dangerous Person.

**Fire:**

In the event of fire, all children will be escorted outside to a specific location on the facilities campus. Staff will have access to all students' emergency contact information and parents will be notified at the earliest opportunity. Staff will follow the direction of all emergency personnel if details of the plan were to change.

**Earthquake:**

In the event of an earthquake, all staff and children will be directed to take cover according to their specific environment (classroom vs. playground). Once the earthquake is over, all staff and children will then seek a safer environment, if needed, (exit building, move to open and clear spaces, etc.). If a building is unsafe to enter, staff will work with administration and emergency personnel to meet the specific needs of each location. Staff will notify all families about the status of their child and the location they are at as soon as possible.

**Tsunami Warning:**

In the event of a tsunami, various steps will be taken at each location. All facilities located above floodplains will stand by and wait for specific information pertaining to their particular needs.

All facilities located on floodplains will have a specific plan to get all staff and children to higher ground. Currently, SPARC's 320 Pacific Place facility is our only building located on flood plains. Depending on the severity of the earthquake that preceded the tsunami warning, actions will be taken to best fit the situation. The following is the plan:

- If safe, all staff and students at this location will exit the building and relocate by foot to the Riverside Health Club, located across the street at 2225 Riverside Drive, Mount Vernon, WA 98273. This building has multiple floors, as well as rooftop access if needed.

- If the Riverside Health Club is not safe to enter, staff will transport students to higher ground. Depending on the conditions of the road ways, the identified destinations are:
  - The YMCA located at 1901 Hoag Road, Mount Vernon WA 98273, or
  - The Skagit River Bridge located on Riverside Drive

Staff will follow the direction of all emergency personnel and county authorities. Staff will notify all families as soon as possible.

**Threat of Dangerous Person:**

In the event that there is an armed person or other threatening circumstance within or outside the building, SPARC will go into a Lockdown status. SPARC has specific protocols that will take place and will also follow the guidance of emergency authorities. All classroom windows and doors will be locked and covered and no one will be allowed to exit or enter the building until law enforcement has authorized staff to unlock the facility. This means that all parents will not be able to pick up their child until the threat has been resolved. If possible, staff will notify all parents as soon as possible. Please note, sometimes it may be unsafe to make any calls during this type of event, so please refrain from calling us as the noise will create an unsafe environment. We will contact you as soon as it's safe.

**How Can Parents Help:**

We know that if any of these events were to happen, not knowing if your child is safe can be very stressful. Please be assured that our staff and community partners will make sure everything possible is being done to keep students and staff safe. You can help by doing the following:

- Preparation is key...Make sure your child's teacher has updated health and emergency contact information at all times.
- If your child is prescribed medications, please be sure the teacher is aware, has access to, and has a written prescription for those medications.
- Have an emergency plan in place for your home and family. If we can all be safe in the place we are during an unexpected emergency, we will get through this safely together.
- Most importantly, stay calm and save yourself. Children react more to the adults around them than to what's actually happening.

Parents will sign an acknowledgement that they received SPARC's Emergency Plan, understand the plan and give permission for SPARC and the Employees of SPARC to carry out the plan or any other necessary and reasonable actions in an attempt to keep their child safe. Those actions may include, but are not limited to, first aid, dispensing necessary medications, authorizing medical procedures and/or moving your child to another location in the event of an emergency.

## Student Pick Up & Drop Off

### PARENTS:

Many SPARC programs are located at busy elementary schools and other properties where traffic plans have been well established. Families will follow these traffic plans that are already in place.

One way and loading zone signs must be adhered to. Loading zones are strictly for buses only.

Parents are expected to find a parking place within the parking area.

Parents need to escort their children into/from class. Other children may not be left in the vehicles unattended.

IT IS AGAINST THE LAW TO LEAVE CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 16 IN A RUNNING VEHICLE WITHOUT AN ADULT. ANY CHILD LEFT UNATTENDED IN A TURNED OFF VEHICLE MAY BE CHECKED BY A POLICE OFFICER FOR THEIR WELFARE AND TO ASSURE THAT NEGLECT IS NOT OCCURRING.

**911 Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting** All SPARC staff are mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect. Definitions and explanations of laws are contained in Protecting the Abused and Neglected Child. <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pubs/22-163.pdf>

- 1) If a staff member observes an incident/concern/disclosure they will document the incident.
- 2) The staff member will contact their immediate team leader and discuss the incident.
- 3) The staff member and team leader will determine if it is necessary to contact CPS.
- 4) If Necessary, the staff member will contact CPS.
- 5) A CPS reporting form is completed and a copy is placed in the child's file.
- 6) The Executive Director receives and reviews a copy of all CPS reports.

All procedures and reports will be completed within 24 hours.

The report and circumstances surrounding it may be discussed at staffing meetings if it is felt the information is "need to know" by all staff attending and will support the child's services.

### Diapering Procedure

- The diaper changing area is:
  - Separate from food preparation area
  - Adjacent to hand washing station
  - Sanitize between use for different children
- The designated changing area is impervious to moisture and washable, as is flooring underneath
  - Diaper changing procedures are posted at the changing area
  - Non-latex gloves are to be worn and hands washed after gloves are removed
  - Disposable wipes are used for cleaning the child except when there is a known allergy

- Staff wash hands after diapering the child or helping the child with toileting
- Soiled diapers are disposed of in plastic bags and placed in lidded garbage bin
- Diapering should be done by SPARC staff or child's parents
- Diapering is not to be done by substitutes

## **Confidentiality**

Information about children, families, and staff is confidential, and is protected from public scrutiny at SPARC. Confidentiality is properly maintained: 1) during the collection of any information from and about children and families, 2) while in hands of staff and volunteers, 3) when it is stored at SPARC as a result of their participation in SPARC programs.

We are responsible for the actions taken officially by the agency staff and volunteers. Children's information will not be shared with outside agencies without written parental consent, except for requests from Child Protective Services or a court order. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) have the right to review their child file upon request.

### Confidentiality of files and information:

- All information regarding children, families and employees obtained by staff, consultants, and volunteers is confidential
- A child's involvement in our program is confidential information
- Parents are informed of the confidentiality policy at the time of enrollment
- Staff, consultants, volunteers, and college students/interns are informed about children, families, and staff on a "need to know" basis only. Need to know is defined as being provided with information necessary to complete one's job requirements.
- Staff, consultants, and volunteers are informed of the confidentiality policy and sign a confidentiality agreement
- Information about children and/or families will not be given to others without written permission to exchange information
- Information collected by outside agencies or persons, and forwarded with parental consent to our program, becomes part of the child's file and the responsibility of our program
- Reasonable protective measures for information includes both written documents and verbal discussions about children, families, and staff, or other information obtained by staff and volunteers in performance of their duties

### **Access:**

- Permanent full time staff and authorized federal and state auditors have access to information and files of enrolled children, families and employees when needed for performance of their duties. However, requests for information from a staff member who is not directly involved with the child of a family is not a claim to automatic access; the staff member may be given a part of the file or a summary instead of access to the entire file
- Sensitive information is not discussed with other staff, volunteers, or community partners without the expressed consent of the parent or family. When advice or assistance is needed, the case is discussed with team leaders and/or per consultants.

- Conversations about children, families, or staff must be avoided in public and in your home even when you do not use a name, the person could be identified through the information shared
- Disclosure of information and files of individuals and agencies outside of our program, including school districts, will not be made without written consent of the parent or guardian on an Authorization of Mutual Exchange of Information form. Reporting cases of suspected child abuse and neglect or responding to court subpoenas are exempt from this policy, as set forth by Washington State Law.
- If sending confidential information to outside agencies via e-mail the use of Hushmail is required.
- When a child transfers to another program, an Authorization of Mutual Exchange of Information form, signed by the parent or guardian, is required before the file is forwarded
- In the case of foster children, the foster parent(s) will have all rights of access given to parents or guardians herein, with written permission from foster care staff.
- Child emergency information is kept readily available at all locations.
- Staff emergency information is kept readily available at the administrative office.
- Computer systems containing personal information about children, families and employees are kept secure with a User Name/Password security system, assuring access only to the appropriate staff.

#### **Storage of Files:**

When not in use, all children's, family and employee files are stored in locked cabinets. When in use, any forms, notes or papers containing personal information about children, families or staff, are kept in locked carrying cases or locked desk drawers. This information will be secured at all times in cars or desks.

- At the end of the program year, the files for returning children will be held at each center in a locked file cabinet. Files of non-returning children will be stored in locked file cabinets at the central location. Files are retained for the period of time designated by the law.
- Any digital files with Personal Identification Information will be transported and stored on a password protected flash drive No Personal Identification Information is to be saved on a personal computer at any time for any reason. Do not work on confidential information in public places or anywhere that non-employees have visual access. This includes but is not limited to; working from home around family, working in a coffee shop, or working on public transportation, etc.