

SAINT MARY PRESCHOOL

**183 High Ridge Avenue
Ridgefield, CT 06877
203-438-7288**

PHILOSOPHY OF OUR PROGRAM

Saint Mary Preschool embodies a variety of hands-on and developmental strategies to promote self esteem through encouragement, caring, and focused attention. It is structured so as to enhance cooperation rather than competitiveness, stressing helpfulness, kindness, and caring attitudes.

Emphasis is on positive, appropriate behaviors while allowing for mistakes. Discipline is a matter of modeling desirable behavior and making expectations developmentally appropriate, while maintaining a non-threatening environment.

Religious Education is an ongoing part of our Preschool. Each child is afforded the opportunity to see herself/himself as a unique creation of God with special gifts and promise. As part of that initiative, we have created a "Special Person" program which encourages visitation of family members, pets, and friends in the classroom. The school year also provides many opportunities for developing the Christian ideals of loving, helping, and sharing. We highlight the Liturgical Seasons and religious holy days in an age appropriate manner. Prayer is introduced as talking to God, children learn the Sign of the Cross, and feel comfortable with rote prayers.

Our nurturing approach enhances the uniqueness of each child, while teaching respect for self and others. We seek to strengthen self esteem, not self indulgence. Physical development and coordination are achieved through creative play. Intellectual curiosity and growth is encouraged through a wide variety of classroom and playground equipment and stimulating, exciting learning programs in an atmosphere of spiritual joy and wonder.

The preschool purpose is to provide an atmosphere that encourages social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual growth and development of the child as a whole. To this end, the curriculum includes sharing and conversation time, developmentally appropriate experiences with various learning materials and indoor/outdoor equipment, centers for block building, dramatic play, arts and crafts, music, an abundance of books, musical instruments, games, drawing supplies, sand and water areas, puzzles, and other manipulatives. The children have opportunities to cook, celebrate holidays and birthdays, enjoy science and nature activities, and experience the joy and wonder of school. We foster trust, self-esteem, independence, and cooperation as a natural outgrowth of the program.

ADMISSION

Children who are three years old, up to kindergarten age, are eligible to enroll at Saint Mary Preschool. Admission requirements and enrollment procedures are as follows:

- A child must be three years old by December 31st to be admitted into the three year old class.
- A child must be four years old by December 31st to be admitted into the four year old class.
- All children must be potty trained.
- Classes are filled on a first come, first serve basis, according to the date of enrollment with the Director of Admissions. Three year olds already in the program have first preference for the four year old program for the upcoming school year. Four year olds have first preference for the transitional kindergarten program the upcoming school year.
- If classes are filled when a parent inquires, the child's name will be put on a waiting list to fill vacancies as they occur.

- As vacancies occur during the year, they will be filled from the waiting list, or from new registrants, according to the above procedures.

PARENT COMMUNICATION/INVOLVEMENT

Parents are informed of the activities in the Preschool through daily notes on the classroom bulletin board, through weekly or monthly newsletters, and through conversation with teachers and teachers' assistants.

Parents may wish to contribute "goodies" during holidays and parties throughout the school year, as they are notified about the events.

Your most important contribution as parents of a preschool student is to be punctual about arrival and pick-up, to be responsible regarding their updated and completed health forms and other necessary paper work (which must be on file) and to be enthusiastic about all their accomplishments. Remember, what looks easy to an adult has often taken a lot of time and effort to achieve for the preschool child.

There is a formal conference opportunity provided each fall. Should you wish a conference at any other time throughout the school year, you may make arrangements with your child's teacher for a mutually convenient time. Much of your child's work will be compiled in a portfolio in order to show their growth and progress throughout the school year. This portfolio will be distributed to you at year-end.

DRESS

Please make sure your child is dressed comfortably and sensibly for school and all its related activities. We strongly suggest sneakers and comfortable play clothes. Most of the real fun in preschool involves getting messy and moving around a lot. Children should feel comfortable enough to enjoy themselves without worrying about their clothes. Your child's name should be placed in all outdoor clothing and other belongings to help ensure the proper return of all their clothes and possessions. It is also a way of helping them become organized and provides opportunities for name recognition.

FOOD/SNACKS

Saint Mary Preschool provides a nutritional snack every school day, served mid-morning or mid-afternoon, depending on the session your child is in. Snack time is used as part of the curriculum and often provides a tie-in, not only to the unit topic, but as a structured social time, emphasizing prayer, table manners, social skills, and responsibility of set-up and clean-up.

With advance notice children may bring in special treats for their birthdays or other times during the year. Please advise us at the beginning of the school year of any food-related allergies your child may have. Food-related allergies must also be noted on your child's health record. Please note, Saint Mary School promotes a nut-free environment.

LUNCH BUNCH PROGRAM

The Lunch Bunch program offers an opportunity for an extended day for your child, building upon socialization and independence skills. The program commences shortly after the first day of school and is run from 11:30AM to 1:00PM, offering a ½ hour for our afternoon classes and up to 1 ½ hours for our three and four year old programs. A reasonable cost is determined each year on a half-hourly basis.

DROP OFF AND PICK-UP

No child should be brought to his/her class before 9:00AM (morning session) or 12:00PM (afternoon session), nor picked up after 11:30AM (morning session) or 2:30PM (afternoon session). If there is extenuating circumstance (e.g. traffic or emergency) please call the school and arrange for alternate pick-up. It is important that your child gets to school on time and is picked up on time so that he/she does not feel anxious or upset. Following a routine fosters security. Being on time for school sets a good example, while emphasizing the importance of school to your child.

For safety reasons, children must NEVER be left without direct transfer to an adult. Children must ALWAYS be brought directly to the designated

drop off area and parents must return to the designated pick up area for their child.

If your child is to be picked up by someone other than a parent, written permission, dated and signed by the parent, naming the person who will pick-up, must be submitted to the teacher beforehand. The teacher will verify this person's identity by checking his/her driver's license before the child is released to that person.

THE SICK CHILD

If your child is not feeling well, is running a fever, has diarrhea, or is vomiting, it is best to keep him/her home. It is school policy that a child may not come to school with any of the aforementioned symptoms and must be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school. This is for your child's protection as well as for that of the class. Please let us know immediately if there is a contagious situation (e.g. chicken pox, head lice, etc...) or if there is a more serious on-going health issue (e.g. asthma, epilepsy, diabetes, etc...) The more informed the teachers are, the better able we are to deal with any health situation. In addition, a head teacher on staff is trained in first aid and CPR.

If your child becomes ill at school, you will be notified by the teacher or teacher's assistant and expected to pick him/her up immediately. He/she will be kept in an isolated area within the classroom under supervision until you arrive to take him/her home.

FIRST DAY ANXIETY

Separation on the first day of school is often very difficult for children, particularly for those entering school for the first time. On occasion, it is even hard for a "veteran" of 4 years old, who may already have been to school before. It is our experience that the best transition from parent to teacher is the one accomplished quickly. Please give a hug, a kiss, and display a happy smile as you hand-off your child to his/her teacher. This will establish a routine which will become familiar to all of us. Keep in mind, even the most "hysterical" child quickly calms down in the face of

new toys, an exciting playground, and experienced teachers. We will be happy to call you at home to reassure you if your child is unhappy about staying at Saint Mary Preschool on those first few mornings. Tears and attempts to grab hold of you as you leave are quite normal for many children. Their suffering is over much sooner than your own!!!

BAD WEATHER

In case of inclement weather, please watch Channel 3 (WFSB), Channel 8 (WTNU), or Channel 30 (WVIT) for information regarding school delays or closings. If the Ridgefield Public Schools are closed, the Preschool will be closed. If the Ridgefield Public Schools call for a 90 minute delay, the morning classes will be canceled but the afternoon sessions **will** be held as usual. You can visit www.ridgefield.org for public school closing information or our school website www.smsridgefield.org. Our main concern is your child's safety. We would rather err on the side of prudence when snow, ice, or flooding is an issue.

FEES

No refunds are given for illness, vacations, or snow days. If your family experiences unforeseen hardships or a sudden financial emergency, the Bookkeeper will be available for consultation and possible alternative arrangements for payment. Tuition is billed three times per school year. The first payment is due on August 1st, the second payment is due on Nov. 1st, and the third is due on March 1st.

TYPICAL DAILY CLASSROOM SCHEDULE AT SAINT MARY PRESCHOOL

- **3 YEAR OLD PROGRAM – Tuesday/Thursday**
- **4 YEAR OLD PROGRAM – Monday/Wednesday/Friday**
- **TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN – Monday through Friday (afternoon session only)**

AM	PM	
9:00	12:00	Entrance, cubbies, quick circle for greetings and explanation of day's activities.
9:15	12:15	Free Play: A time for self-directed, center-oriented play; teacher time with individual children; art projects individually or in small groups.
10:15	1:15	Clean-up Time: Children learn responsibility and proper care of classroom toys, books, etc.
10:30	1:30	Circle Time: Shared group time for songs, finger plays, circle games, conversation, recitation, or prayer.
10:40	1:40	Trip to the bathroom, wash-up, prayer and snack. Time for emphasis on/practice of manners and social skills.
10:50	1:50	Recess.
11:15	2:15	Music: marching band, musical instruments, introduction of new songs, listening, puppets, bean bags, balance beam, organized group games. Or, story/reading/sharing book time.
11:25	2:25	Dismissal preparation: reinforce organization skills and say goodbyes.