


# Smart Start Preschool

*in Hidden Springs*

# Parent Handbook

*Dear Parents,*

*You are about to become an important part of Smart Start Preschool. This handbook has been assembled for you to use while your child is enrolled in our program. Should questions arise or you need to reach us, please call the school at:*

***208-246-9727***

*or email:* ***smartstartpreschool1234@gmail.com***

*We are looking forward to having your child in our school this year. Our goal is to provide a quality educational program that inspires children to create, discover and achieve.*

*Great care and attention are given by teachers to the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of each child. It is important that children build strong and confident feelings about themselves as capable beings, excited about learning, who can function successfully and dependently in the world.*

*You and your child are important to us. Success depends on establishing an effective partnership between home and school. We are looking forward to a great year at Smart Start Preschool.*

*Sincerely,*

*Erin Donahue*

## Mission Statement

Smart Start Preschool strives to create a safe learning environment, which promotes developmentally appropriate education and social skills for young children to learn about themselves, others and their surroundings. Emphasis is placed on self-esteem, creativity, and the development of the whole child. Smart Start utilizes a system of manipulative materials within a structured environment where exploration, discovery and learning take place. The focus is to teach readiness skills for kindergarten as well as instill the desire for life-long learning. A team approach between parents, children and teacher is essential for a consistent, quality education and experience.

## Hidden Springs
## Schedules and Tuition

Registration, supplies and material fee
$100 each school year

Early Preschool: (3 years old)
Tue/Thu Morning 9:00-11:30 $260/month

Preschool: (3-4 years old)
Tue/Thu Afternoon 12:30-3:00 $250/month

Tue/Thu Full day Classes (9:00-3:00) $465/month

Pre-K program: (4-5 years old)
MWF Full Day- 9:00-3:00 $565/month

After School Care offered 3:00-6:00, Monday-Friday

Smart Start Kid's Camp in the summer months for ages 4-8 yrs

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## 2025-2026 Curriculum

AUGUST: All About Me!
SEPTEMBER: Insects
OCTOBER: Autumn and Halloween NOVEMBER: Harvest and Thanksgiving
DECEMBER: Christmas around the World
JANUARY: Outer Space
FEBRUARY: Emotions and Communication
MARCH: Europe
APRIL: Authors & Illustrators
MAY: Pets

## 2025-2026 School Year Calendar-HS

August 12: Back to School Night
August 12: Student Orientation/Meet the teacher
August 13 & 14: First Day of School
September 1: NO SCHOOL- Labor Day
October 10: NO SCHOOL
October 17: NO SCHOOL
November 24-28: NO SCHOOL- Thanksgiving Break
December 19: Early Release: 1:15
December 22- January 5: NO SCHOOL-Winter Break
January 19: NO SCHOOL - MLK Jr Day
February 16: NO SCHOOL - President's Day
March 5: Kindergarten Registration 3:30-5:30
March 13: Early Release: 1:15
March 16-20: NO SCHOOL - Spring Break
April 18: NO SCHOOL
May 16: Early Release: 1:15
May 21: Last Day of School
May 22: Last Day of School & Early Release: 1:15

*(School calendar closure days based on Boise School District calendar- including school closures for inclement weather)*

## Daily Schedule

## PRE-K Monday, Wednesday, Friday

| | |
|---|---|
| 9:00-9:20 | Greeting |
| 9:20-9:45 | Circle Time |
| 9:45-10:45 | Self-Selected Learning Centers |
| 10:45-11:00 | Circle Time |
| 11:00-11:15 | Snack |
| 11:15-11:30 | Recess |
| 11:30-12:00 | Math Centers |
| 12:00-12:30 | Lunch |
| 12:30-1:00 | Quiet Time Play |
| 1:00-1:45 | Free Time |
| 1:45-2:00 | Circle/Yoga/introduce activity |
| 2:00-2:30 | Activity time |
| 2:30-2:45 | Snack |
| 2:45-3:00 | Recess |

## EARLY PRESCHOOL/PRESCHOOL TUESDAY/THURSDAY

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 9:00-9:15 | 12:30-12:45 | Greeting |
| 9:15-9:30 | 12:45-1:00 | Circle Time |
| 9:30-10:30 | 1:00-2:00 | Self-selected Learning Centers |
| 10:30-10:45 | 2:00-2:15 | Clean-up and Circle Time |
| 10:45-11:00 | 2:15-2:30 | Snack |
| 11:00-11:15 | 2:30-2:45 | Recess |
| 11:15–11:30 | 2:45-3:00 | *Music, Show & Tell or Yoga* |

## Self-Selected Learning Centers includes:

Art Table, Activity Table, Writing Center, Dramatic Play Area, Easel, Sensory Table, Block Center, Science/Math Corner, Library Area

# Discipline

Positive methods of discipline will be used to encourage self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-control. For example, directing a child to another activity rather than away from an activity, distracting or redirecting a child from a problem situation, helping children to understand that they are acceptable but their behavior or actions are not acceptable and why, and encouraging children to cooperate with others and solve problems by using words not actions.

We will give guidance in a calm, succinct and orderly fashion and provide a variety of stimulating planned activities with choices for the children.

The children will be made aware of, and expected to adhere to three basic rules.

1. The safety rule
2. The welcome rule
3. The respect rule

Our school rules are appropriate to the situation and the child's level of understanding. (i.e. throwing toys is not allowed because someone could get hurt. If a friend wishes to join you the answer is yes, so that feelings are not hurt).

Parents will be informed if their child is having behavior problems. We will work together to find solutions that are in the best interest of the child and the school. If a child's behavior becomes violent and uncontrollable, we reserve the right to dismiss the child from school after exhausting all possibilities as discussed with the parents.

# PHILOSOPHY

At Smart start preschool, we organize our curriculum around themes chosen with children's interest in mind. It's important that children learn to enjoy the process of learning. We want children to be confident in their ability to master new skills and learn new ideas, to understand that success requires effort, to take pride in their accomplishments, and to retain their natural curiosity. We use themes to explore the world with activities that emphasize hands on, sensory experiences and integrated learning.

According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), studies show that children who experience developmentally appropriate teaching practices in preschool and kindergarten do better in elementary school. Some research indicates that developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood education can lead to higher achievements throughout life.

Our goal is to assist children to be enthusiastic, effective, lifelong learners. At Smart Start Preschool, we support children's learning with a play-based curriculum, emphasizing the process of learning rather than specific benchmarks that we expect children to meet by the end of the year. By encouraging children to question, hypothesize, experiment and solve problems, we help them to develop important critical thinking skills. By observing and describing the world around them, and engaging in hands on sensory activities, children lay the foundation for later learning. We use an integrated curriculum because we believe this is how children learn best.

## At Smart Start Preschool, children most often:

- Lead...rather than follow the teacher.
- Create...rather than duplicate.
- Move...rather than wait.
- Make the lines...rather than color in the lines.
- Speak...rather than listen passively.
- Initiate...rather than imitate.
- Raise questions...rather than answer the teacher's questions.
- Solve their own problems...rather than the teacher's problems.
- Make art...rather than do crafts.
- Emphasize the process...rather than the product.
- Use authentic skills...rather than drill and practice.
- Make books...rather than fill in workbooks.
- Decide...rather than submit.
- Choose wisely...rather than being told.
- Make a plan...rather than follow the teacher's plan.
- Try again...rather than fail.

# PRESCHOOL GOALS:

**To foster independence, problem solving, confidence, critical thinking skills, and a love of learning.

**To foster children's self-awareness and ability to show respect and empathy for others.

**To teach children how to work with others, follow directions, self-regulate and develop self-help skills.

**To offer children educational opportunities through self-directed exploration and hands-on fun.

**To recognize that each child is unique and learns and develops at an individual rate, and to focus on the development of the whole child in these areas:

Math
Science
Writing
Art & Sensory
Character Development
Physical Development/Health
Language Development
Literacy (Phonics)
Social Studies
Geography
Creative Arts
Dramatic Play
Block play/Construction
Reading  Center

# General Policies

## *Enrollment*

*Children are accepted for enrollment to Smart Start without regard to race, creed or gender. Enrollment preference will be given to currently enrolled students first, then to siblings of students, then on a first come, first serve basis. A completed immunization record and registration form are required by the child's first day of school.*

*All children enter Smart Start on a trial basis of three weeks to ensure a proper match between the child and the environment. Parent or Smart Start may terminate service during the trial period without penalty.*

## *Tuition Payments*

*Tuition payments are due the FIRST day of each month with a half payment due mid-August. Tuition received after the 10th of the month will have an additional $10 late fee added. Automatic withdrawals are the preferred method of payment. Monthly tuition fees have been averaged over a ten-month year, regardless of the number of actual class days in any given month. Invoices or receipts will not be sent unless requested.*

*If a change in circumstance requires a withdrawal of your child from the program, a one-month notice is required.*

*Whether or not your child is in attendance, Smart Start's costs remain constant. There is no reduction in tuition or make up days due to excessive illness, vacation or general absenteeism.*

## *Parent Correspondence*

*Please make note of the school cell and save as a contact in your phones: 208-246-9727*

*The best way to reach us is to text us. We will likely not answer the phone when we are busy with children, and we rarely check email during the day, but we will keep an eye on incoming texts and reply.*

*School newsletters will be sent via email and will keep you abreast of what is going on at school. We will distribute your child's artwork and any other correspondence in your child's cubby. Please check this daily and take home all items as cubbies are often shared.*

## *Attendance*

*If your child will be missing school or unusually late, please notify the school via text. If your child will be missing school for an extended period, such as a family vacation, please let us know via text. If parents will be out of town for the day or for several days, please notify the school and provide the name and phone numbers of the person who is responsible for your child. There are no make-up days for days your child misses school.*

## *Drop-Off*

*All children must be accompanied by an adult to and from the preschool and signed in and out each day. School begins at 9:00 a.m. each day. Please try to arrive to school on time. Making your good-byes brief and loving helps your child make the separation less difficult. Separation anxiety diminishes as your child becomes more familiar and comfortable with his/her new surroundings. Upon arrival, please come in, direct your child to get a squirt of hand sanitizer, help your child put things in their cubby, and direct your child to sign-in at our children's sign-in table.*

## *Pick-up*

*If someone other than a parent will be picking up your child, please inform us the morning of or text us, even if this person is on your registration form. Your child will not be released to an unknown person without notice. If you know you are going to be late in picking up your child, please contact the school as soon as possible. After five minutes late, a late charge of $1.00 per minute will be charged. Thank you for your promptness!*

# *Illness*

*Please make sure that your emergency numbers are kept current and that you can be reached immediately whenever your child is at school. If your child becomes ill while at school, you will be notified and expected to pick up your child as soon as possible. Please inform the school if your child will not be attending school due to an illness. In an effort to keep everyone at school healthy, please do not bring your child to school if he or she has any of the following symptoms:*

*** A fever of 101 or higher your child must be fever free for 24 hours*
*** Vomiting two or more times in the last 24 hours*
*** Diarrhea two or more times in the last 24 hours.*
*** A persistent cough.*
*** Conjunctivitis/pinkeye or a discharge from the eye- wait 24 hours after medication begins*
*** Fatigue or illness which will prevent participation in daily activities or that take too much provider time and attention away from others.*
*** Lice—Inform the school immediately so precautions can be taken.*
*** Sore throat and/or swollen glands.*
*** Ear infection.*
*** Mucus/cloudy runny nose.*

*Please use your best judgment with any illness or possible illness. If you feel your child may be contagious, please be considerate of others and keep them home.*

# *Snack*

*All children are served a snack each day. If there are certain foods that your child cannot eat, please let us know. Please let us know of any food allergies that your child has before the first day of school.*

*In an effort to provide hearty and healthy snacks, and expose children to a variety of foods, we ask that each family provide a snack donation of a fresh fruit or vegetable, or perishable dairy product like yogurt or cheese, once a month to supplement the dry portion of the snack we provide.*

*<u>When you bring in a snack donation:</u>*
** Bring enough of one thing for a class of approximately 20*
** Place a check mark on the checklist hanging in the entry area*
** Give it directly to a teacher and we will refrigerate necessary items.*
** No need to cut up or prepare fruit. We can peel and cut up fruits and vegetables at school and we may not use it that day as we will try to use fruit and perishables as needed while they are fresh.*

**If you know you are going to be shopping for snack items, feel free to ask what we are in need of. We can tell you what we are low on, and what we have plenty of!*

**When possible, let your child be involved in choosing produce and snacks at the grocery store with you and feel free to get creative! We love to let children try new and exotic foods with their peers.*

**There are no scheduled days to provide a snack. As a general rule, <u>TU/TH Classes</u>, please aim for the first half of the month, <u>and PRE-K Class</u>, please aim for the second half.*

***We also love donations of lettuce or green veggies for our beloved pet rabbit Willow!*

## *Potty-Training and Diapers.*

*Some children in our early preschool class are still working on potty training. With a 2 1/2 hour day, children who are not quite potty trained but working on it, are still welcome to start school, and we will continue the potty-training efforts at school. However, Smart Start Preschool is not set up for changing diapers and is something we are not able to do. If your child has a bowel movement while at school, you will be notified and will need to be available to come and change the diaper right away.*

## *Clothing*

*We get dirty at Smart Start! Many activities include messy project. While we do provide smocks, your child should not have to worry about his or her clothes, so please help your child dressing comfortable, washable garments. Weather permitting, we will be going outside every day. Please send appropriate jackets, hats and gloves during the winter months. In the winter months, when your child comes to school in rain or snow boots, you are welcome to leave slippers with your child to wear during the day.*

## *Show and Tell*

*Show and Tell takes place at school in small groups on a weekly basis. Each child will be allowed to bring one item from home to share. Please help your child choose just one item from home each week that they would like to share.*

## *Toys*

*Please do not allow your child to bring toys to school unless it is a show and tell day. Toys and items brought from home tend to cause problems with sharing, get lost, and are a distraction to your child and others. We recognize the difference between a security item and a toy, and we are sensitive to the need for a security item.*

## *Special person*

*Each child will be scheduled a week to be our "Special Person". When possible, we will schedule this around your child's birthday, and invite you to come and celebrate your child with us during circle time one day during that week. Providing a special snack, (birthday or favorite food) is encouraged during this week. Directions for decorating a special person poster will be sent home in advance, and a poster adorned with family pictures etc. can be brought in for your child's entire special week.*

## *Holidays.*

*We love to celebrate most holidays at school and invite parents to many of them! We have already scheduled a Halloween party, Friendship Feast, Christmas Pajama Party, Valentine's Party, Mother's Day Tea for our PRE-K students, and End of the Year Parties. Sign-up sheets will be posted before each party for you to provide snacks or party supplies, volunteer, or organize a game or craft. Please watch for these sign-up sheets in the entry area before Holiday celebrations.*

*Many Thanks!*