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MESSAGE TO PARENTS

Children are often excited about starting school -- - and a little afraid.
Starting school means:



- being away from you
- learning new routines and new rules
- following directions from other adults
- getting along with other children

If you have any questions about your child's adjustment to our Pre-kindergarten program, please call your child's teacher for ways to help him/her adjust.



SUWANNEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

Suwannee County Schools will educate all students in a safe and supportive learning environment that will develop life-long learners and productive citizens.

VISION STATEMENT

Suwannee County School District will be a system of excellence ensuring all students are prepared for personal success.

BELIEF STATEMENT

We the community, parents, school staff, and students of Suwannee County believe:

- a commitment to high expectations and excellence will promote life-long learning
- all children are valued individuals who can learn to the fullest extent of their ability
- a safe, supportive and orderly environment will increase student achievement
- allocations of all resources must be aligned with the school district's mission and vision
- an appreciation of diverse ideas and values in our multi-cultural society will promote unity and cooperation
- professional development is essential for continuous improvement of student achievement

PHILOSOPHY OF THE PROGRAM

We believe a high quality early childhood program provides a safe environment, which promotes the development of the young child while responding to the needs of families.

We believe the young child learns by interacting with materials, people, and ideas to challenge the child's interests. We believe:

PLAY IS THE WORK OF THE YOUNG CHILD!



GOALS OF THE PROGRAM

The Pre-Kindergarten Program emphasizes concrete, active learning experiences to achieve the following goals:

- Foster a positive self-concept in each child
- Develop physical and social skills
- Encourage children to think, question, and experiment
- Encourage language development (*phonemic awareness*) and love of reading
- Encourage and demonstrate sound health, safety, and nutritional practices
- Encourage creative expression and appreciation for the arts
- Provide for special needs of children
- Respect cultural differences of staff and children
- Prepare children for kindergarten/school readiness
- Respond to needs of families and community
- Promote an understanding of the Pre-kindergarten/School Readiness program for parents to promote positive attitude toward school and learning



WHAT IS A PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM?

YOU ARE YOUR CHILD'S FIRST TEACHER! We need you to stay involved and participate in the Pre-kindergarten program as your child attends school this year.

The school readiness skills for young children are taught through play. An active learning environment helps children learn through exploration. We will help your child develop his/ her large muscles by encouraging participation in activities with tricycles and activities for running, throwing, jumping, catching, and hopping. We will help your child develop small muscles by encouraging participation in experiences with puzzles, paint, clay, cutting and gluing, sorting and stacking, fitting blocks together and using pencils, crayons, markers, and paint brushes.



Our Pre-kindergarten program is designed to help your child develop language skills. We encourage children to talk and tell us about many experiences. Social skills and behavior are very important in helping children learn to get along with each other. The skills include: taking care of preschool materials, taking turns, sharing, and listening in a small group.

The pre-kindergarten skills we will work on with your child are: recognize his/her first name, count objects, identify colors and shapes, identify letters of the alphabet and numbers, phonemic awareness, letter sounds, sort and match objects, observe clocks and calendars, and follow two-step directions. For a more detailed list, please see the **FLORIDA EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENTAL STANDARDS FOR FOUR-YEAR-OLDS**

We do all these things to get ready for kindergarten! We work with families in our Pre-kindergarten Programs to help develop the whole child.





THINGS TO SEND TO SCHOOL

Please send a **change of clothes** for the appropriate season, including underwear and socks. Make sure your child's name is on each clothing item. All clothes will be returned at the end of the school year. If your child uses the spare clothes at school, remember to send replacements.

Your child will need a **mat** for rest time. Please label the mat with your child's name. At the end of the year, everything will be sent home, unless the mat is not useable.

STUDENT CHECKOUT POLICY

If it is necessary for you to pick up your child early for a doctor's appointment or family matter, **only a designated parent, guardian, or adult may check out your child.** You should report to the main office to check your child out. If you are sending someone who is not on the list of designated adults to pick up your child, please let us know in writing. **This person must have a picture ID.**

FIELD TRIPS

Occasionally, our pre-kindergarten classes will go on field trips. We schedule field trips according to the unit or theme we are experiencing and exploring at that time. The trips provide valuable learning experiences outside the classroom. Parents are encouraged to go with us on field trips. Adults who attend field trips must go through the Volunteer Approval process and have a Florida Department of Law Enforcement background screening completed. We believe that a parent who is involved in the child's learning process is a better partner for learning!

Our classes may visit the Suwannee River Regional Library in Live Oak and Branford once a month during the school year. This gives our young children the opportunity to visit a library, hear stories read aloud by the librarian, and explore books.

TRANSPORTATION

You **must** call the transportation department before your child may ride a school bus. All pre-kindergarten children are eligible to ride the Suwannee County school buses. Parents/Guardians or designated adults need to meet the child at the bus stop promptly during pickup and drop-off each day. If an adult is not at the bus stop, the child will be returned to their respective school site. **After the second occurrence, if you have not contacted the school by 4:00 p.m. the sheriff's department may be notified.**

Suwannee Primary School 386-647-4300	Branford Elementary School 386-935-5700
Transportation Department	
386-647-4127	

The bus schedule for school children who require additional services will be coordinated by the transportation director and the classroom teacher as designated on the child's individual education plan.

If your child is **only** attending Voluntary Pre-kindergarten, they may ride a bus to school, but must be picked up at 11:30 a.m. and **are not eligible to ride School District provided transportation home (school bus).**

If you bring your child to school, you may drop him/her off at the designated area of the school. Please make sure the duty person is aware your child is here. **Supervision of students begins at 7:30 a.m. at Suwannee Primary School and 7:45 a.m. at Branford Elementary School.**

PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE YOUR CHILD UNATTENDED AT SCHOOL.



Suwannee Primary School Parents

The school day begins at 8:05 a.m. and ends at SPS 2:20 P.M. & BES 2:40 P.M. If you pick your child up from school by car, please come to the pick-up area at the south end of the building. Your child's teacher or a designated school staff person will be there with your child.

APT/SAC

Both Suwannee Primary School and Branford Elementary have a School Advisory Council and APT that meets 8 times during the year. If you are interested in serving on this council, please contact the principal at your child's school (386) 647-4300 or (386) 935-5700. We need your participation to make this an effective group

ATTENDANCE

It is important to establish good habits of school attendance at an early age. Preschool children should come to school **everyday**, unless they are sick or there is a family emergency. A doctor's excuse or parent excuse note should be sent upon your child's return to school. We will provide you with a copy of the excuse note from the Early Learning Coalition Florida's Gateway during your parent orientation meeting. A sample of this excuse note is provided:

Early Learning Coalition of Florida's Gateway
1104 SW Main Blvd
Lake City, FL 32025

Provider: _____ Month: _____
My child: _____ Parent Signature: _____

Was absent 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31
(please circle or draw a line through the days absent)

Due to the following:

SCHOOL READINESS CIRCUMSTANCES

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illness requiring home stay | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitalization of child or parent w/documentation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Court ordered visitation | <input type="checkbox"/> Unforeseen military deployment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Death in the immediate family | |

NOTES AND MESSAGES TO PARENTS

Please check with your child daily to see if the teacher or school has sent home any important notes for parents about upcoming events, early school dismissal, or activities. Our program follows the regular school calendar that you received when you registered your child. Please post your calendar in a safe place in your home. There is a copy of the school calendar in this handbook.

Visitation

We welcome parents, grandparents, and guardians to visit and volunteer in our pre-kindergarten classes on a regular basis. If you are interested in visiting or volunteering, please check with your child's teacher.

We want to make sure our school is a safe school. Therefore, anyone who visits or volunteers must complete the volunteer form and the Florida Background and Screening

with the district office.

SICK CHILDREN

For children to be successful in school, they must learn to read, write, and master mathematics as well as many other skills. Health problems can adversely affect a child's ability to learn. Physical, mental, and emotional health problems may cause students to miss school, lack energy, be distracted, or have problems that may interfere with their ability to learn.

Since children spend many of their daytime hours in school and since healthy kids make better students, it is important for parents to assure the health and well-being of their children.

The main reasons for keeping your child home are he/she is too sick to participate comfortably at school or might spread a contagious disease to other students. If your child has been diagnosed with a contagious disease, please contact the school nurse and/or your child's teacher(s).

We ask for your cooperation in helping us to control the spread of communicable diseases at school. **Please note:** If you are a working parent please make arrangements for someone (who can be easily contacted) to pick up and care for your child if she/he becomes sick.

PLEASE help keep your child and others healthy by keeping your child home if he/she has been diagnosed with or has signs and symptoms of any of the following.

- Vomiting more than once in the past 24 hours
- Diarrhea within the past 24 hours
- Fever over 100.4 within the past 24 hours
- Sore throat/red throat
- Frequent coughing and or sneezing
- Runny nose with thick yellow-green colored mucous
- Red, watery eyes
- Thick yellow discharge from eyes
- Pain that does not go away (stomach, head, ear, or elsewhere)
- Rash over a large part of the body
- Chicken pox until sores have scabbed (usually 5 -7 days)
- Impetigo, ringworm, or scabies (until treatment and open areas covered)
- Bacterial pinkeye (thick eye drainage and redness of the white of the eyes)



Your child may return to school when 24 hours have passed from the last signs/symptoms of the illness. If your child has been sent home with a possible contagious disease, a doctor's note is required for your child to return to school.

An emergency information form, updated annually, shall be completed and signed by the parent/guardian for each student listing: contact person(s), family physician, and permission for emergency care (FL Administrative Code 64-F-.004, allergies, significant health history).

PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM FEES

PROGRAM		PARENT FEE
Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten	8:20 A.M. - 11:30 A.M. SPS, BES	Free
4 year olds School Readiness-After VPK	11:30 A.M. – 2:20 P.M. SPS 11:30 A.M. – 2:40 P.M. BES	Determined by Early Learning Coalition of Florida’s Gateway
3 year olds School Readiness	8:05 A. M. – 2:20 P.M. SPS	
Full Pay (School Day)After VPK	11:30 A.M. – 2:20 P.M. SPS 11:30 A.M. – 2:40 P.M. BES	\$55.00 \$55.00
Full Pay Extended Day After VPK	11:30 A.M. – 5:30 P.M.	\$65.00
Three Year Olds Full Pay	8:05 A.M.- 2:20 P.M.	\$80.00

The Suwannee County School District policy for the collection of this fee is as follows:

1. **Fees must be paid on or before the first day of the school week.** Parents may pay weekly or monthly, but **all fees are due in advance.** If fees are not kept up to date, **your child will not be able to continue participation in the extended day programs at SPS.** You will be required to pick up your child at 11:20 am daily.
2. Fees must be paid in **CASH or MONEY ORDER** only.
3. If possible, a parent should bring the fee to school in the envelope we provide and give it to the Pre-kindergarten teacher or paraprofessional.

School (check one)
<input type="checkbox"/> Suwannee Primary
<input type="checkbox"/> Branford Elementary
Date: _____ 201__
Child: _____
Teacher: _____
Parent: _____
Fee Money: _____

PARENT FEES FOR SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM

Florida State Law now requires that you, as a parent/guardian, must pay a fee for your child’s participation in the school readiness program. There is not a charge for Voluntary Pre-kindergarten (8:20 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.) at SPS and (8:20 a.m. - 11:30a.m.)BES. The parent fee is determined by the Early Learning Coalition of Florida’s Gateway, based on your income and/or school enrollment.

SUWANNEE COUNTY SCHOOLS

Pre-kindergarten Program

Discipline Policy

We recognize that preschool children are active, curious, social, and exploring individuals. Our goals are to provide and promote active thinking, engaging activities, appropriate social behavior, and a safe environment for thinking and learning to prepare children with the skills necessary to enter Kindergarten.

Our preschool teachers and staff will:

- 1) model appropriate behavior by treating all children with respect
- 2) demonstrate and encourage active and engaging learning activities
- 3) listen to children's thoughts and ideas
- 4) provide rules for the safety and respect of children and staff

Our preschool children will:

- 1) behave by treating all children and staff with respect
- 2) participate in learning activities
- 3) listen to other children's and teacher's thoughts and ideas
- 4) follow rules and directions for safety and respect for all

Preschool children will be disciplined with:

- 1) verbal explanation for inappropriate behavior
- 2) removal from the group activity for up to five (5) minutes
- 3) redirection to another activity or group
- 4) parent notification to pick up the child from school (in extreme cases)

Thank you for your participation in promoting this discipline policy with your child.

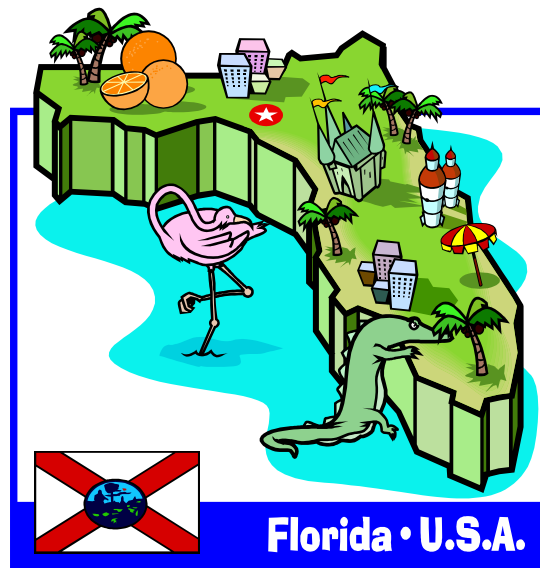
FLORIDA EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENTAL STANDARDS FOR FOUR-YEAR-OLDS

The Florida Voluntary Pre-kindergarten Education Standards describes the skills that four year old children should know and be able to do by the end of their pre-kindergarten year. The Suwannee Pre-kindergarten Programs uses these standards to ensure that all pre-kindergarten students are ready for kindergarten. We work on these skills to prepare each child for success in kindergarten and in life.

The Florida Voluntary Pre-kindergarten Standards include five domains (areas of development). They are: I. Physical Development, II. Approaches to Learning, III. Social and Emotional Development, IV. Language, Communication, and Emergent Literacy, V. Cognitive Development and General Knowledge, and Motor Development. Each domain has several skills that are listed by category. If you would like a complete list of the standards you may access them at www.fldoe.org. If you do not have access to the internet, please contact your child's teacher and the school will provide a copy.

In the Language and Communication, Emergent Literacy, and Mathematical and Scientific Thinking areas, you will find benchmarks under each standard. Benchmarks are more precise than the standards and are set to reflect the level and skill and knowledge that should be demonstrated by a child at the END of their pre-kindergarten experience. These benchmarks are goals for children to maximize their chance for success during the primary school years.

We hope this information will help you in preparing your child for success in school.



Play Is A Child's Work!!

- to work and play together
- to respect the rights of others
- to listen as well as speak
- to express ourselves creatively
- to grow in self-control
- to grow from dependence to independence
- to listen and follow directions
- to develop good working habits
- to finish what we start
- to clean up after work time
- to participate in group activities
- to enjoy using a variety of materials
- to share toys, equipment, and experiences
- to dramatize stories and experiences
- to develop an interest in books
- to develop an interest in the world around us
- to improve muscular coordination
- to stay with plans for increasingly longer periods of time
- to develop new interests and extend old ones
- to understand new words and be able to use them
- to be HAPPY!



When the child listens to stories or looks at books, he/she:

- learns to listen
- has an opportunity to increase vocabulary by hearing new words read
- learns about different concepts and people
- learns to enjoy books and reading
- visualizes the things he/she is hearing about
- begins telling stories from pictures and books in an orderly sequence
- begins hearing likenesses and differences in words
- recalls information that is seen and heard
- sees adults reading and enjoying stories
- learns to recognize the name of common objects, places, and actions
- develops book awareness concepts such as following pictures and print from left to right and top to bottom
- learns to handle books carefully



When the child works in the quiet area, he/she:

- has an opportunity to work alone or together with other children
- gains satisfaction in completing a puzzle or game and builds self-confidence
- has an opportunity to improve eye-hand coordination
- distinguishes and describes shapes
- fits things together and takes them apart
- compares and sorts objects into groups
- uses and describes something in many different ways
- recognizes and creates patterns
- compares numbers and amounts

When the child plays in the housekeeping area, he/she:

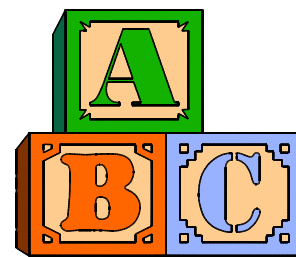
- learns what the roles of mothers, fathers, and children are
- understands what it feels like to play at being someone else
- learns how to use imagination
- learns to cooperate with other children
- increases his/her ability to communicate with others about personally meaningful experiences
- imitates and describes sounds from the environment
- pantomimes actions such as cooking and vacuuming

When the child works in the art area, he/she:

- is more concerned with the process than with the finished product. This is as it should be for this stage of development
- learns about colors and how to use them
- learns to use imagination and transfers ideas to paper
- gets emotional satisfaction from being able to express himself/herself
- learns how to use small muscle coordination to handle a brush
- learns to make choices and decisions
- increases language ability by talking about his/her creation
- learns how to use materials like scissors, glue, tape and staples
- learns how to use imagination to make the kind of creation in mind. Once again the process, not the finished product, is important to him/her.
- learns about shapes, sizes, colors



When the child works in the block area, he/she:



- learns to use imagination to create something from his/her own thinking
- has the satisfaction of being able to make something
- learns about sizes and shapes, weights and balances, height and depth, smoothness, roughness, and volume
- is exercising his/her body
- may be learning to play with others
- learns to communicate ideas through language when discussing similarities and differences
- learns to solve problems and make decisions
- creates patterns when building
- represents personal experiences through role play and pretending

When the child plays in the outdoor area, he/she:

- learns how to use his/her body effectively
- has fun and relaxation to be found in bodily movement
- learns the limitations of his/her body
- learns safety and caution
- learns to take turns and to share a piece of equipment
- develops vocabulary words such as “over” and “under”
- gains experience using large muscles
- represents experiences through dramatic play
- experiences the direction of movement of things and people
- observes and describes weather changes
- explores the natural environment and textures

When the child works in the sand and water area, he/she:

- finds it soothing to bury his/her hands in sand or pour water in and out of cups
- is able to relax with these materials and center attention on a task
- has an opportunity to play alone and not to have to compete with other children as with some activities. This is especially important to a child who has trouble getting along with friends.
- has a great opportunity to learn about size and measurement by experimenting with measuring spoons, cups and different size containers
- learns which kinds of things float in water
- is not concerned with a final product so he/she does not find it frustrating
- develops vocabulary words such as “empty” and “full”
- explores actively the attributes and functions of materials with all of the senses
- transforms and combines materials



When the child cooks, he/she:

- learns to follow directions
- stimulates and uses all five senses
- learns to recognize colors, shapes and different kinds of foods and kitchen utensils
- has an opportunity to use different kinds of tools and equipment to improve small muscle coordination
- develops vocabulary words such as “half” and “whole”
- observes and describes transformations
- measures ingredients
- compares numbers and amounts
- predicts events
- recognizes objects by taste, touch and smell
- describes relations among events and ideas
- distinguishes between “some” and “all”
- observes that clocks are used to denote the passage of time
- tastes new foods



SERVICES FOR FAMILIES

As a parent of a preschool child, you have available to you a resource system that may be very helpful to you. If you have questions or concerns about your child's development or progress, you may call:

Florida Diagnostic Learning and Resource Systems (FDLRS)..... 1-800-227-0059

If you have any questions about your child's placement or after school care, you may call:

Early Learning Coalition of Florida's Gateway.....1-386-752-9770

TOLL FREE NUMBER.....1-866-752-9770

If you need help with migrant services, an interpreter, or the Migrant Education Family Literacy Program you may call:

Juanita Torres(386) 647-4649

Imelda Jaramillo.....(386) 647-4320

Naela Jimenez.....(386) 688-3300/(386)647-4723

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

No person shall, on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, political or religious beliefs, national or ethnic origin, or genetic information, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity, or in any employment conditions or practices conducted by the Suwannee County School District, except as provided by law.

A student having a grievance concerning discrimination may contact:

Name: Bill Brothers
Position: Director of Human Resources
Address: 702 2nd ST., NW Live Oak, FL 32064
Telephone: 386-647-4633

An employee or applicant having a grievance concerning employment may contact:

Name: Bill Brothers
Position: Director of Human Resources
Address: 702 2nd ST., NW Live Oak, FL 32064
Telephone: 386-647-4633

NOTICE OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Suwannee Pre-kindergarten Program (the Provider) understands that, in accordance with section 1002.72, Florida Statutes, records of children enrolled in the VPK program are confidential. The Provider shall keep all Voluntary Pre-kindergarten (VPK) records confidential and disclose the records only in accordance with the law. The Provider shall follow the Florida Public Records Act (Chapter 119, Florida Statutes) and other applicable laws regarding disclosure of any confidential information received by the State of Florida, the Agency of Workforce Innovation, or the Coalition.

The Provider understands that a parent of a VPK child has the right to inspect and review the individual records of his/her child and obtain a copy of the records.