



# Discovery Place Preschool

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## Parent Handbook

### 2017-2018



## Welcome to Discovery Place!

Discovery Place provides a responsive and nurturing environment where children come to experience creativity and learn by discovery. Our goal is to give children the opportunity to act on the environment, explore their own potential and express themselves in original, exciting and creative ways. The purpose of this Parent Handbook is to familiarize you with our policies and procedures and to make you feel at home.

## Statement of Philosophy

The philosophy of education and pedagogy of Discovery Place reflects our dedication to what is acknowledged as best practice in early childhood education. Our view is based on the belief that children are active researchers of their world. Children construct and co-construct knowledge and this knowledge is reinforced through self-expression and reflection.

## Governing Authority

Discovery Place is a non-profit organization governed by a Board of Directors. The Board sets policy which is administered by the Program Director, who is also responsible for the daily operation of the Program. Discovery Place is licensed and regulated by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. The program is funded entirely by tuition and fund-raising activities, and is not subsidized by private or government funds. Contributions are tax deductible.

## Photography/Documentation

In keeping with the Reggio inspired approach, teachers closely observe and document the children's work and expression of ideas. A variety of techniques are used, including taking photographs or videos. Parents will be asked to give permission for their child to be photographed or videoed for these purposes, and we will respect any parents wish for their child not to be included.

## Supplies

Classroom supply lists are sent home upon enrollment. Teachers may request additional supplies as needed throughout the year.

Children should bring a backpack with an extra set of clothing including underwear, socks and a full outfit appropriate for the season. A daily supply of diapers should be sent with children who are not potty trained.

Extended Day children will also need two crib sized sheets, a small blanket to be left at school, and a toothbrush with cover.



## Guidance Policy

Classroom guidance will be positive, and based on mutual respect and shared responsibility. Teachers guide each child's social and emotional growth with kindness, and clear and simple classroom guidelines. Guidance strategies are posted in each classroom.

## Holidays

Our program is non-denominational. We do not teach a specific religious belief to the children. We do, however, encourage children to share with us the traditions and beliefs practiced in their homes. Teachers may discuss and give the children appropriate activities to demonstrate various customs and traditions of families around the world related to the season.

## Open Door Policy

Discovery Place has an Open Door policy. Parents are welcome to visit the classroom at any time, or to schedule visits of other classrooms.

## Personal Items/Labeling

Your child may be allowed to bring toys and personal items to school depending upon teacher's classroom rules; however, please keep in mind that these items might get lost or broken.

Please label all of your child's belongings and personal items, including jackets, hats, mittens and gloves. Names may be written in marker on the tag of the item, or on tape applied to the item.

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## Program Description

Discovery Place is a year-round early childhood program offering full and half day preschool for over 200 children between the ages of 12 months to 6 years. The hours of operation are 7:15 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

### Programs

*Preschool for Toddlers (12 months-2 years)*- Toddlers learn best in a supportive, responsive, relationship-based environment. Our toddler program is designed to instill a sense of well-being and emotional security, giving children the support they need to learn through materials, experiences, and relationships.

*Preschool for Ages 2-3*- The curriculum for children this age is carefully designed for learning through active, sensory exploration, inquiry and social interactions. Teachers prepare daily contexts for learning, observe the children carefully and document the children's ideas as they reveal their understanding of the world.

*Preschool for Ages 3-6*- The curriculum for children this age is informed by accepted research and theory of how children learn and develop. Learning standards are aligned with local and national standards in eight domains: Language and Literacy, Math and Problem Solving, Social/Emotional Learning, Technology, Creative Expression, Science and Nature, Health and Fitness, Large and Small Motor Development.

### Schedules

*Half-Day Preschool:* This schedule is designed for children who attend either a morning or afternoon session, 8:15-11:00 a.m. or 12:15-3:00 p.m.

## General Policies/Procedures

### Appropriate Clothing

- Children should be dressed for freedom of movement, messy art activities and play. We recommend supportive tennis shoes (Velcro is best) and comfortable play clothes that can get dirty. Children may get sand in their shoes on the playground.
- For safety reasons please do not send your child to school with a necklace (or anything else around their neck), or drawstring on a coat or jacket. These can get caught on playground equipment.
- During cold weather, we require warm coats, mittens or gloves, and a hat or hood.

### Field Trips

Field trips may be taken at the classroom teacher's request. Parents or legal guardians will be notified of the details of the trip and any cost involved, and will be required to sign a field trip waiver prior to the trip. Parent volunteers may be requested to provide transportation and supervision.

*Please note: There will be no alternate placement in our classrooms for a child on the day of a trip. Please plan to make other arrangements for your child if you do not want them to attend the trip.*

for parents who want to discuss their child's progress and to plan for Kindergarten with the classroom teacher. Conferences can also be scheduled at any time during the school-year at the request of a parent or teacher.

### **Parental Concerns**

If you have any questions or concerns at any time about your child's development or progress, or about our program, please feel free to contact your child's teachers or our administrative staff.

### **A Note on Assessment**

*In keeping with our belief in the value of early intervention for children with developmental problems, staff are alert to normal developmental behavior. They may express concerns to parents about children that seem to differ from the norm. This is our attempt to be of support and help to parents and is considered our professional responsibility. Teachers or administrative staff may recommend further assessment, appropriate programs, activities or other helpful information if parents desire. Staff members are not trained to diagnose special needs.*



*Extended-Day Preschool:* This schedule is designed for children who need more than a three hour program. Children participate in preschool learning experiences in the morning, followed by lunch and nap. Before and/or after school care may also be added to fit your needs.

## **Curriculum**

The Discovery Place curriculum is informed by accepted research and theory based on predictable principles of development. The program uses a developmentally appropriate, emergent, and multi-dimensional curriculum design for in-depth, integrated learning. Areas of content which align with local, state, and national standards include: Self esteem, autonomy, social/emotional, cultural, literacy, language, critical thinking, math, science and nature, humanities, motor skills, health and fitness, and self-expression (through art, music, movement, and drama).

### **Supplemental Curriculum**

Other curriculum programs such as "Second Step" and "Mind Up" for social/emotional learning, and "The Kitchen", "Fun on The Farm" and "People, People, Everywhere" for literacy have been integrated into our curriculum to provide children a well-rounded learning experience.

### **The Reggio Approach**

Our work with children has been influenced by the distinguished schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy. In Reggio Emilia, each child is believed to be naturally creative, competent, and full of potential. Educators are encouraged to utilize research-based ideology where theory informs practice and practice informs theory.

## Enrollment

### Admissions

Applications from new parents may be made at any time by completing an Application Form and indicating an anticipated start date. Each new school year begins at the end of August and runs through May. Students will be enrolled to begin the school year, or as vacancies become available throughout the year.

The following must be completed and returned to the office before your child may attend school:

√ **Enrollment Form**– Includes general information about the child. Must be completed each year.

√ **Emergency Medical Authorization Form**– Found on the back of the enrollment forms. Must be signed and witnessed by someone other than spouse.

√ **Health Form**– Includes important medical information about your child including allergies and immunization record; must be signed by a physician. Your physician may sign the Form without seeing the child. (However, we strongly recommend that every child sees his/her doctor at least yearly for a physical examination). This form must be current and on file before the child can start school.

√ **Enrollment Fee**– Due for each child each year. Payable at the time of enrollment. Non-refundable.

### Enrollment Changes

Parents may make requests for changes in a child's enrollment at any time. Changes will be made based on space availability.

## Communicating with Two Households

When parents are living separately, we make every effort to provide newsletters and all school correspondence to both parents. Upon request, we will mail newsletters and other correspondence to parents who do not bring or pick up their child at school. We consider both parents important to the child's school experience and avoid expressing any alliance with either parent over the other. It is necessary for us to refuse to become involved in disagreements the parents may have. Parents should come to terms of agreement for purposes of instructing the school as to their wishes regarding their child.

### Classroom Communication

Classroom Newsletters will be sent home or emailed on a regular basis. In addition, many of our classroom teachers will email and post a photo collage of the events of the day or week. Walls and boards inside and outside the classroom are designated for parent information and contain lesson plans, news, and announcements.

### Conferences

Conferences will be scheduled in February or March for parents of children in our Pre-K classes.

Conferences may also be scheduled in the Spring for our younger classes. These conferences are provided



## Parent Communication/ Participation

### Home/School Partnership

We value the importance of good relationships between home and school. Parent involvement is welcomed and encouraged. We encourage parent participation in a variety of ways:

*Open House*– An Open House is held at the beginning of each school year to allow families to see the classrooms and visit with the teachers.

*Parent Volunteers*– Parents can volunteer to be room parents, party helpers, field trip drivers, and/or special project workers. Parents are also welcome to volunteer to assist the program in any way that their time and talents allow.

*Parent Group*– The Discovery Place Parent Group works on projects throughout the school year to benefit the parents, staff and school. These projects include fundraising events, parent meet-ups and teacher appreciation week.

## Special Needs Statement

Discovery Place hopes to meet the individual needs of children; however, there are some children whose needs we cannot meet. If you have a child that may require a special education environment, we will try to help you find a more appropriate program. If we determine that Discovery Place should be a part of your child's educational program, the following conditions need apply:

*We cannot be responsible for providing a therapeutic program.*

*The child's attendance cannot compromise the program.*

## Nondiscrimination Statement

Discovery Place admits students of any race, color, religion, gender, gender expression, national origin (ancestry), and disability to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, gender expression, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, veteran status or sexual orientation in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies and other school-administered programs.



## Withdrawal/Dismissal

Parents must provide the office with a two-week WRITTEN notice if they intend to withdraw their child. The school will then pro-rate monthly tuition or refund a pro-rated amount if it has been pre-paid.

*Exception: We will not accept early withdrawal in May. Full tuition will be due during the month of May regardless of your child's attendance.*

Occasionally, Discovery Place must dismiss a child from the program due to failure to adjust or behavioral needs which our staff cannot meet. Our staff may try to suggest other programs or alternatives for the parents. A child may also be dismissed for failure of parents/legal guardians to comply with the Policies and Procedures of the school.

## Tuition and Fees

Tuition is the same, regardless of absences, inclement weather, closings and other major holidays if they fall on a day the child is enrolled. The major holidays are Labor Day, up to three days in observance of Thanksgiving and Christmas, up to two days in observance of New Year's Day, Memorial Day, and Independence Day. In addition, extreme conditions such as water breaks, electrical outage, bomb threats, etc. may require closings. In these rare cases, parents will be notified. Tuition will not be reduced.

Cash, check or online payments are accepted. If paying by check, please write the week(s) or month for which you are paying and your child's name (last name if different from yours) in the memo section of your check. Cash payments should be handed directly to a staff member at the front desk. Online payments can be made on our website. A \$1.00 convenience fee will apply for each online transaction. Returned checks and online payments are subject to a \$10.00 fee.

## Inclement Weather Policy

Discovery Place will make an independent decision about closing for inclement weather, but will use the Wichita Public Schools (USD259) as a guide. School closings will be posted on our Facebook page, and will be announced on TV channels 3, 10, and 12.

Tuition will not be reduced for weather closings.

Other extreme conditions may require closings, such as water breaks, electrical outage, bomb threat, etc.

In these rare cases, parents will be notified. Tuition will not be reduced for such closings.

## Outdoor Play Policy

The children will be taken outside every day that the weather permits. We will *not* go outside if there is precipitation or if the temperature is below zero degrees (with the wind chill factored in) or above ninety-nine degrees (with the heat index factored in). When going outside on cold days, teachers will assure that children's coats are zipped and hats (or hoods) and mittens are worn. On hot days, staff members will be mindful of the affect of heat on the children; will provide adequate shade, plenty of water, and will limit the amount of time the children are outdoors. If you do not want your child to go outside with his/her class, it may be necessary for you to keep him/her home that day.

## Emergency Procedures

Discovery place has developed an “Emergency Procedure Guide” which is located at the front desk and in each classroom. This guide provides a structured sequence of action steps appropriate for a variety of emergency situations. All staff are trained annually on these procedures, and fire and tornado drills are conducted with the children monthly. The action steps for emergencies are as follows:

*Evacuation: Follow Fire Drill Procedures out of the building*

*Safe Room: Proceed to Choir Room, shut doors.*

*Lock Down: Proceed to nearest designated lock down room, and lock doors.*

*Shelter In Place: Remain in classrooms.*

<b>Emergency</b>	<b>Action</b>
Fire	Evacuation
Tornado, weather related	Move to Safe Room
Utility Failure	Shelter in Place
Chemical Spill, indoor leak	Evacuation
Chemical Spill, outdoor leak	Shelter in Place
Intruder	Lock-Down
Bomb Threat	Evacuation

## Tuition Schedule

Tuition is due at the beginning of each week unless other arrangements have been agreed upon by the parents of the enrollee and the administration.

### May Tuition Policy

We will not accept early withdrawal in May. Full tuition will be due during the month of May regardless of your child’s attendance.

### Late Tuition Policy

Tuition is considered late after 10 days and a \$10.00 late fee will be assessed. If payment is two months in arrears, or if the amount due is greater than \$500.00, the situation will be reported to the Board of Directors. The Board will consider options including payment plans, Board contact with the family, or termination of enrollment.

## Arrival/Pick-up Procedures

Upon arrival, children must be brought into the building and taken to the classroom. Parents must remain with children until classrooms are open and teachers are ready to receive children. Children enrolled in “Before School” should be dropped off with a teacher in the designated “Before School” classroom or shared space.

### Sign-in/Out

Parents must sign their children “in” upon arrival in their classrooms and sign them “out” at departure, noting the time on the “Sign-Out Sheet”.

## Early Drop-offs/Late Pick-Up Policy

Please bring your child to school no earlier than the scheduled arrival time, and be prompt at dismissal. Early drop-offs and late pick-ups can be very disruptive to classroom schedules, and infringe on teacher's brief lunch and planning time.

Children must be picked up in accordance with their schedule. Parents will be charged a late fee of \$1.00 per minute that the child remains past their pick-up time. Repeated late pick-ups may result in dismissal of a child from the program.

## Authorization to Pick-Up

Children will not be released to persons who have not been authorized in writing by the parent or guardian. Staff unfamiliar with any person picking up a child must request a photo ID and check the file for written authorization before releasing the child. Please do not call to give authorization over the phone. A note is required.

*Please note: We cannot, by law, refuse a parent access to his/her child without a Court Order instructing us to do so. Please provide the office a copy of a Court Order if you are instructing us not to release your child to his/her other parent.*



## Nutrition

### Snacks

Snacks are provided by parents on a rotating basis, and in accordance with each classroom's routine. Your child's teacher will inform you of his/her schedule to bring snacks. The Health Department requires that the snacks include at least two of the following: 1) *milk/dairy product*, 2) *fruit or vegetable*, 3) *meat or peanut butter*, 4) *bread or cereal*.

### Lunch

Lunch is provided by the school to Extended Day children. It shall include one item from each of the following: 1) *Meat, poultry, fish, egg, cheese, dried peas or beans, or peanut butter*; 2) *Two vegetables, two fruits or one of each*; 3) *Bread, grains or cereal*; 4) *Milk*

Second helpings of vegetables or fruit, bread and milk shall be offered. Children may bring a sack lunch from home, but it must include items from each of the above categories.

### Allergies/Food Restrictions

Please let us know of any food allergies or restrictions your child may have. Special dietary needs shall be planned for, and known by cooks, staff members and substitutes.

## Toileting/Diapering

Children will be taken to the bathroom as needed, and also have a scheduled bathroom breaks throughout the day. Children will be changed into clean clothes if they soil themselves. Health Department Regulations prohibit staff from rinsing out soiled clothing, so they will be sealed in a plastic bag and sent home un-rinsed.

Children in diapers shall have their diapers changed on a regular schedule, and will also be changed as needed or at a time requested by parents.

## Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting

As an employee of a licensed child care center, staff members are mandated by law to report any suspected abuse or neglect of a child. Staff are required to report suspected abuse/neglect to administrators. Administrators make the report to the SRS.



## Health and Safety

### Communicable Diseases

Children showing any or a combination of any of the following symptoms will be removed from the classroom, and a parent will be called to take the child home; *fever of 100 degrees or more, listless behavior, stomach ache, ear, throat or other pain, diarrhea, vomiting, rash or eye infection.*

The Health Department requires that children be picked up within a half an hour of the time parents were contacted. Please have a plan for days you are unavailable to come to school. We will attempt to call each parent or legal guardian first, followed by the first person listed on the “emergency contact list”, and so on.

Children cannot be admitted into the school with signs of a communicable disease. Children must be fever-free without help of medication for at least 12 hours before returning to school. Please notify us of illness or planned absences.

### Medication

Medicine will only be administered with written permission of the parents or legal guardian. Parents must complete an “Authorization to Administer Medication Form” for each medication.

Parents will be responsible for giving the medication directly to a staff member, who will lock it up in the refrigerator. For your child's protection, we can not: 1) *keep medication overnight*, 2) *give medication with "as needed" instructions*, 3) *give medication contrary to the manufacturer's instructions without written orders from a physician*, 4) *give non-prescription medication for a prolonged period of time*.

### **Medical Emergencies**

In case of medical emergency or serious injury to a child the parent shall be called immediately. An administrator and/or the parent (if available) will determine if the child can be moved. If the child cannot be moved, 911 will be called, and the parent or staff member will accompany the child to the hospital.

### **Minor Injuries**

If a child receives an injury at school that leaves a mark, bump, burn or cut on the skin, the teacher will administer first-aid treatment and complete an "Accident Report" which will be sent home with the child. The purpose of the form is to notify parents of the injury, how it happened, and what steps we took to administer first-aid. If the child is upset, if stitches might be required, if the head was involved, or if biting occurred, the parent will be notified immediately by phone.



### **Biting**

Anytime a child is bitten by another child at school, the teacher will fill out an "Accident Report Form". A copy of the form will go to parents of both children involved. Teachers will notify the parents of both children in person or by phone call by the end of the child's session at school. If a child is bitten and the skin is broken, parents of both of the children involved will be notified immediately.

*Persistent biting may be cause for a child to be dismissed from the program.*

### **Hand Washing**

With parent's help, all children should wash their hands in the restroom immediately upon arrival at school. Children and staff will also wash their hands before and after preparing and serving food, before and after eating, after using the toilet, after touching items soiled with bodily fluids, wastes or dirt, after coughing, sneezing or blowing their noses, after touching pets, after being outside, before and after using water tables or moist items, and if hands appear to be unclean.