

## **Welcome to ZNS**

We hope that the time you spend with us will be fun and an adventure in learning both for you and your child. During the course of the year we promise to provide, to the best of our ability, an environment that is safe, happy and filled with new experiences for each and every child. Our program has been designed with the active and developmental needs of young children in mind. In partnership with the home, we strive to create within each child the foundation for a lifetime of intellectual curiosity, love of learning and a sense of well being. We desire to help children learn to create a sense of self worth and respect for others, to take pride in their accomplishments, to develop good lasting habits through the use of age appropriate activities.

Although our primary focus is developmental and social in nature, appropriate academic areas are included in our everyday program. The children will be involved in the development of pre-reading and pre-math skills through activities that involve patterning, classification, sequencing, number recognition, sorting, graphing and problem solving. To promote small motor skills, children are guided in cutting and gluing activities and the use of geoboards, legos and other manipulatives. Large motor skills are enhanced through the use of dance, exercising, group games and parachute activities. Social and whole languages skills are encouraged through singing, share time, story time, presentations for the parents at the Christmas and Easter Programs, and conversations with friends and staff during free play, snack time and learning centers.

At this time in their life, young children are developing a greater level of independence, and therefore we always encourage them to ask questions and seek knowledge about the world around them. It is our goal to foster each child's natural learning ability and together with the home, to develop the hearts and minds of young children.

We look forward to sharing this time with you.

## **The Parent-preschool Partnership**

No matter how good a job is done at preschool, the most important and most influential place in the life of a child will always be at home. Therefore the partnership between parents and the preschool will be of great value as we seek to enhance that which you have already begun in your child. Here are some ways that parents can cooperate in and strengthen their child's preschool experience.

1. Upon arriving please take your child to the classroom door, but do not enter at this time. With all the children arriving at once it can cause confusion and the teacher and aide need to focus on beginning the class. If your child would like to show you a project or you have questions for Mrs. Kercovich, please wait until you pick your child up and the classroom is empty.
2. Take time after school each day to ask how their day was. You can be specific and ask about snack, games, art and the like. Do remember however, that at certain times of the year, some activities are meant to be kept temporarily secret, such as the making of Christmas gifts.
3. Please adhere to the policies and guidelines listed later in this folder. Our preschool has been in operation for 30 years and over that time we have fine-tuned the way we do things. Each thing listed under the policies and guidelines is there for a specific reason. We will continue to adjust these each year, but ask cooperation in adhering to the current policies and guidelines to help make this a safer place for children.
4. Read carefully the Monthly Newsletter/Calendar and take note of special days and events that are coming up. It is important not to miss your child's snack and share day as this is a very special day for each child and one they look forward to with great anticipation. If you are unable to provide snack on your assigned day please call another parent from your class and arrange to trade. Also note when the birthdays will be celebrated for that month.
5. Please keep your child home when sick and follow the health guidelines. They have been developed for the protection and well being of all the children and staff. We sometimes have children in our program with special medical concerns {such as weakened immune systems caused by heart conditions, allergies, cancer, etc} and therefore must ask for strict adherence to the health guidelines.
6. During the school year we ask parents to participate in fundraisers. We encourage all parents to participate. These are very important activities. Your participation in the fundraisers allows us to maintain a quality program with minimal changes in tuition rates. These are "parent" fundraisers and are not designed for children to go out on their own door-to-door.
7. Have fun. Enjoy the program. Enjoy the special events-and most of all enjoy your children in this exciting time of rapid change and growth.

## Guidelines and Policies

Why do we have these Guidelines and Policies? A structured environment enhances the opportunity for children to safely have fun and to promote learning. Without being overly rigid these guidelines and policies allow us to provide such an environment.

**Arrival & Dismissal** – Coming to and leaving preschool is an exciting time for children. Upon arrival, they are eager to see friends and share experiences, and upon dismissal nothing can compare to seeing Mom, Dad or a caregiver at the end of the school day. We believe that these transition times deserve special attention. We require that the adult bringing each child accompany them into the building, helping them to hang up coats and book bags, and then see them to the classroom. This assures your child's safety and allows for brief conversation between parent and the staff. At dismissal, we permit only those authorized by you on the yellow cards, which will be distributed at the beginning of the school year, to pick up your child from school unless other arrangements are made in writing. Any person on your list we have not met will be asked for identification. Please make sure your child knows who will be picking them up each day. Please note that there is a \$10.00 charge for children who are picked up late without prior arrangements being made. It is important to be on time so your child does not feel forgotten.

**Birthdays** – Check the monthly calendar/newsletter for the day your child will celebrate their birthday. You may send in a special snack for this day, but we ask that no cupcakes be used for these days. As a special treat the children in the 4-year-old class are allowed to hold a sparkler, assisted by Mrs. Kercovich, to celebrate their Birthday. Any questions or concerns can be addressed to Mrs. Kercovich.

**Book bags** – Each child should bring a book bag to school each day. They should be approximately 14" x 16" in size so that they are large enough to fit artwork in when it is sent home. The book bag must be labeled with the child's name and should be easy for the child to open. Please do not allow your child to use the book bag as a storage "pouch" for all their special treasures such as toys or books. There needs to be space available for items coming home and we are not responsible for toys or other items that are brought to school and are lost. The only time a toy should be coming to school is for share day. Please check the book bag after school each day for items coming home from school.

**Book Orders**-The single most important activity for building the knowledge for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to your child. Therefore each month, along with the newsletter/calendar you will receive a book order form. These books cover a wide variety of subjects, are age appropriate for preschoolers and are available at a substantial discount compared to local bookstores. This is also a fundraiser for the school; we receive free books based on the number of sales. Checks for books should be turned in with the order form by the date stamped on the order form.

**Class List-**We will be passing out class lists so parents can contact each other for play days, switching snack times and the like. However, to protect the privacy of parents who wish to keep their address and phone number private you may contact Jessica Johnston to be omitted at 724-824-2134.

**Conferences-**Parent-Teacher conferences are held once a year, in the spring. This will be an overview of your child's growth and development in the various preschool activities over the course of the year. There will also be written progress reports sent home in October and you may feel free to contact Mrs. Kercovich at 724-774-5746 should you have any concerns about your child. **You are welcome to observe your child's class at any time just contact Mrs. Kercovich to make arrangements.**

**Discipline-**Our staff uses positive guidance, redirection, and the setting of clear-cut limits to help foster the child's own ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage the children to be fair, respect other people, respect property, and to learn to be responsible for their actions. We do not use a "time-out" chair, finding that redirection usually renders the desirable results.

**Dress Code-**Whereas we design our program with the active and developmental needs of young children in mind, our program often includes activities that can be messy or physically active, and therefore children should be dressed in clothing they do not have to worry about getting messy. We suggest that girls do not wear dresses as it prevents them from participating in some of the more physical activities. On the days we celebrate birthdays and party days, girls can wear dresses if they wish. Children should wear shoes that are appropriate for active play. Tennis shoes are best. Clothing should be "easy-on-easy-off", that is, something the child will be able to handle by themselves {often in a hurry!!} during trips to the rest room.

**Fundraisers-**Each year we do two or three fundraisers that allow us to provide special programs {such as visits from Mother Goose, class picnics, etc.}, new equipment and toys and allow us to maintain a quality program with minimal changes in tuition rates. All fundraisers are parent oriented and are not intended for children to go out on their own door-to door.

**Health Guidelines-**If your child is sick, do not send him/her to school. If your child has a fever, they should not return to school until they are fever free for 24 hours. Children are not to come to school if they have any of the following conditions: impetigo, lice, ringworm, strep throat, or pink eye until released by a physician. Children having a problem with diarrhea should not come to school. From time to time we have children enrolled with special medical concerns such as a weakened immune system due to heart conditions or chemotherapy. We ask that you be especially sensitive to the needs of others when considering whether it is appropriate for your child to come to school. If your child arrives ill or becomes ill while at school you will be requested to pick them up as soon as possible. Also, if your child is injured at any time you will be notified immediately. If you are not going to be available {even to run to the store} please make sure that your emergency contact listed on your registration form is available. Please notify us of any telephone changes as soon as possible. If you have any special health concerns regarding your child please let the staff know, especially any food allergies.

**Inclement Weather-** In case of inclement weather, please listen to KDKA or SVTV. If the Seneca Valley School District delays school for 2 hours, our morning class will begin at 10:00 AM; afternoon classes will begin at the regular time. Our school will be cancelled only if the SV School District closes their schools. If SV calls for an early dismissal due to the weather, you should pick up your child when the dismissal is announced. There will be no make-up days until 2 days have been missed, and then it is at the Board's discretion. The make-up schedule will not follow the SV schedule.

**Monthly Calendar/Newsletter-** Each month you will receive a class specific calendar and newsletter. **Please take the time to read and review the information in the newsletter.** This includes the themes, songs, snack schedule and dates to remember for the month. It will also give you the details about special events scheduled for the month.

**Room Parents-**Each year a parent is asked to serve as Room Parent for their child's class. The responsibilities of the Room Parent are to help plan parties and assist with other special events during the year. Also, the Room Parent will help with childcare during the parties for siblings if no other arrangements can be made. Please contact your class Room Parent if you need assistance. The Room Parents may also plan out of class outings during the year, which would not be attended by the ZNS staff, but would allow the children and parents to socialize in a casual setting.

**Share Day-**Share Day is Monday for the 4-year-old class and Friday for the 3-year-old class. This is a very important day for your child. Be sure to remember these days, it can be disappointing to your child not to be prepared for Share Day.

**Solicitation-**It is against our policy for parents or others to solicit or to distribute pamphlets or fliers of any sort on church grounds without the consent of the Preschool Board and the Church Session. It is our belief that children and parents should be able to attend preschool and related activities without being solicited to purchase items or attend activities that are not preschool related.

**Snack-**Please check the monthly snack calendar for the date you are to provide snack and drink for the class. Be sure to bring napkins and cups for the entire class including the teachers. Refer to the calendar for the number in each class. We use the following schedule to ensure variety;

Monday – Fruit

Tuesday – Vegetable

Wednesday – Grain

Thursday – Fruit or vegetable

Friday – Grain

We encourage healthy snacks and drinks. Natural fruit drink are wonderful, we ask that you avoid sugar-sweetened drinks like kool-aid. Also no juice boxes or hugs this creates mess and waste. *Birthdays are the exception*, any treat that your child would like is fine but please no cupcakes. Feel free to be creative and remember HEALTHY KIDS ARE HAPPY KIDS!!!

**Special Situations: Child Custody Matters-**We respect legal decisions regarding issues of child custody. We must have court documentation regarding the rights of each parent if visitations are restricted or denied. We cannot refuse release of a child to a parent without such documentation.

**Toilet Training-**Children must be toilet trained and able to take care of their own personal restroom needs with minimal assistance. Diapers are not an acceptable alternative.

**Toys-**Please leave all toys at home {except on your child's share day}, as it is difficult to keep track of personal items. The preschool assumes no responsibility for personal toys brought to school on days other than share day.

**Tuition Payments-**Tuition is due in full on the 1st of each month, even if your child is absent for a portion of the month. Any payment received after the 1st is considered late and a \$5.00 late charge must be paid. There will be no exceptions to this policy unless prior arrangements have been made. Checks returned by the bank, as NSF will be charged \$25.00 to cover the additional administration costs involved. Please use the payment slips provided. Please do not make your child responsible for delivering tuition payments. Do not put them in book bags. We do not check book bags for tuition payments. You may mail them in or put them in the black mailbox on the classroom door.