



## **Sparta Early Childhood Center Family Handbook**



## **Sparta Area Schools**

Building great minds now and for the future!

[www.spartaschools.org](http://www.spartaschools.org)

## Welcome to Sparta Early Childhood Center

Office Phone (616) 887-0068

<b>Childcare Program</b> Open Year Round Hours: AM 6:30-9:00/PM 3:30-6:00 Mon-Thurs. Friday and district closed days 6:30am-6:00pm *Closed on major holidays	<b>3's Preschool</b> Half Day AM 9:00-12:00 Tuesday-Thursday Full Day 3's Preschool 9:00-3:30; Monday-Thursday <b>HeadStart 3's</b> 7:45-2:45 Monday-Thursday
<b>Early Childhood Special Education</b> AM-8:30-11:45 PM-12:35-3:50 Monday-Thursday	<b>Great Start Readiness Program</b> 4 year old preschool 9:10-3:55 Monday-Thursday

*Upon enrollment, families will be given a calendar that pertains to the program they are enrolled in.*

**Sparta ECC follows all rules, regulations and policies developed by LARA and the state of Michigan as any special investigation reports, corrective action plans from the past 3 years. All of the above can be found at [www.michigan.gov/michildcare](http://www.michigan.gov/michildcare)**

**A licensing notebook is available in the center office and includes the following and is available during regular business hours:**

**-licensing inspections, special investigations, and corrective action plans for the past 5 years.**

### **District Mission**

Cultivating a dynamic, compassionate community that empowers all learners to lead successful lives.

### **District Vision**

Creating valuable relationships and innovative learning experiences within our schools and community that empowers all learners to thrive and excel.

## **Sparta Early Childhood Center Philosophy**

Creating relationships with families, teachers, and children by cultivating child-centered, purposeful, play-based environments that support critical thinking skills, develop positive self-concepts, and promote independence to ensure children will be socially, emotionally, and academically ready to thrive and excel.

## **Goals and Objectives**

- To encourage children to develop trust and a sense of security. To accomplish this, children need to know that those around them will help them meet all of their needs, both physically and emotionally.
- To encourage children to recognize emotions and then later learn to express them appropriately. To foster the development of a positive self-concept.
- To promote growth of independence and a sense of competence through the development of self-help skills, problem-solving abilities, self-regulatory, and coping skills.
- To encourage social development through opportunities to play cooperatively and practice problem-solving and negotiation skills.
- To enhance fine motor abilities through the development of manipulative skills and hand/eye coordination. To enhance sensory motor and manipulative skills and increase the capacity to understand and manipulate the environment.
- To develop gross motor skills in the areas of body awareness, balance, coordination, and spatial awareness.
- To promote cognitive skill development by providing interactions and materials that encourage constructing, and expanding knowledge.
- To develop speaking and listening skills in children through interactions with staff, other children, and materials.
- To establish relationships between families and teachers, and between teachers and children, in order to provide consistent, loving care.

## **Curriculum**

Our childcare program utilizes Creative Curriculum and our 3 year old preschool programs use High Scope Curriculum. In a HighScope preschool program, teachers ignite children's interest in learning by creating an environment that encourages them to explore learning materials and interact with adults and peers. We focus on supporting early learners as they make decisions, build academic skills, develop socially and emotionally, and become part of a classroom community. Staff organize intentional learning centers such as house area, toys and games, book nook, art and writing center as well as other learning centers. Active learning is at the center of the HighScope Curriculum. It's the foundation of young children gaining knowledge through their natural play and interactions with the environment, events, and other people.

To create a predictable and active learning environment, teachers arrange and equip the classroom with diverse, open-ended materials that reflect children's home, culture, and language. The room is organized and labeled to promote independence and encourage children to carry out their intentions. A consistent framework for the day provides a balanced variety of experiences and learning opportunities. Children engage in both individual and social play, participate in small- and large-group activities, assist with cleanup, socialize during meals, develop self-care skills, and exercise their small and large muscles. The most important segment of the daily routine is the plan-do-review sequence, in which children make decisions about what they will do, carry out their ideas, and reflect upon their activities with adults and other children. These higher-level thinking skills are linked to the development of executive functions, which are needed to be successful in school and life. For more information:

<https://highscope.org/our-practice/preschool-curriculum/>

Social emotional growth in an early child is a critical focus in development and learning. Staff spend intentional and spontaneous time daily helping children develop social emotional skills such as friendship skills, problem solving skills, managing emotions, identifying emotions as well as many other age appropriate social emotional skills.

## **Assessment**

The 3 year old preschool classrooms use COR Advantage for student assessments. Staff take observations of children during all parts of the day. At conferences and throughout the year, staff will share strengths with families and collaborate with them to create goals for children to work on both at home and school.

## **Communication**

We encourage communication for childcare and 3 year old preschool to be through the Kambyu app. The use of the app provides transparency and consistency in the program. The director is also accessible on the Kaymbu app if a private message needs to be sent. The director is also available via phone, in person, or email. An information sheet will be given to families on how to download the app.

## **Tuition Contract & Payments**

Every family will sign a contract that will indicate the schedule their child will attend the childcare program and/or 3 year old preschool program. Tuition will be charged based on your contracted schedule, not attendance. Tuition payment requests are sent out every Friday and due on Monday for the current week. Tuition charges still apply when children are absent from childcare for any reason other than when childcare is closed. Credits are given to families on days that childcare is closed. If your child attends childcare on a no school or snow day the full day rate will be added to your bill. There is an annual registration fee of \$50 that will be collected when your yearly contract expires. We accept payments from the Child Development and Care Program that offer assistance with paying for childcare. Visit Mi Bridges to apply for childcare assistance. [Mibridges.michigan.gov](http://Mibridges.michigan.gov). Payments will be made using the SmartCare Parent App or Web Portal system. Cash and checks are not accepted. A reminder will be given at the end of each payment period and after one week of non-payment your child will no longer be able to attend the center. Late fees will be applied on Tuesdays at a rate of 10% of the tuition charge. After 3 months of non-payment, accounts will be turned over for collections.

### **Vacation Policy and Procedure**

Families are given two weeks credit worth of vacation time if they are enrolled in the child care program through the months of September through August. The credit must be used in one week intervals and notification in writing to the director is required. Children enrolled in tuition preschool or only the summer program will not have this availability.

### **Change of Schedule & Withdrawal Procedure**

If a family needs to add a day to their schedule that is not in their current contract it must be done by contacting the school secretary or center director via phone, via Kaymbu or email 1 week in advance to the day that needs to be added. Adding days cannot be guaranteed due to ratios and licensing regulations. In addition any kind of change in schedule will follow the same procedure.

School Secretary : 887-0068 [megan.beduhn@spartaschools.org](mailto:megan.beduhn@spartaschools.org)

Center Director: 887-0068 [steve.johnson2@spartaschools.org](mailto:steve.johnson2@spartaschools.org)

**Please refrain from asking childcare staff to add a day or withdrawal from programming. They will ask families to contact office staff.**

Withdrawing from the program requires an email or letter in writing 2 weeks prior to the withdrawal date. Tuition fees will be collected until the date of withdrawal. See guidance and discipline policies for further withdrawal scenarios and expectations.

### **Family Conferences & Newsletters**

Conferences with your child's teacher(s) are scheduled twice a year: once in the fall and once in the spring. At these conferences, you will receive written and verbal communication about your child's development. Additionally, you will receive a monthly newsletter from your child's teacher informing you of the happenings in the classroom and what you can do to support your child.

### **Family Involvement & Home School Connection**

Family involvement in their child's education and classroom are an important part of a child's success. There are multiple scheduled opportunities for families to engage in activities within the classroom and center throughout the year. We also encourage families to volunteer in the classroom as well.

Families being represented in our classrooms is also important to the staff in the center. It is important to us that we incorporate family's culture in the classroom through mediums such as family photos, all about me information sheets, as well as many other ways staff may engage families in sharing about their culture and home life with the classroom.

### **Special Occasions Celebrations**

We respect the fact that families often have different traditions and holiday celebrations. Holidays in general can be over-stimulating for young children. We are aware of children's excitement surrounding celebrations. We acknowledge and engage in group discussion of their individual experiences without emphasizing holidays in the curriculum. Each classroom will decide how to celebrate within their classroom community.

### **Items From Home**

Center staff asks that toys from home stay at home. This includes all toys that have weapons or other violent themes. Please check with your child's teacher, as each room's guidelines may vary slightly. The center will not be responsible for any broken or lost items.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips out of the center happen on occasion; particularly during the summer program. Families will be given advance notice, minimum of 3 days, and will be asked to sign a permission slip prior to the trip. The form will include the date, time of departure from the center, time of arrival back to the center, the location of the field trip, and mode of transportation. Children may walk to a location if it is within reasonable distance to the center or may use public school transportation. Childcare staff will notify families of the trip.

*The following guidelines will be followed when utilizing transportation:*

(a) For 3-year-olds, there must be 1 staff member or volunteer for 10 children. The driver may be counted in the staff or volunteer-to-child ratio.

(b) For 4-year-olds, there must be 1 staff member or volunteer for 12 children. The driver may be counted in the staff or volunteer-to-child ratio.

To count in the staff member or volunteer-to-child ratios, staff members or volunteers shall be all of the following:

- At least 16 years of age.
- Seated with the children.
- Responsible for the supervision of the children.

(c) When children are entering or leaving the motor vehicle, the following safety precautions must be taken:

-The accompanying staff member, volunteer, or driver shall ensure that the children are received by a staff member, parent, or other person as designated by the parent.

-Children shall enter and leave the motor vehicle from the curbside unless the vehicle is in a protected parking area or driveway.

-Children shall not be left unattended in a motor vehicle and will be assisted on and off the bus.

(e) children shall not be on the bus for more than 1 continuous hour.

### **Program Eligibility and Enrollment Procedure**

Childcare is available for children who attend another program in our building.

Preschool and childcare is available to children who are 3 years old and 4 years old who are fully toilet trained. See details about toilet training below.

The director reserves the right to place children in tuition classrooms and childcare according to age, development, and needs.

The following must be completed prior to a child attending the center

- Smartcare Application
- Tuition Contract
- Registration Fee \$50 per child/ \$100 per family
- Birth Certificate



- Proof of Residency
- Health Appraisal
- Immunization Record
- Child Information Card
- Permissions Form
- Safe Schools Form
- Abuse/Neglect Form
- Licensing Notebook Notification/Written Information Packet Form

### **Toilet Training Policy**

Children in all programming are required to be fully toilet trained. We understand that occasional accidents happen. In the case of an accident, children will be changed immediately and staff will assist children by verbally prompting them how to change themselves and clean themselves. If a staff member needs to assist children in the cleaning process they will ask for another staff member to be nearby and will let the person picking up the child at the end of the day know they physically assisted the child. It is our goal to work with families on an individual basis and create a plan that is best for families and staff.

- Staff will never put a child on the toilet unless the child is willing.
- Bathroom breaks are built into the daily schedule and staff will remind children on an individual basis to use the bathroom as well.
- The ECC does not have the ability to change diapers or pull-ups under any circumstance unless there is a medical reason and a medical letter is on file with the office.
- Staff cannot wash out soiled clothing per regulations set by the Center for Disease Control. They are required to put soiled clothing in a plastic bag for you to take home and wash.
- Staff will encourage your child to wipe themselves after a bowel movement. We ask that you practice this at home as well. You are welcome to keep wipes in your child's cubby labeled with their name for them to use at school as well.
- Please keep a change of clothes in your child's backpack or cubby at all times in a ziploc bag labeled with their name.

- Excessive accidents (more than 1-2 per week) may result in being withdrawn from programming.
- Please send them to daycare with loose fitting clothing that your child can manage independently. Try to avoid tight clothing, pants with snaps or buttons, overalls, and tight leggings.

If a child has had 2 or more accidents at school the following steps may be followed:

- Meeting with teacher/parent to create a plan
- If the child does not respond then an adjustment to the plan will be made.
- If the child does still not respond then the child may be removed from the center until the child is more completely potty trained.

## RULES

1. Respect the caregivers and peers
2. Follow staff directions
3. Keep your hands and body to yourself
4. Appropriate language and voice level
5. Child will treat materials and toys with care
6. Clean up your activity and snack area
7. No rough housing, wrestling, or unsafe behavior

## CONSEQUENCES

### IF THE CHILD CHOOSES NOT TO FOLLOW THE RULES:

1. Verbal and or written warning
2. Separation from the activity/ alternate activity
3. Child will be given time to reflect on their inappropriate behavior
4. Conference with the director and parent

\*Severe misbehavior (fighting, threatening children or leaders or verbal abuse) may result in the child being immediately removed or suspended for a period of time.

\*If inappropriate behaviors are repeated on regular basis, children may be dismissed and or suspended from the program.

The above approach is successful in dealing with discipline problems

involving the majority of children. Every effort will be made to modify inappropriate behavior by using the procedures as well as through parent communication and involvement. In the event that these methods are not effective, the Director maintains the right to dismiss any child from the program who exhibits disruptive or inappropriate behavior that interferes with the quality and/or process of the program. Your support and cooperation will help us provide a safe and quality care for your child and all of the children.

### **Transition from Classrooms Within the Building**

It is our goal and intention at the ECC to help families transition from one classroom/programm to the next classroom/program with the best interests of the children when making decisions. The director and secretary will help enroll children in the appropriate programming. Enrollment can be completed any point during the year if there are openings available in programs. There is an annual open house in February/March where families can complete enrollment for the next year.

### **Transitioning to BAC at Appleview**

Children will remain active enrollees at the ECC until they are officially DK/Kindergarten students. Once they transition to Ridgeview as a student they will then be eligible to transition to the school-age BAC.

### **Child Custody Arrangements**

In cases involving child custody, we need a copy of the current parenting time court order. We will support any decisions that have been determined by the court.

### **Release To Siblings**

If a parent/guardian would like an older sibling to pick up their child, this individual must be on the child information record as well as put in writing to the director. It is recommended that children are over the age of 13 to pick up.

### **Absences**

Absences should be reported to the office via the attendance line at (616) 887-0068 and then press 1. Please leave a message with your child's name,

teacher, and reason for absence. Children who attend childcare after other programming are also required to call or email in their child's absence.

### **Arrival and Departure Procedures**

- Park in designated parking areas only. For the safety of our children vehicles are not able to park in the bus lane.
- Parent/guardian must walk children to the classroom door when dropping off or picking up their child. We ask that children hold an adult's hand or walk near an adult when entering and exiting the building.
- In the event there are buses parked in front of the building please remain in your vehicle until they have cleared. Please do not walk in between or behind buses at any time.

### **Late Pick Up Policy**

If a child has not been picked up by 6:00 p.m., the following steps will be taken:

1. Family(ies) will be called at all numbers listed on the Child Information Card.
2. If there is no response and staff is unable to reach the family(ies), all emergency phone numbers listed on the Child Information Form will be called. The child may be released to the individual(s) listed on the card.
3. A staff member will remain with your child until the director arrives.
4. When the director arrives to remain with your child, if the child has still not been picked up, or arrangements haven't been made to do so, the local Police Department will be called to pick up the child. They will also assist in trying to locate the family(ies).
5. Staff will continue to try and reach the families (or other emergency contact) to make them aware of the situation. There will be a complaint filed with Child Protective Services by the police. Police and Child Protective Services may make the decision to take the child to Kid'sFirst at 2355 Knapp NE until the family arrives to pick up the child. This is a stressful and difficult situation for children, families, and staff alike. Please help us to avoid these types of situations by picking your child up on time. The preschool is to close promptly at 6 p.m. Please make sure to have your child picked up no later than 6 p.m.

A late fee will be applied for any child that is not picked up by 6 p.m. at a rate of \$1.00 per minute. Staff will communicate late pick ups to the center secretary and late fee

will be added to the families smartcare account. If siblings are picked up late from the same family, the fee is applied for each individual child.

### **In-Home Childcare Disclaimer**

Families and their children become comfortable with staff and they sometimes ask our staff to provide after-hours, at-home childcare. Please be advised that the Sparta Early Childhood Center assumes no responsibility for employees who provide private services to families.

### **Accident and Emergency Policies**

Minor accidents, incidents and/or injuries are common in young children as they are developing balance and movement skills. Depending on the incident, families may be notified in conversation or in writing via anouch report on the same day as the incident of a minor accident or injury (some examples include: surface cuts, scrapes, bruising of the skin, or bloody noses). If the injury is of a more serious nature (some examples include: significant blood loss, cuts, head trauma), parents will be contacted immediately by phone and in some cases, they will be requested to pick their child up from school. All serious injuries requiring medical attention are required to be reported to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

If necessary, in the event of an emergency, teachers will follow policy to call 911 and then contact parents. If a child needs to go to the hospital, a staff member will be present if a family member is not present.

### **Center Relocation Plan–Emergency Protocol**

**Relocation Address: Sparta Administration Building**

**465 South Union**

**Sparta, MI 49345**

In the event of a building evacuation, all children and adults will be relocated to the Sparta Administration building. Children and adults will exit the building and walk to the building and go into the board room.

Families will be notified via school messenger and given directions for reunification.

### **Confidentiality**

Staff at Sparta ECC maintains confidentiality and does not reveal information regarding your child except as required by law or when there is a threat to the health and safety of individuals and families we serve.

### **Guidelines for Behavior and Discipline**

Guidance and behavior is a necessary part of young development. We utilize strategies that assure the safety and well being of children and staff.

1. We use positive guidance. We state what we want the children to do, not what not to do. For example, "please sit on the slide" rather than "don't stand on the slide."
2. We offer choices "Do you want to use red or green paint?"
3. We use words and a tone of voice that will help the child feel confident and reassured, not afraid, guilty, or ashamed.
4. Redirection is often more effective than confrontation. We may redirect a child to a new activity.
5. We remind the child of appropriate behaviors and choices.
6. We model problem solving to the children and provide opportunities for them to practice.
7. Model appropriate emotional expression and self-regulation and provide opportunities for children to practice.

The following methods of discipline are prohibited:

- (a) Hitting, spanking, shaking, biting, pinching, or inflicting other forms of corporal punishment.
- (b) Placing any substances in a child's mouth, including but not limited to, soap, hot sauce, or vinegar.

- (c) Restricting a child's movement by binding or tying him or her.
- d) Inflicting mental or emotional punishment, such as humiliating, shaming, or threatening a child.
- (e) Depriving a child of meals, snacks, rest, or necessary toilet use.
- (f) Excluding a child from outdoor play or other gross motor activities.
- (g) Excluding a child from daily learning experiences.
- (h) Confining a child in an enclosed area, such as a closet, locked room, box, or similar enclosure.
- (i) Time out must not be used for children under 3 years of age.

### **Exclusion Policy**

It is our ultimate goal to keep children in care everyday all throughout the school year. At times, extreme behaviors may necessitate a child being excluded from the program. A process of documenting the behavior, implementing strategies, and direct director involvement with the classroom and families will occur prior to a child being excluded. If behaviors require a one-on-one staff member for more than 30 minutes the director and staff reserve the right to call the family and have the child picked up.

### **Dress/Clothing**

Clothing that is comfortable and suitable for indoor and/or outdoor play and messy activities is best for early childhood classrooms. During cold weather, please send children to school wearing hats, mittens, coat, snow pants and boots.

- Label clothing with first and last name.
- Please provide an extra change of clothes that matches the season (socks, underwear, pants, short or long sleeve shirts, jacket etc.)
- Please do not send children in their best clothes, play clothing that is comfortable is best.

- During the winter, please send extra shoes so your child can change out of their boots.

### **Health and Communicable Disease**

Our Child Illness Policy is based on guidelines stated by the Kent County Health Department. We attempt to limit the spread of communicable disease in our classrooms and are committed to applying policies that balance and respect the needs of children, families, and staff in these situations. It is the policy of Sparta Early Childhood Center to temporarily exclude children, staff, and volunteers from care who may be infectious. If staff become aware that a person has a communicable disease, symptoms will be posted or sent home in note form. **Children must be free of symptoms and non-fever reducing medications for 24 hours before they are able to return to school.**

Reasons for early childhood programs to exclude children include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Fever or oral temperature greater than 100.4 F.
- Rash with a fever.
- Diarrhea- if it is causing "accidents," and/or not associated with changes in diet or medication
- Vomiting
- Breathing difficulties, constant coughing, or constant runny nose.
- Skin sores that are weeping fluid and are on an exposed body surface that cannot be covered with a waterproof dressing.
- Purulent conjunctivitis (defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge) until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- An illness that poses a risk of spread of harmful disease to others.
- Child must be symptom free without medication for 24 hours to return to school.
- Any kind of lice--live bugs, eggs or nits.



Families will be notified by phone if their child is ill and needs to be picked up. After one hour passes and the child has not been picked up additional individuals will be called on the emergency card.

### **Vaccination Records**

Our school nurses monitor all vaccination records to make sure all students are up to date on their vaccinations or they have the appropriate waiver on file. Letters will be sent home to inform parents if their child is close to being overdue on their vaccinations.

### **Medication Policy**

Staff may not give or apply medication without prior written permission from a physician and a parent/guardian. All prescription and non-prescription medication must be in the original container and clearly labeled with the child's name. Prescription medication must have the pharmacy label and be given according to the directions on the original container unless accompanied by a written order from the child's physician. All medications require a medical permission form that can be obtained by a staff member or in the office. This form documents the time, date, and staff member who gave the medication.

**Medication must be given directly to a staff member—never put it in a child's lunch box, backpack, or cubby.**

### **Handwashing Policy and Procedure**

The program follows these practices regarding hand-washing:

- Staff members and those children who are developmentally able to learn personal hygiene are taught hand-washing procedures and are periodically monitored.
  - Hand-washing is required by all staff, volunteers, and families when hand-washing would reduce the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to themselves or others.
  - Children wash either independently or with staff assistance as needed.
- Children and adults wash their hands:

- On arrival for the day.
- After using the restroom or assisting with bathroom care.
- After handling body fluids (e.g. blowing or wiping a nose, coughing on a hand, or touching any blood, mucus, or vomit).
- Before meals and snack, before preparing or serving food, or after handling

any raw food that requires cooking (e.g. meat, eggs, poultry).

- After playing in water that is shared by two or more people.
- After handling pets and other animals or any materials such as sand, dirt, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals.
- Before and after administering medication.
- After handling garbage or cleaning.

Proper hand-washing procedures are followed by adults and children and include:

- Using liquid soap and running water.
- Rubbing hands vigorously for at least 10 seconds, including back of the hands, wrists, between fingers, rinsing well, drying hands with a paper towel, a single-use towel, or dryer; and avoiding touching the faucet with just-washed hands (e.g. by using a paper towel to turn off water).

### **Cleaning and Sanitizing**

The center cleans and sanitizes surfaces using a 3 step process.

1. Soap Water Solution & Dry Surface
2. Water Solution & Dry Surface
3. Sanitizing Solution (Bleach and water mix per Health Department ratios) and let air dry.

Each day classroom materials are sanitized using Step 3 and materials have a schedule of cleaning using the 3 step process. Any materials that have been in children's mouths or come in contact with bodily fluids will also be sanitized using the 3 step process.

### **Food Service and Nutrition**

Sparta Early Childhood Center works in cooperation with the district's food service to offer meals and snacks. Preschool nutrition is extremely important to your child's healthy physical and mental development. All meals follow the minimum standards of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Meals include the 5 food groups: dairy, protein, grains, fruit, and vegetables. Full day students receive two meals and one snack. Half-day students receive a snack. Meal Times are available on each classroom's individual schedules. The center will comply with rule 440.8330(3) to ensure children with special dietary needs receive meals/snacks in accordance with the child's special needs. We will need signed documentation from your child's doctor if there are items on the menu that your child has an intolerance or allergy. Menus are posted at the inside the main entrance on the Family Information Board as well as on the Family Information Board at the childcare

entrance. Menus include noted food substitutions. We will need signed documentation from your child's doctor if there are items on the menu that your child has an intolerance or allergy. Breakfast is served within 30 minutes of program arrival and lunch is served between 12:00-1:00 each day. An afternoon snack is served approximately an hour before departure.

Please report dietary and/or allergy requirements to your child's teacher. The teacher will provide you with a Food/Medical Allergy Form. Your child's doctor will use the form to provide details about their needs and outline an action plan and sign it. Meals/snacks can be provided according to the child's needs outlined by a doctor on the form. **Due to licensing regulations, store-bought pre-packaged food is the only food that may be brought into the classroom.** If a family is providing a meal, the meal must be provided on the date it is to be consumed. Please note that we do require a first and last name on the child's lunch box. Families have the option to choose on the menu which meals children will eat provided by the center. Milk will only be provided for children who eat center provided lunches. A child will never be denied or deprived of a meal or snacks if a family fails to provide it for the day.

### **Rest Time**

Per licensing, teachers must provide a quiet space and rest materials for children who attend full day programming. Rest time lasts 45 minutes. Quiet activities will be provided for children who do not wish to sleep during rest time. Consider providing a reasonably small size blanket for your child to use while they rest. Labeling personal items with a first and last name is a great way to ensure to get them back. Items must be able to fit on the shelf in their cubby area. Mats/cots will be sanitized following licensing guidance. Your child's teacher will let you know more information about bedding and a washing schedule.

### **Weather Policy**

Being physically active helps your preschooler learn healthy daily habits. Outdoor play and fresh air are important for the healthy growth of children. Preschoolers who participate in active play can get the physical activity they need to maintain a healthy weight, develop muscles and strong bones, and reduce their risk of developing some chronic diseases. Sparta Early Childhood Center is required by the State of Michigan to provide 30 minutes minimum of daily outside time for every 3 hours open. Children will play outside unless the

temperature exceeds 90 degrees with the heat index or is less than 10 degrees with the windchill. Please dress your child for the season's temperature and label your child's clothing with first and last name. If your child is well enough to attend school, he/she will be expected to participate in all classroom activities, including outdoor time. If children are unable to play outside, families will need to make alternate plans for the child to stay home as staffing does not allow us to stay inside with a child.

### **School Closings**

If Sparta Area Schools are closed, the 3 year old preschool programs will also be canceled. A notice will be sent out via school messenger from the superintendent as well as on local television stations. Childcare will remain open from 6:30 am-6:00 pm unless it states that it is closed. If you need to utilize childcare during this time a non-contract day will be applied. The center will need to be called prior to dropping off your child to be sure staffing is adequate and available.

### **Cultural Competency Plan**

It is the commitment of the center and its staff that all families feel welcome, respected, and supported in our programs through a lens of culture and diversity. It is our mission to create a safe space for children to learn, explore and grow as well as be represented in classroom materials, family dynamics, and experiences in the classroom. Staff will receive continuous training to support diversity, equity and inclusion in our programs through the district and county resources. Our staff will use strategies such as self-reflection, a strength based approach, and engaging in open communication. Our goal is to teach children about the value of differences and acceptance by providing a safe place to ask questions and explore differences as well as provide the same for families of the children.

### **Supporting Children with Special Needs**

It is the commitment of the center to strive to meet the needs of all children in the center. Children's development is closely monitored and open-communication is key to ensuring children's needs are met. The center has staff in the building to assist and plan for children with special needs as well as assist with any needs for referrals or evaluation for families who may have

concerns about their child's development. An inclusive environment where all families and children feel welcome and serviced to meet their needs in an environment that supports children at all developmental levels is part of the mission and vision of the Sparta Early Childhood Center. We continue to strive to be a high quality program for families and children. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to discuss it with classroom staff or the center director. Items can also be emailed to the director if that is easier. Concerns will be addressed individually between all involved.

### **Sample Daily Schedule**

Arrival: Children enter the classroom and take care of their belongings and wash their hands.

Welcome and Read Aloud: Children are welcomed to the whole group with a song. Teachers introduce, read, and engage children in a book with carefully planned lessons.

Breakfast Children have choices about what to eat of the food available. Teachers have meaningful conversations with the children.

Outdoor Time Children have many choices about how they play in the outdoor learning environment. Teachers supervise children for safety and join in their active outdoor play, supporting their initiatives and problem solving.

Small Group Time: Three to five children meet with a teacher for direct instruction while the other children engage in Select Learning Centers. Teachers engage with children as well as assess children during this time.

Cleanup Time: Children and teachers clean up together. Children make many choices during clean up.

Lunch: Children choose what to eat and how much to eat of the food available. Teachers have meaningful conversations with the children. Children are encouraged to clean their own meal space including disposal of leftovers, wiping of tables, and pushing in their own chairs.

Quiet/Rest Time: Resting is a time for sleeping or quiet resting. After 20 minutes children who are awake are offered quiet activities.

Departure: Children gather belongings and are dismissed to a parent/guardian.

*We continue to strive to be a high quality program for families and children. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to discuss it with classroom staff or the center director. Items can also be emailed to the director if that is easier. Concerns will be addressed individually between all involved.*