

# St. Theresa Early Learning Academy



# Soaring To Success!

Preschool Addendum to Parent Handbook 2024-25

## St. Theresa Early Learning Academy Philosophy

We recognize and respect each learner as an individual as they become involved in and a part of our Christian community of learners. We strive to create opportunities in the environment that will challenge the children to problem-solve independently and socially.

Play and the development of social competencies is the foundation for academic learning. It is through play in a Christian environment that encourages exploration, inquiry, discovery, and creativity, that children will build the skills necessary for future academic successes.

### GOALS

- To embrace each learner's learning style through the implementation of developmental, individual, and culturally relevant preschool experiences.
- To provide a safe, consistent, and nurturing environment that supports the needs of each learner.
- To guide each learner toward independence, self-regulation, respect for others, and a positive outlook in a Christian place of learning.
- To introduce learners to the world of technology in appropriate and engaging ways.
- To make learners aware of their responsibility to themselves, their families, the community, and God through active outreach experiences.



## **CURRICULUM**

STELA offers a variety of learning experiences for learners and creates an environment that supports each area of development. Each is adapted to the learner's different learning abilities and builds upon their strengths and interests. Our curriculum is as follows:

**Pre-Kindergarten (4 yr. old classroom)** Our four-year-old classroom actively prepares its learners for kindergarten using a comprehensive program developed to meet the learning needs of all children and by creating and managing a purposeful, fun learning environment. We aim to stimulate learning in all developmental areas, provide basic knowledge and skills for school readiness, provide choices that make our children effective decision-makers, explore various subject areas through hand-on and concept-oriented activities, and help our preschoolers relate their everyday life to the gospel. The implementation of technology has also elevated our ability to reach out to our students at their individual level of understanding and in ways that are appropriate for education in the 21st century.

**Pre-Kindergarten (3yr old classroom)** Our three-year-old classroom provides our youngest learners with experiences that appropriately transition them into the daily school routine and prepares them for success as independent learners and thinkers. The thematic curriculum is designed to meet the varying needs of our students by creating and managing a purposeful, fun learning environment. We aim to stimulate learning in all developmental areas, but with a focused attention on social/emotional development. We provide our children with the predictable, consistent, safe, and nurturing space needed to promote independence, self-awareness, and self-regulation. Our curriculum encourages the exploration of several subject areas through teacher-directed activities, child-initiated interest areas, and learning centers that prepare our learners for the next phase of their early education and beyond.

We also use our professionally developed curriculum to:

1. Stimulate learning and creativity in all developmental areas.
2. Practice health, nutrition, and safety habits.
3. Provide basic knowledge and skills for school readiness.
4. Encourage independence for all children.
5. Provide choices so learners can become effective decision-makers.
6. Explore the subject worlds of math, science, technology, and social studies through hands-on, concept-oriented activities.

## **PRESCHOOL RELIGION CURRICULUM GUIDE**

Parents contribute to the spiritual growth of their children by nurturing the intellectual, emotional, and physical growth of their children. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discuss their vocation as children of God. The family is the first place where faith is learned, lived, and interpreted.

The school community assists parents in their role of catechists, especially through liturgical celebrations and a program of systematic catechesis. Together we help our children to develop a personal relationship with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

These two sources, families and school, have appropriate roles and responsibilities in complementary ways; together they form a partnership in the responsibility for forming children in the four pillars of the Catholic faith: creed, sacraments, Christian life, and prayer.

### **Creed**

Family: Parents stimulate awareness, awe and joy for life in the preschool child through nurturing loving relationships and experiencing life's precious moments together. Noticing the beauty of God's creation in nature with a preschooler can be particularly illuminating.

School: The school assists parents by providing preschool religious education classes where children can relate everyday events of their lives to the Gospel.

### **Sacrament**

Family: Parents teach young children the meaning of ritual and family. Participation in family rituals (such as bedtime rituals, family prayer, seasonal celebrations, etc.) by preschoolers forms the basis for their future understanding of worship.

School: Encouraging participation in the social and worship life of the parish to foster a sense of belonging to the faith community.

### **Christian Life**

Family: Setting aside time to be with preschoolers to share the events of the day, to hug them, and carefully listen to them are some ways parents nurture the faith of the child by being models of loving service and care.

School: Projects designed for family involvement help children form a positive attitude toward Christian and service programs of support and outreach to families in need model loving service and care for all.

### **Prayer**

Family: Families pray simple prayers with children and establish patterns of prayer that are comfortable for them as a family. Spontaneous prayer, meal prayers, bedtime prayers, and prayers at special family times are all excellent ways to introduce prayer to the preschool child.

School: The most important way the parish community helps parents lead their Children worship through liturgy. Offering Children's Liturgy of the Word for young children help them to gradually understand the liturgy and feel included in the worship experience.

## **SIGN IN AND OUT/DROP OFF/PICK-UP**

All children must be accompanied to and from the classroom or playground by an authorized adult who is listed on the pick-up list. Adults are also required to print their name and the time of drop off and pick up daily. The accuracy of the daily attendance is important to ensure that all children are accounted for in the event of an emergency.

In an emergency, a child can be released to someone not on the pick-up list if the teaching staff has received prior verbal consent from a parent or guardian. All adults who are picking up preschoolers are required to show a valid photo ID until the teaching staff has become familiar with them. Please keep your pickup list current and update any phone numbers when necessary.

## **HOURS AND DAYS OF OPERATION**

**Follows school calendar**

**Regular day:** 7:30am to 2:30 pm- Monday through Friday

**Extended day:** 2:30 to 5:00- Monday through Friday

*\*Arrival time is from 7:30 am and not later than 8:00 am. Please inform the teachers or front office if your child will be tardy or absent.*

## **CALENDARS, NEWSLETTERS, AND SCHOOL SPEAK**

STS utilizes the online portal School Speak as its main mode of communication. All school policies, events, and news are posted and are updated weekly. Individual classroom information including announcements, progress reports, and homework are posted by teachers. Parents are responsible for checking School Speak regularly and acknowledging information.

Preschool parents will also receive additional monthly newsletter and calendar as well as any reminders that will be sent home in their homework folders. Please sign and return any papers promptly when noted. It is the responsibility of the parent /guardian to check your child's backpack daily for any reminders.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are an exciting event for learners which will extend their learning experiences beyond the classroom. Parents are required to sign an excursion form which allows your learner to participate in any scheduled field trip. Families are responsible for providing a non-perishable meal for their child as well as for themselves when chaperoning. The staff will inform families if siblings are allowed to meet us at our scheduled destination.

**REST TIME**

Resting is very important for young learners if they are to be alert and enthusiastic about learning. Rest time starts after lunch and may last up to two hours depending on the prek class that your learner is enrolled in. Quiet music will be played, and staff may pat a learner's back when requested and with their permission. Learners will not be forced to sleep, but each learner should rest quietly on their mat before being excused to engage in quiet activities like reading, drawing, or playing with puzzles.

Nap mats should be stored in an oversized pillowcase or bag provided by the parents. Nap mats will then be placed on a shelf easily accessed by learners for daily use. Learners may bring a light blanket, small pillow, and/or small stuffed companion if necessary. Nap mats are to be taken home at the end of each day and returned the next morning.

**CUBBIES**

Each learner is given a cubby space near the front door of the classroom to hang their backpack and belongings. Your learner's extra set of clothes should be placed in a large Ziploc bag with their name on it and will be stored in the appropriate bathroom and or cubby area.

**ATTRACTIVE NUISANCES**

Toys are to remain at home unless on specific show & tell days. Please help your learner understand and follow this rule. The school will not be responsible for personal items and staff will take away toys brought into the classroom.

**PARENT CONFERENCES**

Conferences may be scheduled upon request by either the parents or staff at any time during the school year. Parents are asked to attend a parent/teacher conference following the winter assessments so that goals can be set with each family. Learner assessments are done in the fall, winter, and spring of each year.

**DRESS CODE**

Preschool learners are expected to wear their school uniform four times a week. Wednesdays are free dress days.

Preschool is a creative space that will sometimes get messy. Our learners enjoy painting, art activities, are learning to self-feed, and play outdoors. They should be aware of their cleanliness, but not terrified of getting dirty. Parents should dress learners appropriately so that they can participate in all aspects of the preschool curriculum. Parents are asked to send an oversized shirt or apron to be worn over their child's clothes when painting.