



Family Handbook



OUR VISION

We believe every child deserves the opportunity to reach their potential, understand him/her/their self as a member of a larger community, and be successful in future experiences.

OUR MISSION

The Mission of School for Little Children is to educate, nurture and inspire all children and to support families in that endeavor. We seek to provide high quality and equitable early education in a community that embraces individuality and diversity while promoting the social-emotional and cognitive development of our students.

Educate.

Creating a community of learners, we prepare children for their future growth and education by supporting their social, emotional, physical and cognitive development through child-centered activities and an approved curriculum based on current research and early learning standards criteria.

Nurture.

Working together, we cultivate a welcoming environment where meaningful relationships are formed, individuality is respected and a sense of community is fostered.

Inspire.

Recognizing the value of daily discovery, we create a learning environment where new skills are learned and taking pride in one's and the group's accomplishments is celebrated.

CLASS SESSIONS

Class	Days	Times
2 Day Twos	Monday/Wednesday	9:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.
3 Day Twos	Tuesday/Thursday/Friday	9:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.
3 Day Threes	Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday	9:30 a.m. – 12:00 a.m.
4 Day Threes	Monday – Thursday or Tuesday-Friday	9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
4 Day Pre-K	Monday – Thursday	9:15 a.m. – 12:00 a.m.
5 Day Pre-K	Mondays (all year)	9:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
	Tuesday – Friday (beg. Sep. 10)	9:15 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
	*Optional lunch program from 12-2	
Kindergarten	Monday – Friday	9:15 a.m. – 2:15 p.m.

EXTEND YOUR DAY PROGRAMS

EARLY CARE: is available for all age groups starting at 8:30 a.m. Children can be dropped off before school begins, and a teacher will escort them to their classrooms when the school day starts at either 9:15 or 9:30 a.m. This program begins the first full week of school and requires a separate additional fee.

LUNCH & LEARN: is an optional enrichment program offered to children attending a 3s or Pre-K class from 12:00-2:00 p.m. Lunch is brought from home and refrigerated upon arrival. Since foods with nuts or nut products are not allowed at SLC, please refrain from including them in your child's lunch. This program begins the first full week of school and requires separate registration and an additional fee.

AFTER CARE: is only offered to children attending a 3s, Pre-K or Kindergarten class, and runs from 2:00-4:00 p.m. This program starts the first full week of school and requires a separate registration and an additional fee.

SUMMER PROGRAMS

**All summer camps run for 6 weeks in June/July.*

BEACH CAMP: for children ages three to five with preschool experience. This outdoor program meets at Burnham Park, on the east end of Dempster St, and offers children time at the playground, activities (arts & crafts, songs, stories), snack and ends at Lee Street beach! If there are harsh weather conditions (rain or extreme heat) the program is held at school.

ON-SITE @ SLC: for children exiting a 2-year old program. Children participate in art projects, songs, stories and creative play in SLC classrooms. There is also outdoor play and music instruction.

BUILDING BLOCKS TO KINDERGARTEN: for children exiting a pre-K program, this camp offers the opportunity to engage with peers in a supportive and structured classroom environment while learning important skills through play. The curriculum includes literacy, math, art, enrichments (such as music, yoga, and beach activities), and time at the park.

TUITION

Class	Full Tuition	Semi-Annual	Monthly
2 Day Twos	\$3,564	\$1,782.00	\$396
3 Day Twos and 3 Day Threes	\$4,752	\$2,376.00	\$528
4 Day Threes	\$5,967	\$2,983.50	\$663
4 Day Pre-K	\$6,309	\$3,154.50	\$701
5 Day Pre-K Ext. Day	\$9,126	\$4,563.00	\$1,014
Kindergarten	\$9,981	\$4,990.50	\$1,109
Kinder-Current SLC Families	\$9,450	\$4,725.00	\$1,050

Online payments can be made via bank draft, by logging onto the SLC Parent Portal through a link on our homepage at www.slcevanston.org.

Credit cards are accepted but are subject to a 2.2% processing fee. Credit Card payments are made through PayPal (not the Parent Portal). The payment link can be found at <https://slcevanston.org/registration/payment/>

Payment can also be made by check, payable to **School for Little Children**, and mailed to:

School for Little Children
1427 Chicago Ave.
Evanston, IL 60201

TUITION IS DUE:

Annual Due May 1
Semi-Annual Due.....May 1 & January 1
Monthly Due..... May 1 through January 1

Since our operating expenses, e.g. teachers' salaries, equipment and supplies, are relatively fixed before school begins, we are unable to provide refunds given for time missed because of extended illness or vacation.

TUITION DELINQUENCY POLICY

Tuition payments are due on the 1st of each month unless a payment plan has been arranged. If payment is not received by the 1st or the first business day following, a \$10 late fee may be assessed. Families with past due invoices may not enroll their children in additional SLC programs such as Lunch & Learn and Fun in the Sun.

If payment is not received by the 1st of the next month (30 days later) and no payment plan has been made, another \$10 late fee will be assessed. If payment is 60 or more days past due without family contact, another \$10 late fee will be assessed, and the child may be excluded from school until an acceptable payment plan is agreed upon. Once a payment plan is in place and a partial payment is made, the child may return to school.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Our preschool is committed to making quality early childhood education accessible to all families, regardless of their financial circumstances. We offer a financial assistance program that provides sliding scale tuition rates based on family income and size, ensuring that each

child's opportunity for education is not hindered by financial barriers. To apply for assistance, families are required to submit an application along with documentation of income and expenses. All applications are reviewed confidentially, and financial aid is awarded based on demonstrated need and available funds. Our goal is to support diverse and inclusive enrollment, fostering a vibrant learning community for all children.

For information regarding tuition assistance, contact Chrissy Cornell at ccornell@slcevanston.org

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY & CURRICULUM

CHILDREN LEARN THROUGH PLAY

Learning through play is foundational in preschool education as it provides young children with rich opportunities to explore, experiment, and develop essential skills in a natural and enjoyable way. Play allows children to engage their imagination, creativity, and problem-solving abilities as they interact with peers and materials. It supports the development of language, social-emotional competence, and cognitive skills such as counting, sorting, and understanding cause and effect.

TEACHERS FACILITATE LEARNING

In a play-based preschool classroom, teachers play a crucial role as facilitators of learning, guides, and nurturers of children's development. Teachers create a stimulating environment where play is not just fun, but also a meaningful avenue for learning and exploration. They observe and understand each child's interests, abilities, and developmental stages, tailoring activities and experiences to support individual growth.

The teachers at School for Little Children work to build trusting relationships with children and their families. Teachers use praise and encouragement as motivation for growth, learning, and self-control. Patience, affection, positive language, energy and creativity are the tools teachers use to provide a nurturing and caring setting.

PROGRAM OF INCLUSION

School for Little Children (SLC) is committed to providing an inclusive program. Inclusion in early childhood education is crucial as it sets the foundation for a child's lifelong perceptions of diversity and acceptance. When children learn and play alongside peers from various backgrounds, abilities, and cultures, they develop empathy, respect, and a deeper understanding of the world around them.

Our Inclusion Coordinator, Dr. Gwen Fiske, plays a pivotal role in ensuring that children at SLC thrive in a supportive environment. Through a collaborative approach, Gwen recommends classroom modifications, provides training and resources to staff, and consults with families. If your child has a medical or developmental need, please let us know so that we can support your family to the best of our ability.

CONFERENCES / ASSESSMENT / CONFIDENTIALITY

Teachers continually observe each child's unique needs and overall development. Verbal and written information from these observations is shared during conferences in November and March; however, a parent or guardian may request an informal conference or phone call at any time.

Parents/guardians receive a copy of their child's Reporting Document at the spring conference, with a duplicate copy kept in SLC's electronic files. Information related to assessment and your child's development will not be shared with outside professionals without your written consent. At the end of the school year, assessments are transferred to the child's file in the SLC office. These files are securely locked and access is restricted to SLC staff members and teachers. According to licensing

requirements, child files are stored for five years before being destroyed.

CHILD GUIDANCE & DISCIPLINE POLICY

Caring adults set routines and limits in the classrooms in order to guide children's behavior. Praise and positive reinforcement of good behavior is used consistently with children as a way to build their self-esteem and encourage self-control. This approach reduces discipline problems by focusing on helping children to learn to respect themselves and to respect the rights of others.

Discipline and guidance should be developmentally related to a child's act and may include firm positive statements, redirection of behaviors or removal from the group as a means of helping a child gain self-control. Discipline shall be the responsibility of adults who have an ongoing relationship with the children. Teachers will dialogue with parents and caregivers, sharing information in a collaborative partnership.

There are times when children's behavior results in a logical consequence. This helps them to learn the cause-effect relationship of their actions. Staff encourage children to problem solve independently as much as possible, but will mediate when necessary.

School for Little Children personnel will not use physical punishment or verbal abuse. The following behaviors are prohibited in our school:

- a. Corporal punishment, including hitting, spanking, swatting, beating, shaking, pinching, and other measures, intended to induce physical pain or fear.
- b. Threatened or actual withdrawal of food, rest, or use of the bathroom.
- c. Abusive or profane language.
- d. Any form of public or private humiliation including threats of physical punishment; and any form of emotional abuse, including shaming, rejecting, terrorizing, or isolating a child

ADDRESSING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

We understand that children develop social and self-regulation skills at their own pace, and that there is a wide range of typical behavior while adjusting to the preschool setting. If a child is exhibiting an unusual amount of challenging behavior, SLC will work with the child's family to try and solve the problem.

"Challenging behavior" is defined as any behavior that consistently interferes with the child's ability to function in the preschool classroom and/or causes a consistent disruption to the classroom setting, impacting other children and/or adults in the learning environment. Examples of challenging behavior include, but are not limited to, angry yelling/screaming, physical aggression toward self or others, unkind language toward self or others, property destruction, or a refusal to participate in the classroom environment. When a child's behavior is negatively impacting their own health and well-being, or that of the classroom community, the following course of action will be implemented:

Step 1. Classroom Observation

The Director and/or the Inclusion Coordinator will observe the child in the group setting and then meet with the teaching team to discuss the observation. Parents will be notified that their child is struggling.

Step 2. Team Meeting

The Director, Inclusion Coordinator, Teaching Team and Parents/Guardians will meet to discuss the child's needs, to refer the child to outside agencies for evaluation and/or treatment (if appropriate), and create an intervention plan (sometimes called a Behavior Support Plan). A Behavior Support Plan includes proactive strategies designed to decrease the challenging

behavior, and reactive strategies to address the challenging behavior when it occurs. It is a plan of action that is agreed upon by the program staff, parents/guardians and qualified professionals that allows for consistent support and response to the child. The goal of a Behavior Support Plan is to support the child, family, caregivers, and program staff, and allows for modification of the classroom and learning environment to address the identified challenging behavior.

Step 3. Track Progress

The school will communicate about the child's progress, taking data as needed to determine if the plan is successful in decreasing the challenging behavior and, after an agreed upon period of time, the team will again meet with the family.

Step 4. Determine Appropriate Placement

If a child responds to the interventions and the SLC staff feels that the child can continue at SLC in a manner that is safe for all, the child will continue enrollment for the remainder of the school year. If the child does not respond to interventions, the Inclusion Coordinator and/or Director will work with the family to transition the child to a more appropriate setting.

DISCHARGE AND TRANSITION POLICY

If interventions are unsuccessful, the Inclusion Coordinator and the Executive Director will work with the family to find a more appropriate placement for their child based on the following DCFS regulation: *Infants, toddlers and preschool age children who, after documented attempts have been made to meet the child's individual needs, demonstrate an inability to benefit from the type of care offered by the facility, or whose presence is detrimental to the group, shall be transitioned to a different program.*

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS

Vision & Hearing: As required by DCFS, children age 3 and above will receive an annual vision and hearing screenings to comply with Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Policy. Each fall, a certified technician visits SLC to administer screenings. Results are shared with parents. In some cases, follow-up visits may be recommended.

Developmental Screening: In collaboration with parents, the SLC staff works to identify children that may benefit from a developmental screening. Developmental screenings in preschool are essential for early identification of potential learning or developmental delays, enabling timely intervention and support to ensure each child's optimal growth and success. With parent permission, SLC may refer children to Child and Family Connections (birth-3 year olds) or District 65 (3-5 year olds) for the screening.

SAFETY PROTOCOLS & POLICIES

SLC has an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) that is reviewed with the staff annually and updated as necessary. The EOP can be reviewed upon request by contacting the school office.

The SLC staff participate in annual safety trainings: an ALICE training, CPR and First Aid training, Allergy & Epi Pen training, as well as Lock Down procedures & building evacuation procedures during staff meetings (when children are not present).

BUILDING SECURITY

Doors to the building are always locked. Someone will be in the SLC office to buzz-in families and visitors during school hours. Unfamiliar visitors must identify themselves with a photo ID, and will be cross checked with the children's Release Forms. When school is not in session the only entrance to the building is the monitored church entrance. SLC visitors must identify themselves to the attendant on duty in order to be permitted entrance.

NO SMOKING POLICY

To prioritize the health and well-being of our preschool community, we strictly enforce a no-smoking policy within the premises and surrounding areas of School for Little Children. Smoking is prohibited in all indoor and outdoor spaces, including parking lots and entrances. This policy applies to all staff, parents, visitors, and contractors. We recognize the harmful effects of secondhand smoke on children's developing respiratory systems and overall health. As role models for our children, we encourage everyone to promote a smoke-free atmosphere and refrain from smoking during school-related activities or events. Your cooperation is essential in fostering a safe and healthy environment for the children in our care.

NO FIREARMS

In accordance with our commitment to creating a secure learning environment, we strictly prohibit the presence of firearms on the premises. This policy applies to all individuals, including staff, parents, guardians, caregivers, and visitors. A firearm-free setting is essential for fostering a sense of trust, promoting a peaceful atmosphere, and ensuring the emotional and physical safety of everyone within our community. Any violation of this policy will be addressed promptly and may result in appropriate actions, including but not limited to removal from the premises and involvement of the appropriate authorities. We appreciate the cooperation of our preschool community in maintaining a safe and nurturing environment for all.

PESTICIDE POLICY

A pesticide policy is available for your review in the preschool office. Chemical pesticides are not applied in the SLC classrooms. If this practice changes for any reason, we will notify parents 48 hours prior to chemical use.

LEAD TESTING

Testing to determine the lead levels in the water supply at SLC and First Presbyterian Church has been completed. Results are available upon request.

GENERAL SAFETY REMINDERS

- Please do not allow children to run up and down the ramp, climb on the stair railing, or walk along the retaining wall when entering/exiting the school.
- Please refrain from allowing children to climb in the trees, or on the church sign, in front of the school.

PARKING LOT

- Do not park in the accessible parking spots for people with disabilities, or double park, at any time. Violators will be given a verbal warning and then issued a ticket on their second offense.
- Do not park in the reserved & labeled spaces closest to the church building.
- Do not leave infants or children unattended in the car while you are in the school.
- The parking lot is a CELL FREE ZONE. Please refrain from using your cell phone for the safety of the children.
- Except where indicated by city signage, additional parking is permitted along the north side of the building on Lake Street (in the loading zone) during drop-off & pick-up times.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSURES

In the event of extreme weather, SLC will notify families of weather-related closures through our automated phone/text system. We will also send emails, post updates on social media, and keep our website updated if closures occur. SLC administrators collaborate with local early childhood administrators and District 65 to ensure the safe return of families and staff to school.

In the event of an emergency or loss of building utilities, SLC will communicate with families via our automated phone/text system. The message will provide instructions on where families should reunite with their children in the event of a building evacuation.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS & PROTOCOLS

In order to enroll at SLC, children must undergo a health examination within six months prior to enrollment and submit a completed health form. The health form requires a physician or medical practitioner's signature, along with completion and signature of the parent section.

- A complete medical examination report dated within 6 months prior to the start of school.
- A lead screening (blood test) is required for all children based on zip codes in Evanston and neighboring areas identified as high-risk.
- A TB test is required only for children in high-risk groups, as determined by the examining physician. The initial examination for all children over one year of age must include a tuberculin skin test using the Mantoux method, with results included.

VACCINATION POLICY

The School for Little Children is licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, requiring all children to be vaccinated before enrollment. According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, vaccination is critical for protecting infants, children, and teens from serious illnesses.

To enroll your child at SLC, please ensure this health form is completed and returned prior to enrollment, with immunizations up to date according to the standard schedule recommended by the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

All enrollment decisions are made at the discretion of the SLC Director. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns regarding this policy.

VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS

Immunizations must be up to date according to the schedule recommended by the Illinois Department of Public Health. To comply with Illinois regulations, children entering SLC must provide proof of vaccination for the following, as listed on the State of Illinois Certificate of Child Health Exam form:

- **Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (DTP or DTaP)**
- **Polio**
- **Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)**
- **Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV 13)**
- **Hepatitis B**
- **Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR)**
- **Varicella**
- **Meningococcal conjugate (MCV4)**

Please note: *These requirements are subject to change based on updates to Illinois state law or additional guidance issued by the Illinois Department of Public Health.*

ISOLATION & DISCHARGE OF SICK CHILDREN

Any child with the following symptoms will not be allowed to remain in the facility:

- A temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, or higher.
- Shortness of breath, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, chills, rash, etc.

If a child becomes sick during school, SLC staff will contact the child's parent/caregiver to pick them up as soon as possible. The child will be isolated from others and encouraged to wear a face mask.

24-HOUR WELLNESS POLICY

Families must keep their children home for at least 24-hours after they are symptom and fever-free (without medication). To ensure the health and safety of all students, it is important for families to notify the SLC office if their child contracts a contagious disease (such as Covid-19, the flu, chicken pox, or strep throat). Parents and guardians in the affected classroom will be informed, but the notices will not include any children's names.

EMERGENCY HEALTH CARE PLAN (Allergies or Asthma)

If your child has serious or life-threatening food allergies or asthma, please submit a **Food Allergy Action Plan** or **Asthma Action Plan** to ensure SLC staff can respond appropriately during school hours. When a family submits an Emergency Health Care Plan, parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Monitoring the child's asthma and/or allergies during special school events, such as the fall family event.
- Keeping necessary medications up to date, including two EpiPens with a 6-month expiration period and/or inhaler.
- Providing two small photos of your child.
- Providing written doctor authorization for the child to return to school within 24 hours of hospitalization due to an allergy episode or asthma attack.
- Informing the school promptly of any changes in emergency care protocols.

If a Food Allergy or Asthma Action Plan is not submitted, the school assumes that the allergy or asthma is not serious or life-threatening.

MEDICATION POLICY

SLC staff members are authorized to administer prescription and over-the-counter medication (such as Tylenol or Motrin) to children only under the following conditions:

- The parent/guardian completes and signs a medication consent form, valid for the specified duration.
- Medication is submitted directly to office staff for safe storage at school, meeting DCFS storage regulations.
- Both prescription and non-prescription medication must be in its original container, labeled with the child's first and last name.
- Prescription medication must have the original prescription label (including child's name, current date, and dosage), accompanied by a signed doctor's note explaining the reason and duration for medication.
- Topical products require written permission from the parent or legal guardian before application.

Enhanced Protocols for Everyday Operations

For the health and well-being of our families and staff, we believe in:

- Staying up to date with vaccinations.
- Staying home when sick.
- Opening windows frequently, to increase the circulation of fresh air.
- Reinforcing proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
- Utilizing proper cleaning & disinfecting practices.

Cleaning & Disinfecting

Following the procedures outlined by DCFS guidelines, the staff will do the following:

- Disinfect high touch surfaces throughout the day.
- Clean high touch surfaces before and after children use them for play, eating and drinking, or any other purpose.
- Place toys that have been in children's mouths in a "soiled toys" container until they are sanitized at the end of the day.
- Clean toys and equipment at the end of each day.

Handwashing Protocols

DCFS requires staff and children to wash their hands frequently throughout the day, including but not limited to:

- Before or upon entering the classroom.
- Before and after each meal or snack.
- After using the toilet or having diapers changed.
- After wiping or blowing their nose.
- Before and after outdoor play.

HEAD LICE

In the event of a head lice outbreak, SLC reserves the right to check all children for head lice; if head lice is suspected, parents/guardians will be contacted to take the child home, and children may return to school once the lice have been treated and the child is free of nits.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

ARRIVAL: Parents/Caregivers are required to sign in their children upon arrival at school, with arrival times recorded at sign-in. We encourage adults to accompany children into the school to assist with tasks such as removing coats, ensuring handwashing, and helping them settle into morning activities

DISMISSAL: Parents/Caregivers are required to sign out their children upon pickup, with departure times recorded. Only individuals listed on your child's release form are authorized to pick them up. We ask that adults enter the school to assist their child in preparing to go home.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT & COMMUNICATION

VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering in your child's preschool is invaluable as it fosters a sense of community, enhances the educational experience, and provides essential support to teachers and staff. Moreover, volunteers bring diverse skills and perspectives that enrich the learning environment,

making the preschool experience more dynamic and supportive for all children.

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is crucial for our non-profit preschool program as it provides the necessary financial support to maintain and enhance the quality of education and care we offer. These funds enable the school to afford essential resources such as educational materials, classroom supplies, and facility improvements, which directly benefit the children's learning experience. In fact, our tuition income does not cover our operating expenses, necessitating annual fundraising support.

GENERAL COMMUNICATION

Thursday Thoughts: our weekly newsletter is sent via email to all families on Thursday afternoon, and includes important school-related information. If you don't have regular access to email, please let us know and we will send home a paper copy with your child.

Children's Folders: Check your child's folder outside of their classroom (in the black file box) on a regular basis.

Absences: Please notify the office, or your child's teachers, if your child will be absent.

Email: Each class has an email address caregivers can use to communicate with their child's teachers. For urgent messages requiring a timely response, please call the school and leave a message.

CUSTODY AGREEMENTS

In order to provide the best care for your child, we believe it is crucial to maintain positive relationships with all significant adults in their life.

Please let the SLC office know any pertinent information about:

- Custody agreements.
- Which parent/guardian to contact for general questions and in case of an emergency.
- Whether program information should be distributed to more than one parent/guardian.
- Who is responsible for tuition payments.
- If there is anyone that is **not** authorized to pick up the child(ren)
- Family circumstances, or health changes, such as births, deaths, divorce, etc.

TOYS

We kindly request that your child leave their toys at home to prevent loss and minimize sharing challenges with special treasures. However, if your child requires a security item for comfort, please send it to school with their name clearly labeled.

SNACKS & WATER BOTTLES

SLC provides a daily snack for children attending school, adhering to DCFS licensing requirements by offering two of the following food components: fruit, vegetables, dairy, or grains. Families are rotated to bring in a fruit, vegetable, or cheese option for the entire class, while SLC provides the accompanying grain. All fresh foods must be washed and prepared at the school by SLC staff. In cases where a family cannot bring in snack, SLC will provide applesauce with the grain.

In line with DCFS recommendations, parents may send an empty, clean, and labeled water bottle to school. SLC staff will fill these bottles with filtered water from the drinking fountain each morning. Children without a water bottle will be offered water in a plastic cup.

BIRTHDAYS

Parents/guardians may provide special paper products to celebrate occasions during snack time. Please refrain from sending goody bags. Due to allergies and state licensing requirements, we cannot accept home-cooked or specialty food items.

CLOTHING

Please ensure your child brings an extra set of clothes (and diapers & wipes, if needed) to be kept at school. Children should come dressed in comfortable clothes that can get dirty, as spills such as paint or glue can occur. In cooler weather, please dress your child in layers for outdoor play. Help your child recognize their own clothing by labeling all personal items clearly.

FIELD TRIPS

As part of our regular program, trips into our community are planned within walking distance of the school, and permission for walking field trips is granted by signing the Release Form.