Starting Gate Preschool Handbook

Private – 4 Decades of Education
California State Licensed

579 Couch Street ~ Vallejo, CA 94590-2407
(707) 643-Gate
www.StartingGateSchool.com
Hours of operation: 6:30 am to 6:00 pm

Dear Parents,

Welcome to our school! We will work with you and your 2 year 9 month to 5 year old, helping your child grow and develop to his/her potential. Before enrolling, please visit us to acquaint your child with the campus and teachers. We believe you will discover that our school meets the needs of your child and family.

School History

For 4 decades, we have celebrated the educational methodology developed by Genevieve Reignierd. In 2008, Mrs. Reignierd left a legacy of memories and educational excellence for future generations, to uphold the belief that quality education can still be affordable.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Starting Gate School is an equal opportunity educational institution and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap, or age in its activities, programs, or employment practices in accordance with federal and state statutes and regulations.

Our Aim

Our faculty and staff pledge to make sure that every day each student will be given the opportunity to maximize his/her ability to learn. We recognize that education is fostered through cooperation between the teacher, student, parent and administration.

We commit ourselves to providing a learning environment which encourages each student to develop self-esteem along with individual growth which will help support them to become contributing members of their community. Parental support is always appreciated.

Our school provides a warm atmosphere which will stimulate creative activity and learning. Our teachers are trained and skilled to work with children in a friendly, understanding manner. We conduct a weekly program for preschool aged children who enjoy and can benefit from individual and group activities.

ENROLLMENT

To begin our program, each child must be at least 2 years 9 months old and toilet trained. All necessary state forms, a physician's report, and an immunization record must be current, complete, and on file at our school.

We promote an "Open Door" policy. We encourage parents to visit us unannounced during school hours.

YOUR CHILD AND SCHOOL

The early years in your child's life are vital to future educational development. We believe our school will help prepare your child socially, emotionally, physically, and academically. Our commitment to your family is to help you lay a foundation upon which you and your child will build on for many years to come.

Please tour the school with your student. Show your child where the bathrooms are and the place where the students will most likely eat lunch. For new children these situations can be intimidating. It is common for children to be afraid to ask to go to the restroom.

Make sure your child receives plenty of rest the night before the big day. Provide a good breakfast every day to start the morning right.

It is very important to let your child know that he/she will not be left at school indefinitely, but is there only for a specific time period. Explain to your child and the teacher who will be bringing and picking up your child to eliminate confusion at the end of the day.

Let your child know the teachers are glad your child will be coming to preschool. Explain that we have many planned activities to do.

Your child may be used to having things his/her own way. Teach your child to share and take turns. A two year old child at school is sometimes very self-centered and not used to being away from home in a formal situation.

If your child is beginning school for the first time remember to not act hesitant. Say good bye confidently - and then leave promptly. Your child must not feel your departure is a matter of choice or that if she/he makes enough fuss, you'll change your mind and stay. Remember to not feel hurt if your child is happily occupied when you leave and hardly notices your departure. Instead, pat yourself on the back knowing your child loves and trusts you.

Please allow 2 to 3 weeks for the adjustment period. Let us know of any difficulties your child may have in acclimating to the new school environment.

Check in the office for bulletins listing future events at school. Parents can help their child keep a good attitude about school by talking over what has been done at school each day. Above all, listen & watch for your child's achievements and always give praise.

Policies

We will gladly meet with you and communicate with you to discuss any additional questions you may have. It is our pleasure to provide the most modern and efficient teaching techniques for your child's benefit. We strongly encourage parents to take an active part in our program.

Curriculum

Your child will enter an environment that is intended to enhance social relations, personal character, physical and mental growth, emotional stability, and readiness for academic skills.

Nutrition

Proper rest and nutrition will insure your child's maximum learning ability. We urge you to make sure your child is getting sufficient rest every night and has a well balanced breakfast before each school day.

At school we serve a mid-morning snack, usually juice and crackers. Parents are welcome to send other snacks to be shared by their child's class. Suggested snacks are: apple wedges, orange sections, raisins, celery or carrot sticks, Jell-O, etc. Your child will also have the opportunity to cook throughout the year, preparing special foods at school for a snack or special meal.

Students are encouraged to bring their own lunches from home in a lunch pail. We feel this serves as a tie between home and school with the parents maintaining a nourishing variety of lunches which they know their children will eat and enjoy.

Any leftover lunch is returned in the lunch box so that parents may adjust their menus accordingly. However, as an alternative pizza lunch is on Thursday.

Attendance

It is important that parents sign the attendance sheet with their complete signature. After signing in, please be sure to walk your child into the school building. The teacher will not accept charge of your student until the child has entered the building. Please be sure that the instructor has acknowledged your child's presence.

Attending school is important. Schools are responsible for teaching your child. But we can't do our job when the student is often tardy or absent. A child who misses a day of school also misses a day of learning that might never be replaced. You can help by making school a top priority. By building the habit of daily attendance, you will help your child see that school is important. Remember, being tardy only disrupts the class. Please phone us to order lunch if needed if your child will be arriving late.

Health / Medical Records

Your child's health is very important to all of us. Upon enrollment you must file with us a health form signed by a physician. We also require that your child has standard immunizations and tuberculosis clearance. According to California regulations your child must have an up-to-date California State Immunization record showing the month and year each required immunization was given for our files.

It is the parent's responsibility to keep the immunization record up-to- date.

Tuberculosis tests are required annually for staff members and participants. We strongly recommend that all parents have such a test each year.

A child will be sent home if she/he appears to have symptoms of illness during the day. In such cases, the child is isolated from the other children until the parent can be contacted and immediate arrangements made to have the child picked up.

Should illness arise, you will be expected to keep your child home if he/she has had a fever during the last 24 hours, has a constant cough, heavy nasal discharge, a cold that is less than four days old, diarrhea, or is taking an antibiotic that must be administered during school time. Please provide a note from your child's doctor if she/he is returning from a prolonged illness.

Symptoms of communicable diseases can be sniffles, reddened eyes, sore throat, headache, abdominal pain, diarrhea, and/or a fever. Rest at such times may prevent the development of serious illness. Please notify the school at once if your child does have a communicable disease. Do not send your child to school with an undiagnosed rash.

Medications

ABSOLUTELY NO medication may be brought to school. This includes vitamins and cough drops. If your child must receive medication such as an antibiotic or treatment from an inhaler, the parent must administer the required dosage. If the parent or authorized person is not available, alternative childcare plans should be made during a peak illness period. Most medication can be administered before school, after school, and before bedtime.

Leaving Campus

No child will be released to a person not authorized by a sponsor to pick the child up. We must receive verbal or written authorization from the sponsor to allow this.

Required Uniform Message

Consider your child's comfort and provide simple clothing that is free of complicated fastenings. Think of interestingly messy art materials and other activities. Provide clothing that is washable. Be sure to label all clothing for easy recognition. Open sandals lead to stubbed toes. Cowboy boots and clogs lead to many falls. Choose good, comfortable shoes that support your child's feet. Tennis shoes or other comfortable well fitting shoes are best. Shoes should match school uniforms. No bells or distracting lights on shoes please.

If your child has pierced ears, studs are recommended to prevent accidents. Earrings that dangle are not permitted at school.

NO OPEN TOE SHOES, PLEASE.

Discipline

School rules must be strictly adhered to. "Time out" or "Bench" are commonly used as discipline enforcement. If the behavior problem continues over a prolonged period of time, a parent-teacher conference is usually requested.

Parent Support

Unlike co-op programs where it is necessary for families to volunteer time and make donations, Starting Gate does not mandate such contributions. We do welcome any parent, both moms and dads, to spend time at school whenever possible. You might read a story or explain to the children about your career. Teaching possibilities are endless, and visits continue to develop the minds of students whom we want to encourage to grow, learn and become responsible members of our community.

The Disciplinary Process

The progressive steps outlined below illustrate our formal methods of helping and teaching our students to exhibit good social behavior.

Step 1: **For unacceptable behavior**
1 minute of time out for each year of age for unacceptable behavior.
Example: **J.L., age 4 kicked Q.R. The teacher assigned 4 minutes of Time out to J.L.** ***(4 years multiplied by 1 minute = 4 minutes)***

Step 2: **Exhibiting the same unacceptable behavior after completing Step 1**
We will call the parents of the child, and during our conversation the parents may desire to speak with their child over the phone. Or, they may wish to come to school promptly to discuss the issue with our student.

If the student does not correct their behavior at that time, a parent will be expected to pick up their child. Also, a 1 day suspension from school (for the next school day) will be assigned to the student if the director decides it is necessary.

Example: **A child had a tantrum when the teacher announced that it was time to go inside for rest time. The child was given 3 minutes of time out (3 years x 1 minute = 3 min.).**

After the time out was finished, the teacher gave the child a pep talk to encourage better behavior. However, later that same afternoon, the same child had another tantrum. At that time, his parents were phoned.

Step 3: **Exhibiting the same unacceptable behavior after completing Step 2**
If the child continues a certain bad behavior, parents will be expected to come to school and remove the child from school for the rest of the school day. Failure to pick up the student will result in a 1 day suspension for the student for the next school day.

Example: **Student #1, 2 years old, bit Student #2 on the arm. The teacher gave Student #1, 2 minutes of time out. Later that same day Student #1 bit Student #3 on the hand. The teacher phoned Student #1's parents, who talked to their child over the phone. He stated that he would behave and the teacher allowed him to remain at school for the rest of the day. Later that afternoon Student #1 bit Student #2 on the arm. His parents were phoned and instructed to come to school and pick up Student #1.**

Step 4: **Exhibiting the same unacceptable behavior after completing Step 3**
If the misbehavior continues and the child's parents have to be contacted more than 3 times, the director reserves the right to dismiss any student. This will only be done if, in the discernment of the director, it is believed to be in the best interest of the student and/or school.

Behavior examples that would require Step 4:
Not cooperating with teachers, not following school rules, biting, kicking, screaming, abusive language, hitting, tantrums, running around against instructions, running away from teacher causing the teacher to leave the group in order to attend to one student to correct the student.

Financial

The financial needs of our center are substantial. We have developed our curriculum with the objective of keeping tuition at a minimum. In order for the school to meet its financial obligations, parents must be faithful in making tuition payments on the first of each month.

Please note that tuition can be paid by cash, check, or money order. If you have more than 2 returned checks you will be required to make all future payments by cash or money order. A returned check charge of $25.00 will be automatically posted to the balance of your account if a check is returned. A late fee of $25.00 will be automatically posted to the balance of an account that is in arrears. Payment will be considered delinquent on the 5th day of each month.

Students remaining past their half-day or full day schedule will be charged $25.00 per quarter-hour until the parent or guardian arrives.

If a sponsor's account is 2 weeks in arrears, they will be asked to remove their child from school until the account is up-to-date. When re-enrolling, a new registration fee will be charged. We will not release diplomas or promotion certificates of students with delinquent accounts.

WITHDRAWAL

Sponsors are required to provide the school with a 2 week withdrawal notice. Students absent for 10 days without notification will be terminated from the school roster.

Dismissal

If it is determined that the student does not benefit from the school program, via maturity, safety, or well being of the school community, Starting Gate reserves the right to dismiss the student. Tuition is payable through the end of the month in which the student is dismissed. The director reserves the right to dismiss any student after due consideration, if in his/her judgment it is in the best interest of the student or school.

Parent Participation:

Parent volunteers and room assistants for classroom celebrations are always welcome at Starting Gate School. As part of our school's Admission Policy, prior to enrollment you will need to register your family with supporters of Starting Gate School: Escrip, Safeway, and Target Stores. This is 5 minute process that can be done here at school. For families who have already committed to another organization, i.e. sports programs, churches, and favorite charities, don't worry; more than one nonprofit entity may be enrolled simultaneously. Signing up can

be done here at school. It's fast, easy, and a great way for all students to benefit at no personal cost to you. Invite others to join in and watch us grow.

Holidays

January	New Year's Day – Martin Luther King's Birthday
February	President's Day
May	Memorial Day
July	Independence Day
September	Labor Day
October	Columbus Day
November	Veteran's Day – Thanksgiving & the following day
December	Christmas Day

Since the school is available on a year-round basis, we will observe certain holidays. No credit will be given for these days and additional holidays may be scheduled in accordance with public school holidays.

Parent Education Programs

We will schedule educational programs on any subject that is of concern to you and your child upon the request of 3 or more parents. This will be implemented in addition to our regularly scheduled programs.

Parent Conferences

In relation to your child's progress, conferences may be arranged upon request. Please contact the office to schedule an appointment. It is also understood that children of preschool age often experience a 2 week adjustment period. If after that time it is determined that the student will not benefit from the program, either due to aggressive behavior or required extra staff time, the sponsor will be given 2 weeks notification to find an alternative placement for the student.

Emergencies

In case of accidental injury we will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent. If we can't reach you, we will call the child's physician or "911". The director or an assistant will be present with your child to assist medical personnel. You will be expected to assume responsibility for any resultant expense. Starting Gate will maintain a parent's signed consent form agreeing to this provision.

Please keep the school up to date on telephone numbers, emergency numbers, and other related information.

Field Trips – Volunteers

We always appreciate volunteers. This is your school. We urge your voluntary assistance in planning trips, programs and public relations activities. We are always in need of parents to accompany us on walks or local field trips.

Part of our school program is to encourage visual awareness and other senses of our students through neighborhood walks in the general vicinity of our center. Staff and employees alike are addressed as "Teacher" to avoid confusion among the children.

As a volunteer you will earn this title. Visit us often! Know with your child that school is a good place because you have been there and experienced it first hand!