

# Pre-K Handbook



## Play in the Pre-K Classroom

“Observe children at play: they are active, curious, creative, and eager to learn. Play is how children learn how to learn. They question, explore, and experiment with ideas, language, and imagination. At play, children collaborate, negotiate, and learn from one another. They are learning how to learn.”

### Play is the Cornerstone of Learning

#### Cognitive/Language

- Distinguishes between reality and fantasy
- Encourages creative thought and curiosity
- Allows for problem solving
- Encourages thinking, planning
- Develops memory, perceptual skills, and concept formation
- Learns to try on other roles
- Acquires knowledge and integrates learning
- Learns communication skills
- Develops listening and oral language skills

#### Creative

- Fosters use of imagination and make-believe
- Encourages flexible thinking and problem solving
- Provides opportunity to act upon original ideas
- Supports taking risks
- Learns to use senses to explore
- Re-creates images in buildings and art media
- Sharpens observational skills
- Provides variety of experiences
- Learns to express self in art, music, and dance
- Develops abilities to create images and use symbols
- Acquires other perspectives

#### Social

- Tries on other personalities, roles
- Learns cooperation and taking turns
- Learns to lead, follow
- Builds a repertoire of social language
- Learns to verbalize needs

- Reflects own culture, heritage, values
- Learns society’s rules and group responsibility
- Shows respect for others’ property, rights
- Teaches an awareness of others
- Learns how to join a group
- Builds awareness of self as member of a group
- Gives sense of identification
- Promotes self-image, self-esteem
- Experiences joy, fun

#### Physical

- Releases energy
- Builds fine and gross motor skills
- Gains control over body
- Provides challenges
- Requires active use of body
- Allows for repetition and practice
- Refines eye-hand coordination
- Develops self-awareness
- Encourages health and fitness

#### Emotional

- Develops self-confidence and self-esteem
- Learns to take a different viewpoint
- Resolves inner fears, conflicts
- Builds trust in self, others
- Reveals child’s personality
- Encourages autonomy
- Learns to take risks
- Acts out anger, hostility, frustration, joy
- Gains self-control
- Becomes competent in several areas
- Takes initiative

#### Reference

Gordon, A. M., & Browne, K. W. (2016). *Beginning essentials in early childhood education* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.

## How Children Learn in Preschool

Everything about the classroom environment is designed to help your child learn and grow.

**The Classroom:** When you walk into your child’s preschool/kindergarten classroom you will find a large, colorful room divided carefully into learning centers. It will be filled with bright, primary colors and a variety of materials for your child to manipulate, explore, snuggle, play with, and share. The room is especially designed to encourage your child’s creativity, natural curiosity, and desire to learn about their world. Children are learning every minute of the day! They learn from the daily schedule, large and small group activities, and when they play outdoors. Children have many opportunities to make choices, come up with ideas, experiment, and take responsibility for their work. Here’s what you’ll see when you visit:

	<b>When children do this:</b>	<b>They are learning to:</b> (traditional subject)	<b>*Multiple Intelligence</b>
<b>Blocks</b>	Make bridges for cars	Use shapes to build (math)	Spatial
<b>Dramatic Play</b>	Use a stethoscope to examine a friend and write a prescription	Recall what they know about workers in their community (social studies)	Interpersonal
<b>Games and Toys</b>	Group pictures that are all the same	Match and classify (math)	Spatial
<b>Art</b>	Paint a picture of their family	Use symbols to represent their ideas (literacy)	Spatial Interpersonal
<b>Discovery</b>	Plant seeds and measure each plant’s growth	Measurement (math) Plant life cycle (science)	Logical-Mathematical Naturalistic
<b>Sand and Water</b>	Discover how many cups of sand fill a pail	Cause and effect (science) Count and measure volume (math)	Naturalistic Logical-Mathematical
<b>Library</b>	Listen to a story and talk about what happened	Love books, remember details, and express ideas (language development, literacy)	Linguistic
<b>Music and Movement</b>	Sing or do a finger play with other children and the teacher	Recognize rhymes (phonological awareness, listening)	Musical, Linguistic, Bodily-Kinesthetic
<b>Cooking</b>	Follow directions in a recipe that calls for adding ingredients by teaspoons, cups, etc.	Read a recipe (literacy) Understand measurement (math)	Linguistic, Spatial, Logical-Mathematical

**Outdoors:** The time children spend outdoors every day is just as important to their learning as the time they spend in the classroom. Large muscle activities are essential for children’s health and well-being.

This is an excerpt from A Parent’s Guide to Preschool, by Diane Trister Dodge and Joanna Phinney, Teaching Strategies, Inc., copyright 2002.

**\*Multiple Intelligences** from Howard Gardner and Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences ©2011

## Pre-K Readiness Checklist

- ✓ Must be three years old by September 30 of the current school year
- ✓ Potty trained: able to pull clothes up and down by self to use the bathroom; able to verbalize a need to use the bathroom, go to the restroom, and get up and off toilet by self. (It is a given that at this age accidents will occasionally happen, that they may need help with wiping, and also with buttons, zippers, etc.).
- ✓ Ability to handle verbal correction from the teacher or other adults
- ✓ Ability to handle redirection
- ✓ Manageable separation anxiety from parents or caregiver
- ✓ Ability to follow basic verbal directions
- ✓ Ability to communicate and interact with peers on a basic, functional, age-appropriate level

Acceptance into the Pre-K program is on a trial basis, assuring that parents, child, and teacher are working together to establish a strong home and school connection. The Pre-K classroom is to serve as a safe, nurturing, and creative environment where children can learn and interact to the best of their ability.

## Dress Code

- ✓ Shirts DO NOT have to have a collar, but MUST have sleeves and natural themes/patterns (no sports or super-hero logos, graphics, etc.)
- ✓ Jeans and sturdy pants are recommended, but sweatpants and leggings (for girls) are acceptable
- ✓ No jewelry or temporary tattoos
- ✓ A red field trip shirt is mandatory (see school secretary to purchase)

## Pick-up and Drop-off Policy

The classroom is open starting at 8:00 am every morning. If your child needs to be dropped off before that time, he/she will wait in the hallway with the on-duty teacher until worship at 7:45 am is finished.

School ends at 3:15 pm Monday through Thursday and 12:00 pm on Fridays. Your child can be picked up each day in the front entryway. You may park and come in to pick up your child or I will walk them out to your car.

Early dismissal is at 12:00 pm, and those dates are posted in the school calendar and also in the weekly newsletter.

## Curriculum & Home Connection

SVAE's Pre-K curriculum is the *Creative Curriculum*, which consists of a 6-8 week "Study" where we investigate a certain subject (i.e. Recycling) and the activities revolve around learning about different aspects of the subject. This curriculum also weaves into each Study concepts of math, language arts, and science in a format that is geared particularly toward the interests and abilities of preschoolers.

We do not have preschool "homework" in the traditional sense, however, blending home life with school life and what we learn within each are very important for academic success and achievement. Within the Studies, each week, there is a key question that we will address every day. I will send home the question in our weekly newsletter. The goal is for the student and parent to talk about the question during the week,

and bring something to class on **Thursday** for our group discussion time/activity. For example, if the question of the week is: “What can we recycle?” student and parent will discuss different things throughout the week. Perhaps they help you look for things throughout the kitchen or house that could be recycled and make a list. By Thursday, the student will bring in something from home—i.e. a printed picture, an object, a book, etc. that answers the question or pertains to it. In this way, learning becomes applicable and connected for the student.

### **Newsletters**

To help keep parents informed with what is happening within the classroom, there is a weekly Pre-K newsletter (in addition to the school-wide newsletter) that goes home every Monday. A hard copy and an emailed version will be sent.

### **Field Trips**

Upcoming field trips will be posted in the Pre-K newsletter each week. There is always a need for extra drivers and supervision during these fun events, so please plan on attending at least one field trip with your child during the school year. Some of our field trips may be combined with the Kindergarten class.

### **Opportunities for Parental Involvement**

The best schools and classrooms have a strong, vibrant home and school connection throughout the year. Open communication, involvement, and working together will ensure a school year that promotes the greatest opportunities for learning and growth for your child. There are times when extra hands and ideas will be needed for events like school picnics, field trips, festivals, programs, banquets, fundraisers, etc. These are fun times that we can work together, not only to complete a specific task, but to grow in our friendships as well. Please take the time this year to look over the school calendar and find an event or two that you feel comfortable helping with.

### **Home Visits**

Before the start of each school year, I make an effort to contact parents to set up home visits. These visits can be especially helpful for young children and new students who are transitioning from the comfort and familiarity of the home environment to that of school. It is a way for the teacher and child to get to know each other a little bit and “break the ice” before the first day of school. It is also a good time to ask questions or voice any concerns you may have so that we can find answers together. If you are not comfortable with a home visit, we can arrange to meet elsewhere, like a park, library, or even the classroom at school.

### **Birthday Celebrations**

Birthdays are always a lot of fun, and parents are always welcome to come celebrate with their child by either eating lunch with them, stopping by for a visit, or bringing a treat. If you will be bringing a treat, please let me know ahead of time and we will arrange to enjoy it either at lunchtime or at the very last part of our day, from 3:00-3:15 pm. Please also be sure to provide enough for all students within the classroom.

## **Discipline**

I use positive discipline and modeling for the majority of my discipline interactions with the students. As I see students following instructions, being especially kind, caring, or helpful, I will positively affirm the student verbally. I also expect students to respond to my direct instructions (i.e. "Please do . . ." or "Please do not. . ."). In the event that a student chooses not to respond to either approach, I will send them to the prayer chair to think things over for a few minutes. I then rejoin them, talk things over, and pray with them. In extreme cases, I will contact parents and the school principal, but those instances are rare.

## **Communication**

If your child will not be present at school for any reason, please let me know as soon as possible. Please feel free to contact me with any questions, ideas, or concerns you may have. I'm here to help in any way I can to ensure your child feels safe, loved, and accepted while they are at school. I truly want to do my very best to meet the needs you and your child have this year. If you have a concern, don't hesitate to come to me right away so we can find a solution together.

## **Contact Information**

If you have additional questions or need further information about your school, please do not hesitate to contact the school office at 540-740-8237.

The school address is:

Shenandoah Valley Adventist Elementary  
115 Bindery Rd.  
New Market, VA 22844

The school's website is <http://svaelementary.org>

My name is Carrie Heilman and I can be contacted at the school or via email or cell phone:  
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