

La Mesa-Spring Valley Schools



SmartSteps

**PARENT
HANDBOOK**

Preschool Office
4750 Date Avenue
La Mesa, CA 91942

SmartSteps Preschool Parent Handbook

We welcome you and your child to our
SmartSteps Preschool Program

Your child's teacher will be _____

The preschool room number is _____

Important telephone numbers:

School _____

Classroom _____

Preschool Office (619) 668-5700, X 6480, 6481

SmartSteps Preschools are located at:

SmartSteps Fletcher Hills	SmartSteps Maryland Avenue
2330 Center Place El Cajon, CA 92020 (619) 668-5820 # 376700461	5400 Maryland Ave La Mesa, CA 91942 (619) 668-5700 # 376700136

Open Door Policy

As stated in the Child Care Center Notice of Parents Rights (LIC 995): Parents/Guardians have the right to enter and inspect the child care center without advance notice whenever children are being cared for.

The La Mesa-Spring Valley School District is committed to equal opportunity for all individuals in education programs, activities and employment. The District prohibits discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying based on actual or perceived race, color, ancestry, national origin, nationality, ethnic group identification, ethnicity, age, religion, marital or parent status, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics.

District policies and procedures regarding Uniform Complaint Procedures, discrimination, sexual harassment, and Title IX can be found on the District website at www.lmsvschools.org.

All questions related to discrimination, equity and Title IX can be directed to the District Compliance Officer: Director of Student Supports, 4750 Date Ave., La Mesa CA 91942. Phone 619-668-5700.



Dear Families:

Welcome to La Mesa-Spring Valley Schools SmartSteps Preschool Program. Your decision to enroll your child in this program is an excellent one. Starting school is an important and exciting event in the life of your child, and yours as well.

This school year promises to be one of excitement. Your child will learn new things and meet new friends as new wonders of the world begin to unfold. You can be confident that your child will be in a safe, caring and child centered environment, where all of our staff is trained to understand the needs of young children. Our daily activities focus on developmentally appropriate experiences that promote social, physical, cognitive and language growth to prepare your child for kindergarten.

Our goals for your child include:

1. Cognitive/Language Development

- Develop creativity and thinking skills through language and literacy experiences
- Develop number, shape, and other mathematic concepts and perceptive skills
- Demonstrate read-like behaviors and develop an interest in books

2. Social and Emotional Development

- Develop positive feelings about self and others
- Develop responsibility, sensitivity, confidence, motivation and productive behaviors

3. Physical Development and Self-Care

- Develop and exercise small and large muscles
- Increase perceptual skills in reading and writing
- Learn self-management, independence, responsibility, decision making and problem solving skills.

Raising and educating a young child is a partnership between the family, the school, and the community. All of us want to ensure that our children grow up to be happy, healthy, readers, writers and problem solvers. As your child's first and most important teacher, there is much you can do to make sure that all your dreams for your child come true. We want to work with you and help your child reach his or her full potential.

Please feel free to discuss your child's development or any concerns that you may have with your child's teacher. Take advantage of our parent education workshops and classes. These are designed to help you with some of the difficult questions regarding raising a healthy and happy young child.

Again, congratulations on enrolling your child in preschool. I know that he/she is going to learn new and exciting readiness skills. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the preschool program, please don't hesitate to call me at 619 668-5700, extension 6480.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rita Schwartz".

Rita Schwartz
Coordinator, Early Childhood Education
La Mesa-Spring Valley Schools

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Welcome to La Mesa-Spring Valley Schools Where Our Focus Is 'Every Child Learning Every Day'

Welcome/Philosophy

Welcome to the La Mesa-Spring Valley School District SmartSteps Preschool Program. We strive for excellence in our SmartSteps Preschool Program and believe that within a quality program all children will succeed. Our goal is to create learning environments where children feel safe and cared for. We focus on developing early language and literacy skills, cognitive, self-help, social, emotional and physical growth. Teachers provide a variety of activities to effectively guide learning. The curriculum is balanced between teacher-initiated and child-initiated learning activities which accommodate a wide range of abilities and learning styles.



Communication is a vital part of our Preschool Program. You will receive monthly calendars, newsletters, flyers, and phone calls to inform you of activities and events. If you have a concern regarding your child, please make an appointment to conference with your child's teacher or Program Coordinator. We will be happy to work with you to ensure a positive educational experience for your child, and for you.

SmartSteps curriculum supports the California Preschool Learning Foundations. The instruction is organized thematically; with the developmental standards addressed through planned learning activities.

Admission Criteria

Children from ages three (by August 1st of the current school year) through five are eligible for SmartSteps Preschool. **Bathrooms are located outside of the classroom, toileting skills are required (No 'Pull-Ups').**

Registration

The following are needed for registration:

- SmartSteps Preschool Parents Agreement
- \$50 Non-refundable (annual) registration fee is due prior to your child starting SmartSteps. Payments may NOT be left at the site or given to the Preschool Staff.
- School Registration Forms
- Health registration form and Health history
- Child's Preadmission and Health History Parent's Report
- Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment
- Personal Rights & Parent Rights form
- Birth Certificate
- Original Up-to-Date Immunization Record
- Physical form returned within 3 weeks of start of school

Immunizations and Physical Examinations

At the time of enrollment, all children are required to have up-to-date immunizations (SB 277) that include:

4 DTP	3 Polio	3 Hepatitis B
1 Hib (on or after child's first birthday)	1 Varicella	1 MMR (on or after child's first birthday)

A written medical assessment must be completed by a licensed physician prior to or within three weeks of enrollment in the preschool program. This assessment must include a tuberculosis risk assessment or if the physician deems necessary a result of a test for tuberculosis. This is required by the State Department of Education. For your convenience, the Preschool office can furnish you a list of providers of physical examinations under the CHDP (Child Health and Disability Prevention Program). Parents will receive the appropriate form to be filled out by their physician in the enrollment packet.

Emergency Information

Student records must be accurate and up-to-date. All family records and information are confidential and are kept in a secure location. Your cooperation in filling out the health and emergency cards at the beginning of the school year and updating them as needed will help us to keep our records up to date and ensure the safety of your child. It is extremely important that we have your current address and phone number in case we need to reach you regarding your child.

Please inform teachers and staff of any changes or special conditions regarding phone numbers, address, custody arrangements, emergency numbers, babysitters, health conditions, or legal actions (i.e., restraining orders), etc. We cannot prevent any parent from removing his or her child from the preschool if there is no court order on file. If there is a court order restricting a parent from visiting or picking up their child, then a copy of the court order must be provided to the preschool office, which will be placed into the child's confidential file.

Program

School Year

The SmartSteps Preschool Program follows the calendar established by the La Mesa-Spring Valley School District.



Days and Hours of Operation

The SmartSteps Preschool Program is a three-hour program.

- 2-days 8:30-11:30 am
- 3-days 8:30-11:30 am
- 5-days 8:30-11:30 am

Nutrition

A daily snack is provided through the school District's Child Nutrition Program for your child mid-morning. Please make sure that your child has had a healthy breakfast before coming to SmartSteps. (Please let the preschool know if your child has any food allergies).

Classroom Celebrations, Holidays and Birthdays

Celebrations can be an important part of our school community. Teachers work with parents to plan classroom events that help to develop deep friendships. Students are introduced to the sights and sounds of the seasons and have seasonal celebrations for Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer. Teachers rely on parents to assist in the planning of these events. For the safety of your child, we have a strict policy regarding the food served at these events. All food items to be consumed by students **MUST** be store bought and packaged, with an ingredients list. All foods served to students are to be of high nutritional value. No homemade items or candy may be served. Our program suggests you bring a non-food treat for all children on your child's birthday (donate a book to the class, stickers, pencil).



We want to be sensitive to you and your child's culture and home values. Please notify the teacher or the program coordinator whether or not you celebrate holidays or activities that make you or your child feel uncomfortable. The teacher can make adjustments to include all children.

Policies and Procedures

Late Arrival / Late Pick-Up

It is very important to bring your child to school on time. Preschool is the foundation of life-long learning. When children arrive late, they have missed out on many opportunities. Other students are affected because of the interruption to the teacher and class. Please make your child's education your first priority. Anyone arriving at school 5 or more minutes late is considered tardy.

A fee of one dollar (\$1) per minute will be charged for a late pick-up. If you have four late pick-ups, your child will be suspended at the start of the following week. If the pattern continues, your child will be dropped permanently from the program.

Signing In and Out

For safety purposes, licensing requires that all children must be brought into the classroom by a Parent/Guardian or authorized adult and must be signed in and out **DAILY** with a full **legible** signature. No one under the age of 18 will be allowed to sign your child in and out. If you are sending another adult (not listed on the emergency card) to pick up your child, you must send a note (*in advance*) signed by you, authorizing the release of your child to the person named, or you may call the classroom and give the name of the person picking up your child. Adults, other than custodial parents, will be asked to show a picture I.D. for pick up. Please inform the person picking your child up that he/she must provide proper I.D. (with picture).

If anyone other than the student's custodial parent is picking up a student prior to the end of the school day, BOTH of the following conditions must be met:

- The person picking up the student **must** be listed as an emergency contact on the emergency card.
- The custodial parent **must** deliver a signed, dated letter notifying the office as to which emergency contact will be picking up the student and the date and time of that pick-up.

When signing your child in/out, parents/guardians are encouraged to check for messages in the child's mailbox and to take notice of important information that is posted by the teacher.

Emergencies and Disasters

In case of a disaster, staff is responsible for keeping your child safe and protected. All children are instructed on what to do in case of an emergency (fire, earthquake, disaster drills and exiting the classroom to a safe location are practiced monthly).

In case of an emergency or natural disaster:

- No child will be allowed to leave with another person, not even a relative or babysitter, unless we have written permission from the parent **or** that person is listed on the child's emergency form. Adults **must** provide photo identification.
- Children will be guided to the safest location for protection. If the building is not safe to re-enter, the class will move to a safer place.
- Make sure the adults you list as emergency contacts know that we will call them in case of an emergency if we are unable to locate you.
- All parents or authorized adults, who are coming to pick up children, must sign them out at the 'Family Reunion' location, which will be set up in an emergency.
- It is very important to keep your child's emergency contact information up to date. If your phone number or your emergency contacts change, please advise your teacher immediately.

Health and Safety

Parents can help to develop good health habits by:

- Sending child to school clean and groomed.
- Reminding child to wash hands before and after meals and to brush teeth regularly.
- Reminding child to wash hands after using the toilet.
- Establish good sleeping habits.
- Establish healthy eating habits.

Toileting

Please dress your child in clothing he/she can manipulate on their own. Please practice belts, hooks, zippers, etc. with your child. The preschool staff will handle some toileting accidents. Please send a change of clothing for occasional accidents; label with child's name. If your child has an accident, the staff will use your extra clothing to keep your child comfortable and send the soiled clothing home. Please be prompt in returning the clothing. If your child has a bowel movement accident, the parent or emergency contact person may be called on to assist and change the child.



Illness

The teacher will determine if any children are ill or contagious. A child who is ill or contagious cannot be accepted in the classroom to ensure good health for everyone. If your child has a fever or displays other symptoms of illness while at school, you will be notified to pick him/her up. A child must be free of a fever for 24 hours before returning to school. A child must also remain at home until free of diarrhea for 24 hours. Children who vomit during the night or in the early morning should stay at home until free of symptoms for 24 hours. Please keep your child home if there is evidence of any of the following:

1. Cold-first 1–3 days; longer if persistent coughing, fever or other symptoms are present
2. Fever-until fever free for a full 24 hours
3. Vomiting-until vomiting has not occurred for a full 24 hours
4. Diarrhea and/or upset stomach-until child is symptom free for a full 24 hours
5. Contagious disease including, but not limited to: measles, mumps, chicken pox, rashes, impetigo, conjunctivitis (pink eye), head lice, and scabies
6. Green or yellow discharge from nose and eyes or any discharge from ears

Allergies/Medical Conditions

All diagnosed allergies and medical conditions must be documented in child's file and each staff person responsible for supervising the child must be notified. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to inform the staff at the time of enrollment and the child's teacher of any and all known (potentially harmful) allergies or medical conditions (asthma, diabetes, seizures, etc.).

Medication

Parents are encouraged to arrange necessary medication doses before and after school. If medication is required during school, parents and a physician must complete specific forms. Please contact the teacher, who will direct you to the school health technician, if your child needs medication during the school day. Medication can be administered only under the following conditions:

1. Each container of medication must be in the original prescription container and be accompanied by the district form, to be filled out by the prescribing physician and signed by the parent. This includes over the counter medication.
2. Since we share with you the responsibility of protecting the health of the children, we ask you to inform us if your child has been exposed to or has a communicable disease.

Parking and Traffic Control

Parking and traffic control is a considerable safety concern. All parents must park in designated parking spaces. Adults must hold children's hands at all times as they walk their children from the parking lot and to school. Always use a car seat. It is illegal to leave a child unattended in a vehicle for any period of time or to park in a handicapped parking space without a disabled person's placard displayed. Parking is not permitted in the bus zone or in the handicapped spaces without a placard.

Visitors

Any visitor to the classroom must follow the school site procedures. Visitors must register at the school office. To ensure minimum interruption of the class, the visit should first be arranged with the teacher. If a conference is desired, an appointment should be made with the teacher before or after school.



Clothing

Play clothes are appropriate for everyday dress. Preschool includes activities that require clothing to be washable, comfortable, and able to withstand occasional paint stains, and appropriate for physical activity. Preschool activities are often 'messy' and it is an important part of the child's development. Mark all coats, sweaters, and jackets with your child's name. For safety reasons, strapless back or open toe shoes may not be worn.

Mandated Reporting

Each staff member is obligated by law to report to the Department of Social Services any injury to any child that requires medical treatment of any unusual incidents or student absence, which threatens the physical or emotional health or safety of any child. They are also required by law to report any suspected physical or psychological abuse of any child. All such suspected abuse will be reported to Child Protective Services without notification of the parents. The Department of Social Services has the authority to interview children or staff without prior consent. The Department of Social Services has the authority to inspect, audit, and copy child or child care center records upon demand during normal business hours (101200(b)(1)(c)(1)).

State Licensing

The La Mesa-Spring Valley SmartSteps Preschool Program is licensed by the State of California and will comply with the regulations of the Community Care Licensing Division. The Community Care Licensing Division and the State Fire Marshal will conduct periodic inspections to ensure the program meets or exceeds the standards.

If you wish to inquire into our license:

Community Care Licensing Division
7575 Metropolitan Drive, Suite 110
San Diego, CA 92108-4402
(619) 767-2200



Special Services / Family Support

The SmartSteps Preschool Program strives to support families as we work together to prepare children for kindergarten and lifelong learning. At times, families may encounter circumstances that affect their ability to support their child. Upon admission to the Preschool Program, every family is given a list of community agencies and service organizations that may assist in areas such as accessing health services or insurance, child care, parent education, family or child counseling, homelessness, etc. Families are encouraged to talk to their child's teacher or call the Preschool Office for additional information on how to find support or resources through the school district or community. If you suspect your child has learning, behavior, or developmental concerns, the Preschool Program can help arrange for you to meet with a school psychologist and/or a speech and language specialist.

Parent Involvement

Parent/Family Volunteers

Parents are a child's first and most important teacher. Active involvement promotes a closer relationship with young children, and interactions between teacher and parent are likely to produce the greatest benefit for the child.

There are many ways families can participate in the program:

1. Working in the classroom, assisting the teacher
2. Volunteer to help prepare classroom materials at school or at home
3. Attend Parent Orientation, Parent Educational Meetings, Back To School Night, Open House and Kindergarten Transition
4. Join your school's PTA
5. Volunteer to be the Room Parent (Immunization required).



Behavior Expectations

Law prohibits the use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure against any student. All SmartSteps Preschool teachers practice a positive approach to discipline. We are interested in working with our parents in fostering self-discipline in our students. We want to help the child control his/her own behavior and learn the consequences of that behavior. We teach strategies that encourage and help the child to work out problems constructively. We want the child to develop respect for self, others and the environment.

Dismissal from the program may result when the child's behavior is aggressive or hurtful to others or if a child's behavior is disruptive to the classroom. The teacher and the Preschool Program will make every attempt to guide the child to learn appropriate social behavior and develop self-control.

How Parents Can Help At Home

Parents ask for ways in which they can help their preschool child at home. Here are some ideas:

1. Show your child that you think preschool is valuable for him/her, participate!
2. Offer praise at all times (it's free and it works wonders!).
3. Read a story to him/her and ask comprehension questions.
4. Ask your child about his/her day at preschool.
5. Ask your child to teach you a song or game learned at preschool.
6. Teach your child a song or game you learned as a child.
7. Display artwork that is brought home.
8. Let your child help with simple household chores.
9. Practice positive table manners at family meals.
10. Visit places in the community such as libraries, parks and museums.

Curriculum & Assessment

The individualized instruction, ongoing observations and child assessments are based on the California Preschool Learning Foundations. The SmartSteps Preschool Program also uses Kindergarten Readiness Curriculum (KRC). The development of early literacy skills is a critical component of the curriculum. Oral language is enhanced through vocabulary development and a variety of activities to develop listening and speaking. In addition, children are provided experiences in print, phonological awareness, alphabetic knowledge and writing. Math and science skills are enhanced by direct hands-on activities, and supported by language and literacy to develop understanding. The SmartSteps Preschool Program focuses on enhancing a child's total development for a successful entry into kindergarten. This includes not only academics, but also readiness skills in language, motor development, social skills and behavior. Parent involvement is an essential piece of a child's readiness and success in school. Regular information is sent home with the child so parents know what skills are currently being worked on and can reinforce them at home. Spring Parent Teacher Conferences are scheduled in May. At this conference the teacher will share your child's progress and readiness for kindergarten.



Payment

Fees are due in advance. Statements will come out bi-weekly, showing the amount owed for the upcoming 2-week period and any changes in the cost of the previous month. If your payment is not received in the District Office by the due date indicated on the invoice, a \$20.00 late payment fee will be assessed and your account becomes past due. SmartSteps reserves the right to refuse further service. There is a \$25 charge on returned checks.

If your account is not fully paid by the first day of the next billing cycle, your child will be excluded from the program. Existing charges will be left on account and may get sent to a collection agency. The parent is responsible for any collection fees.

A two-week notice, in writing, must be given to the billing department and the teacher for withdrawal of your child from school. Parents will be responsible for full tuition fees until such notice is given in writing. A non-refundable \$25 re-enrollment fee is charged and collected prior to re-enrolling your child within the same academic school year.

Payment is made to LMSV SmartSteps Preschool, and mailed to LMSV Education Center, 4750 Date Ave., La Mesa, CA, 91942. Checks or money orders may also be dropped off at the LMSV Education Center in the Extended School Services Department or the ESS drop box located on the West side of the building. (Please do not put cash in the drop box.)

For online payments, go to our website: www.lmsvsd.org. You must have your account # to make the payment. Or, you may call the District Office at 668-5700 x 6475 to pay using your credit card/ATM or to set up for automatic withdrawals.

A 2% convenience fee is charged for any online payments.

SmartSteps Preschool program will assess a transaction fee on all credit/debit card/ACH (electronic check) transfer transactions. Families making payment by cash or check will not incur this fee.

Transaction Amounts Between	Fee to be Charged
\$1.00 - \$25.99	\$0.00
\$26.00 - \$99.99	\$2.00
\$100.00 - \$199.99	\$4.00
\$200.00 - \$299.99	\$6.00
\$300.00 & up	\$8.00

Teacher Qualifications

All teacher and assistants have units in Early Childhood Education. All preschool staff are District employees, have been fingerprinted, have had a comprehensive background check conducted by the California Department of Justice (DOJ) and The Child Abuse Central Index (CACI), a Tuberculosis (TB) clearance and have all required immunizations. All staff is CPR and First Aid certified every 2 years to remain current on all lifesaving procedures.

