

# KACHINA COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

## Preschool Parent Handbook

2007-2008



### Office Hours

Monday - Friday  
7:30 am - 5:30 pm

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Web Site : [www.kachinaschools.com](http://www.kachinaschools.com)

Quality education is a partnership and children are most successful when the partnership is active and honest. Parents and teachers need to communicate, share goals and objectives, reinforce one another, and demonstrate to children a consistent view of values, education, and life.

We invite you, as parents, to participate in the education of your child. This handbook of suggestions and explanations is simply a way of beginning the dialogue.

## FIRST DAY TIPS FOR PRESCHOOLERS

The first day of preschool is a momentous occasion to a child. It means separation from family and adjusting to a new routine and surroundings. Separation can also be upsetting for parents who often do not anticipate the strength of their own emotions.

Anxiety and emotion can be associated with the first days of school and is perfectly normal. Try not to be overly concerned if this occurs. Teachers understand and are prepared should this occur. Staff is experienced and has worked through the process many times with other families. Trust them.

Helpful tips in preparing both you and your child for those first days of school:

- Talk with your child about preschool. Talk about the teacher by name. Drive by the school and show your child what it looks like.
- Attend the Ice Cream Social held before the opening of school. It gives you and your child a chance to get acquainted with the teacher and the surroundings.
- Plan to be available the first morning of school. We may call you if your child needs a shortened first day. You may choose to stay with your child the first day if you feel he needs you for support.
- Both you and your child will be more anxious if you are rushed so allow plenty of time to get ready for school on the first morning.

- Be prepared to deal with your own feelings. Smile and act confident. Body language can communicate more than words.
- If your child expresses apprehension, accept the feelings and tell your child that you understand. Continue to be positive about the coming new experience.
- Walk side by side with your child into the classroom rather than carrying your child in your arms. It helps to minimize the physical separation.
- It is best not to linger. Tell your child that you will be back soon and say good bye. Leave confidently and quickly. You can always phone later to see how your child is doing.
- Arrive promptly at dismissal time. Your child will feel more secure if you arrive when other parents do.

Children usually adapt very quickly. However, it may take several mornings before you and your child can part from one another comfortably. Try not to judge yourself or your child. If it appears that your child is not ready for the preschool experience, you may want to talk with the teacher and the Director about delaying the enrollment.

## ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is emotionally important at the preschool level. Your child will adapt more readily and be more comfortable with a consistent routine. Establishing a pattern of attendance at an early age helps to build good habits in later school years.

If your child should resist going to school, acknowledge his or her feelings. Encourage your child to talk about it. Proceed to school. Talk with the teacher about the problem **after** the school session. Share as much information as possible. Together you should be able to identify the basis for your child's loss of confidence in school. Allowing your child to stay home will not solve the problem.

## CLASS PLACEMENT

Kachina provides a developmental preschool program with an average age span of six to eight months in each class. Our goal is to place children in classes according to their overall developmental maturity. This may at times differ from their actual age.

If you are new to Kachina, your child's initial class placement will be based on actual age. During the first few weeks of school, we observe each class to help ensure that all children have been placed appropriately. In some cases, we recommend that a child be moved to another age grouping more suited to his or her total readiness. We talk with you and request your cooperation before making a class change.

Class placement for continuing students is based on evaluation of the child's overall maturation during the previous school year. This is determined by teacher observation, group screening in the classroom and an individual developmental screening with the Miller Assessment for Preschoolers (MAP) or Gesell Screening for School Readiness.

Our developmental age level groupings are sometimes confusing when parents try to determine a year-to-year progression. The following represents a somewhat predictable progression beginning in the Fall.

A) Young 2s--Young 3s--Young 4s--Young Kindergarten--Developmental 1<sup>st</sup> --

1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.

B) Older 2s--3s--4s--Kindergarten-1<sup>st</sup> grade--2<sup>nd</sup> grade.

## HEALTH

To preserve the health of all children, we ask that you not send a sick child to school. Small children in particular are prone to infection because their immune systems are not fully developed. One sick child in the classroom places all other children at risk. In addition, the sick child typically has a miserable day.

A child who has a fever should not be sent to school under any circumstances. A child who is listless or shows active signs of illness also should be kept at home. Here is a good rule of thumb. Keep your child at home if you observe any of the following symptoms: (1) Persistent stomach ache, any diarrhea or vomiting; (2) deep or hacking cough even if fever is not present; (3) continuous runny nose; (4) yellowish or greenish mucus; (5) a rash that has not been diagnosed.

A child may return to school when (1) fever is gone and temperature has been normal for at least 24 hours; (2) energy level has returned to normal for at least 24 hours; (3) active signs of illness are no longer present. Children do not have to remain at home until all secondary symptoms disappear. Some nasal and bronchial congestion may linger for several weeks following cold or flu, but the child generally is no longer contagious. Consult your physician or the school nurse if you question whether or not your child should return to school. If the teacher observes signs of illness, she may suggest that your child be seen by the school nurse before being admitted to the classroom.

Medications may be administered at school under the following conditions. The parent must supply the medication in its original container and complete a medical instruction form which allows school personnel to administer the medication. This form may be effective for a maximum of one week. The medication must be stored in the school office and administered by the school nurse or a Red Cross Certified staff member. Medications can be kept at school for a maximum of one week.

Please tell us if your child has been exposed to a contagious disease so that the teacher can be alert for early symptoms. If your child becomes ill while at school, we will notify you. It is essential that you provide us with current home, office and emergency telephone numbers for this purpose. We may recommend that you take your child home or that you seek medical care.

## **REST**

A good night's rest is also essential for a good day at school. The need for sleep varies from child to child. In general, we recommend that preschoolers get at least 10 hours of sleep per night. Most children also require some kind of rest period during the day until they reach the mid-3's. Daily routine for preschoolers enrolled until 3:00 PM or later, includes a nap or quiet time after lunch. Even children who don't usually nap at home will need a nap after playing all morning in an active group. Children are awakened after about an hour of napping so they will be able to settle into bed at a good time in the evening.

## PERSONAL HYGIENE

Good habits help to prevent illness. We don't expect young children to be neat, but we encourage them to be clean.

Daily routine for preschoolers includes washing hands before eating and after going to the bathroom. We accompany all children to the bathroom until they learn the routine. We try to keep runny noses wiped and encourage children to cover their mouths when they cough or sneeze. Toys are washed regularly. We encourage you to reinforce these routines at home. If your child brings a stuffed animal, blanket or toy to school for naptime, be sure it is washable and labeled with his or her name.

Dental hygiene is incorporated into the curriculum and reinforced in daily routines. For example, preschool children get water to drink at snack time to help rinse their mouths of food particles.

## NUTRITION

Nutrition is essential to maintaining good health in growing children. Every child should have a nutritious breakfast before coming to school. Ideally, it would include juice or fruit, a grain product like toast or cereal, a protein like eggs or cheese, and milk. Sometimes children are not awake or alert enough to eat a large breakfast. Try experimenting with alternatives like granola bars and instant breakfast mix whipped in a blender with fruit. Kachina provides breakfast for all children participating in early morning extended day. Nutrition education is incorporated in the curriculum.

Small children need to refuel their bodies frequently and Kachina provides nutritious mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks. We serve things like raw vegetables with dip, celery with peanut butter, fresh fruit, raisins, pretzels, granola, cheese chunks and crackers. We encourage you to promote this kind of snack for at home.

A hot lunch is provided for all children at noon. The meal includes a fruit, a vegetable, a protein, and milk. Dessert is served after lunches have been eaten. If your child has any food allergies, be sure to note it on your emergency/immunization health card.

## PERSONAL PROPERTY

Extra clothing and removable clothing brought to school should be labeled with first and last names. We recommend sewn in labels or permanent markers.

Young preschoolers may wish to bring a stuffed animal or blanket for naptime. It should be washable and clearly labeled. Older preschool classes typically have a designated day for show and tell. Each child will be invited to bring a favorite toy, book, or souvenir to share during show and tell time. Please be sure that your child does not bring fragile items, expensive toys, jewelry or money.

Do not send toys to school with your child on a regular basis. Preschool children often are not ready to share personal property. We have lots of toys at school. They belong to everyone, so it's easier for a child to accept the notion of sharing and taking turns. No personal toys will be allowed outside of the classroom on the playground. Guns and toys with sharp corners are not allowed at school under any circumstances.

At times your child may be adamant about bringing a toy. It's better to let the child bring it than to start the day with a major upset. The teacher may suggest putting the toy in a safe place and saving it for an individual show and tell sometime during the day.

Please remember that the teacher's major responsibility is the safety and well being of the children. Teachers will do their best to care for personal possessions but it cannot be a primary concern. Clothing is sometimes soiled and toys are misplaced. Parents must share the responsibility. Don't send your child to school in a "best dress" outfit. Help to locate toys and other possessions at pick-up time. Enlist your child's help and you will encourage an attitude of responsibility. If an unfamiliar toy or article of clothing shows up at your home or in your car, please return it to school the next day.

## SAFETY TO AND FROM SCHOOL

Kachina does not provide bus service, so parents must assume responsibility for transporting children to and from school. We encourage car pooling.

If you drive your own child to school, please remember to fasten the child securely in a car seat or automobile seat belt. Most accidents occur within a few miles of home. If you car pool, car seats must be provided for all children under 5 years.

### **Infant**

Birth to age one, designed for children from 7 to 20 pounds

**Seats**

### **Convertible**

7 to 40 Pounds

**Seats**

### **Booster**

40 to 60 Pounds

**Seats**

Seat belts must be used with all other children. Set an example by wearing your own seat belt.

The back seat is the safest place for small children. If your car has a cigarette lighter in the back seat, take it out or tape it closed. Be sure that car doors are locked and windows are rolled up. Never leave your child or children unattended in the car. If you must stop in route to or from school, take the children with you.

Children riding in your car should be under control when you are driving. We realize that is easier said than done. Here are a few tips for keeping children occupied. Ask them to count cars. Look for trucks. Find something that is colored yellow....red....blue. See who can blow out the red stop light. If things get out of hand, pull off the road and stop until you can reestablish order.

## SIGN IN AND SIGN OUT

School policy requires that each preschool child be walked to the classroom and delivered into the care of the teacher. At pick-up, children must be signed out from the classroom or sitting room. Everyone...parents included...must show a pick up pass or "Permission for Pick Up" form in order to pick up a child from Kachina.

If you plan to pick up your child before the regular dismissal time, please knock on the classroom door and the teacher will bring your child to meet you at the door. This courtesy is particularly important to young preschoolers. The obvious arrival of a parent is a signal to children that class is over. Class activity is disrupted and children often become apprehensive about the arrival of their own parents.

Pick up passes are issued to parents. Each parent should carry a pass. Extra passes are provided so that you may give them to anyone who will be picking up your child on a routine basis throughout the school year. This would include car pool drivers and regular caretakers such as grandparents, baby sitters or nannies. The pass represents parent authorization for pick-up. When you give passes to people, be sure to list their names on your Emergency/Immunization/Health Card and get their signatures on the card. If your situation changes during the year and any of these people cease to be responsible for picking up your child, be sure to get your passes back from them. Destroy any passes you don't need.

We recommend that you carry the passes in your wallets or your cars so they're always handy. Anyone who does not have a pass must go through the office. Parents and those authorized for pick up on the Emergency/Immunization; Health Cards will be verified and given a temporary pick up pass.

If you want your child to be picked up by someone who does not have a pass for your child, you must fill out a "Permission for Pick Up" form which is available in the school office. You may give your completed form to the classroom teacher or take it to the office. In emergency situations, a parent may phone the school office and give permission for pick up. The person picking up your child must go through the office to obtain a copy of the permission form in order to collect your child from the classroom. The person will be required to show ID and sign the form. We will not release a child to anyone not authorized.

## **TIPS FOR UNLOADING IN THE PARKING LOT**

Kachina parking lots are crowded at drop off and pick up times. Hold onto your child. Children are impulsive and they move quickly. This is a time to focus your attention, particularly if you are unloading more than one child. If you have an infant in the car, release the seat belts on older children but require them to stay in the car until after you have taken the infant out. Car pool drivers may find a lead line helpful. It can be a scarf or a rope that children hold onto as you unload and walk across the parking lot. Another trick... tell the children to hold onto the car as they unload. Position yourself between the children and the driveway. Unload on the curb side of the car if you can.

## **BIRTHDAYS AND OTHER CELEBRATIONS**

Birthdays are special! Children are invited to celebrate their birthdays by bringing treats to share with classmates. Party favors such as balloons are OK too. Some parents make a practice of letting their child donate a book to the class in honor of the child's birthday. Please coordinate your plans with the teacher. We ask that you not bring presents to school for the birthday child.

It is best to hold private birthday parties on non-school days. It is especially important not to schedule a party immediately following school if every child in the class is not invited. You may distribute birthday party invitations through the school only if every child in the class is invited. If you would rather limit your child's party to fewer children, we ask that you distribute invitations outside of school so there are no hurt feelings.

We learn about other holidays as a means of sharing traditions. Those we typically earmark for special attention are Halloween, Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Martin Luther King Day, Christmas, Valentine's Day, President's Day, Mother's day, Father's Day, and Fourth of July. Teachers may elect to hold classroom parties on some of those occasions. The parties are organized by Room Parents. Please talk with your teacher or room parent if you wish to contribute something special for a holiday or help with a classroom party.

## **REFERENCE TO RELIGION**

Kachina is a private, non-profit school. We maintain a strict non-discriminatory policy with regard to race, color and creed of students, faculty and employees.

We do not teach any form of religion or practice any form of worship in the classroom. Cultural traditions which are a part of community life may be included as part of the children's social learning. For example, we typically say a poem before snack. The thanksgiving poem does not contain a reference to any deity. Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and Elementary school students begin their day with a flag ceremony and the Pledge of Allegiance.

We also make a practice of learning about child-centered holidays like Christmas and Hanukkah. We may read the Nativity story and tell the story of Hanukkah as a means of sharing traditions. No form of worship is included or intended. We believe that young children should have their early religious experiences within the context of the family.

## VISITING THE CLASSROOM

Parents are welcome to visit and observe your child's class. Please remember that while class is in sessions, teachers are responsible for guiding, nurturing and supervising the children. If you wish to talk with the teachers, you are welcome to meet with them outside of Class time.

For a broader perspective, we encourage you to consider our Parent Participation Program. It allows you to view your child's class on more than one occasion, to become acquainted with the teachers, and to be actively involved with the children in the process of learning.

## HOME LEARNING

Learning is not confined to the classroom. It takes place anywhere and at any time. All it requires is a perceptive and receptive parent and child.

Setting the family dinner table with your preschool children can help them to understand colors, shapes, and left and right. It also offers many counting possibilities. Running errands in a car and grocery shopping provide opportunities for letter and word recognition games. Reading aloud to your children (even after they can read alone) is a wonderful way to demonstrate that you place value on reading and that reading is fun. Cooking teaches the difference between the whole and its many parts. Taking care of the yard is the beginning of science.

When you include children in your own activities, they begin to understand that the world is full of interesting things. They acquire skills, knowledge and competencies.

While it is true that small children can be taught to perform with workbooks and flashcards, the long-range benefits are limited. It's more important for small children to find success in learning than to deliver the right answer. That will come later. It is also important for children to see that grownups are curious too. When you actively participate in children's non-structured learning experiences, you show them that learning is natural, fun and life-long. We develop symbol and sound recognition through sensory patterning activities, phonics, sight reading readiness programs and a activity/computer early literacy program

## **DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING**

It is reassuring to know that children are developing normally. It is also important be able to recognize a developmental delay and suggest activities that will stimulate development. Many learning disabilities and difficulties can be prevented by early identification and attention to developmental delays. At Kachina, children from 3 to 6 years old are individually screened at least once a year for developmental progress.. We use the Miller Assessment for Preschoolers (MAP) or the Giselle Screening for School Readiness to measure specific skills such as eye-hand coordination, large and small motor skills, speech and language development, visual and auditory memory, and problem solving. We also provide hearing screening annually for all preschool children and vision screening.

Individual developmental screening is an integral part of the Kachina program and philosophy. Each child enrolled in Kachina is screened at least once a year.

Screening is done individually and outside of the classroom. Sometime during the year, you will be contacted to schedule an appointment for you child's screening. Following the screening, you will receive a written report highlighting the results.

An appointment to go over the screening results and recommendations can be scheduled and is recommended.

## **BEHAVIOR**

One of the goals of education is to teach children to impact positively on the people and things around them. Sometimes they need to learn to respect the rights and property of others. Sometimes they need to learn to protect their own rights and property. In general, they must learn how to cooperate and how to express needs and feelings appropriately. The teacher models positive behavior and problem solving methods that children can emulate.

Parents should advise the teacher of any changing home situations that may affect a child's behavior. The birth of a brother or sister, a death in the family, a divorce or separation, illness, a change of residence, even prolonged or frequent business and pleasure trips can upset a child. Sharing information will help the teacher to better understand your child and deal more sensitively with changes in behavior.

## DISCIPLINE

Preschool children behave spontaneously and rarely have a clear cut understanding of cause and effect. The teacher has to be flexible and give them lots of help in learning how to behave. They also learn from interacting with one another. By placing children in classes with a narrow age span, we give them a better opportunity to develop social and emotional problem solving with their peers.

When a child does something that is harmful, potentially harmful, or disruptive, the teacher uses logical consequences and time-out as a form of discipline. We do not use physical punishment.

A reminder of the rule comes first. The teacher interrupts the out-of-bounds behavior, calls attention to it, and restates the rule.

Time-out occurs in the classroom if the behavior is repeated. The teacher interrupts the behavior, restates the rule and suggests that the child needs time out to think about the rule and the consequences of the behavior. The child is guided to a seat on the sidelines where he or she can see, but not participate in the classroom activity. After a few minutes, the teacher again restates the rule, verbalizes a request that the child will remember it and allows the child to rejoin the activity.

Time out in the office is the next step if the out of bounds behavior continues to occur in the same day. The teacher restates the rule reminding the child that he or she has had time out to think and still is repeating the unacceptable behavior. At this point, the teacher may take the child to the office for a brief time out in the company of the preschool director. Sometimes a child needs to be removed from the excitement of the classroom in order to relax and regain control. If the child is still unable to modify behavior, we may call the parent and suggest that the child be picked up early from school that day.

If your child consistently displays out of bounds behavior, the teacher will tell you about it and explain the way it is being handled. Parents are encouraged to participate in the discipline process. We need to share insights and present the child with a consistent view of behavior and the consequences which logically accompany it.

## HOME SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Students new to the school program may need their parents support for their first day. If you feel this is needed feel welcome to stay.

### Open House Before School Begins

During the school year, you and other parents in your child's class will be invited to visit the classroom to see some of the children's project and learning materials, and talk informally with the teachers.

### Informal day to day Communication

It is important to advise the teacher when something has happened that may affect your child's performance or behavior at school. We encourage you to write a note to the teacher rather than trying to discuss it when you bring your child to class. Teachers are responsible for welcoming all the children and supervising those already involved in activities. It is difficult for the teacher to give the necessary attention at this time. If you wish to discuss a concern, ask for a conference. Teachers are happy to talk with you.

The teacher will advise you if there is a significant change in your child or if something out of the ordinary occurs at school. From time to time, you may receive a note from the teacher just to let you know how your child is doing or to tell you about an important accomplishment. The bulletin board outside your child's classroom provides highlights of daily activities.

### Parent/Teacher Conferences

You are invited twice a year to meet the teacher to discuss your child's progress. In the early fall conference, teachers give you a brief written report on your child and ask for your perception of the program and your child's adjustment. You will receive a written report at this first conference.

The mid year conference provides a more thorough evaluation of your child's development, special abilities and performance.

Parents of toddlers receive behavioral reports based on teacher observation. Is the child comfortable? Does he talk with classmates? Can he listen to a short story...imitate a finger play...follow direction? Does he exhibit general characteristics of a child his age?

Parents of 3 to 5 year olds receive reports based on teacher observation of developmental progress, social adjustment, problem solving, and early academic achievement.

The parent/teacher conference is a time for you to ask questions. It's a chance for you to provide information that will help the teacher better understand your child's needs. It is a common goal-setting session. Everyone should benefit from the conference...you, your child and the teacher. Here are a few tips to help you make the most of it.

*Organize your questions ahead of time and write them down. Questions may pertain to behavior, adjustment to preschool, social skills, self-esteem, development of readiness skills.*

*Make a list of things that will help the teacher to better understand your child: family experiences that may be affecting your child, special needs or medical problems, unusual sleep habits, feelings about school, relationships with siblings, TV habits, special interests, home learning activities.*

*Plan to arrive promptly. Conference time is limited. If both of you and the teacher are well prepared, you should be able to exchange information and hold some discussion. If you need more time, arrange another conference.*

*Don't forget to talk with your child about the conference. Share all the good things the teacher has said. Praise accomplishments. Help your child begin to build a positive attitude toward parent/teacher conferences.*

## **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

Parents may sign up to work in the classroom as parent helpers. It is a way to be actively involved in your child's school experience.

Check with the teacher for a time for you to come and be a "parent helper".

You may help with an art activity, read a story or work with children in a learning center. You are asked to mingle with the children during free play and assist the teacher wherever she needs help. Expect your child to be proud that you are there and seek your attention. Be sure to tell the teacher if you have special talents that could create a unique learning activity. Another way to participate in the program is by driving and supervising children on their class field trips. The 2's and 3's have some in school special programs but do not go on field trips until the 4's age.

We recommend that parents wait about a month after school opens before you sign up to participate in class. Children need a little time on their own to adjust to the class and become secure with the teacher.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

### In the Classroom

Each class has a room parent responsible for organizing parents to help with class parties and special projects, and for developing a spirit of camaraderie. Room parents also help to inform parents about school activities and to solicit support. Parents provide transportation and supervision for class field trips. Some contribute by visiting the classroom to share an occupation, hobby or special talent. We enjoy having fathers in the classroom as well as mothers. Let the teacher know that you are willing to help, and tell us about your interests, expertise and availability.

### In the School

Kachina has a very active Parent Teacher Organization which serves as a vehicle for parent and staff support of, and participation in school activities. The organization manages the room parent program, provides assistance with hearing and vision screening, provides hospitality and refreshments for special events, provides volunteers to help organize and assist with school fundraising projects and special activities like Children's Holiday Shopping, Family Halloween Party and the Spring Carnival. By offering many different ways to get involved, the Association encourages participation of all parents...fathers and mothers, full time working parents, part time working parents, and full time parenting parents.

### Parent Education Classes

Parent study classes and special programs are held periodically to help you better understand and nurture your child's growth and achievement. Some are designed to explain specific aspects of our program. Others focus on child development, behavior patterns, learning strategies, discipline, self-esteem and family communication. Specific times and topics are announced in parent newsletters or special bulletins.

## Board of Directors

Kachina is a non-profit corporation governed by a volunteer Board consisting primarily of parents. All members are encouraged to attend the meetings. Let the Executive Director know if you are interested in serving on the Board. We are also organizing a site counsel for parent input to school policy.

KG - 8<sup>th</sup> Grades - Charter Program

State Funded Tuition.

Learning Strategy, Experimental and Computer based Programs

Classes limited to 20 students in each grade.