

## Early Childhood Education Program FAQ's



### **What is Inclusion?**

Inclusion is one of St. David's Center's core values. We believe that truly inclusive environments, ones that embrace individual differences, promote optimal development of all people. In the context of our early childhood education classrooms, inclusion refers to children of all abilities learning together. Our early childhood education program reflects the diversity of children in the community. We believe programming for children with diverse abilities has a positive influence on every child. For that reason, we include children with typical needs and children with special needs in our early childhood education classrooms. Successful inclusion at St. David's Center means that all children can actively participate, make friends, learn and grow together, in a natural preschool setting.

### **How does inclusion work at St. David's Center?**

Our inclusion program is tailored to meet the needs of each child enrolled so that every student, regardless of need or ability, receives the best possible early childhood education experience. Parents are actively involved by sharing information such as assessments, Individualized Education Plans (IEP's), therapies, special education, etc. and working with staff to develop a program plan so additional support can be put in place as needed.

If your child has special needs, an alternation enrollment process may be required, which may result in additional tuition. Before filling out enrollment materials, please contact our CORE Office at 952-548-8700 for more information. Funding options may be available.

### **What are the Early Childhood Education Program hours?**

Our center is open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday.

### **What program options are available?**

#### **3-HOUR DAY**

The 3-hour program begins at 8:45 a.m. and ends at 11:45 a.m.

#### **6-HOUR DAY**

The 6-hour program begins at 8:45 a.m. and ends at 2:45 p.m.

#### **FULL-DAY**

Our full-day option allows for arrivals and departures any time between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. Please have your child arrive to class by 9 a.m.

#### **ENGLISH / SPANISH CLASS**

St. David's Center offers an English/Spanish Pre-K class. This class provides exposure to Spanish language and culture but is not considered a full immersion program. The class is for children in our Pre-K program who will turn 5 years old by August 2019. In the case that there is more interest than availability, placement will be determined via a lottery system considering a balance of gender and schedules. Priority for enrollment will also be given to children who were enrolled in one of our Pre-K classes the year before. If there is not space available for your child, an offer may be made in another class as a secondary option. The English/Spanish

Pre-K program charges an additional monthly fee. This fee can be found on our 2019-2020 Tuition Rates sheet.

## **What class will my child be in?**

Classrooms are grouped by age. Your child's placement will be determined by their age as of September 1, 2019.

Toddler Classes	16 - 33 months
3-Year-Old Classes	34 - 48 months
Pre-K Classes (4 & 5-year-old)	49 - 67 months*
Pre-K English/Spanish Class	49 - 67 months*

\*In certain cases, we may put younger children (46 - 48 months) in these classrooms when developmentally appropriate.

## **How is tuition determined?**

Tuition and payment policies are fully described in the Tuition Rates and Tuition Policies sheets and [on our website](#). Increases in tuition may occur year to year to ensure we can continue to offer flexible programming and competitively compensate staff as key components of our high-quality program.

The primary contributor to annual increases in tuition are staff salaries. Paying competitive wages is essential for retaining experienced and highly skilled early childhood educators and directly impacts your child in the classroom. Competitive salaries reduce staff turnover, which can be especially disruptive for young children. Consistent caregivers help young children build trust and develop relationships, which positively impacts their social-emotional development as the cornerstone of life-long learning. We work hard to better meet the needs of our teachers, so they can provide the best possible care for your child. St. David's Center is proud to offer competitive salaries, opportunities for professional development and a commitment to a healthy work-life balance, which in turn has improved our retention rate and reduced the need for substitute teachers.

St. David's Center completed a rate analysis across other centers in the local community as well as the greater Twin Cities area. For more information on this analysis, please contact Matt McNiff, Assistant Director of ECE, at (952) 548-8771.

## **When should I apply?**

Current families must complete their Returning Child Applications, and any New Child Applications for siblings, by January 18, 2019 to have priority placement over incoming families. New families can access the application beginning February 1, 2019. Applications will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis with many factors going into enrollment decisions such as age, schedule, and dynamics of the room.

## **Will my child be provided with snack and lunch?**

St. David's Center will provide your child with a nutritious mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack. For 6-hour and Full Day programming, parents will need to provide a healthy cold lunch for their child. Guidelines for a fully nutritious meal will be sent out to families prior to the starting. St. David's Center will provide milk with

lunch. **Please clearly indicate any dietary restrictions or requirements your child may have on your application form.**

### **Does my child need to be toilet trained?**

Children enrolled in any of our toddler options do not need to be toilet trained. If your child is in one of the 3-year-old classes, we encourage parents to look for signs of readiness to begin the toilet training process. We will work with you towards achieving this goal. **Pre-K classes require that children four years and older be toilet trained by the time they start the program.** If this is a concern, you must inform us before your child is enrolled. Additional tuition may be required for Pre-K students who regularly require special accommodations to use the bathroom.

### **How is classroom placement determined?**

Classrooms are divided into age groupings. There are many factors taken into consideration when placing students into classrooms. Our task is to find the right balance that allows every child to be successful. Some of the factors we take into consideration are:

- Maintaining student-teacher ratios at or below state levels
- A balance of genders in the classroom
- Teacher availability and family schedules
- Child's established friendships
- Synchronizing sibling schedules
- Limiting the number of transitions

Although it is not always possible for us to meet every individual's needs, we work to ensure the best learning environment for every child.

### **What if my child has a tough time with groups?**

For some students, group care experiences can be difficult or overwhelming. Our teachers have many resources to help students in the classroom, however some students may require additional support to be successful. Teachers may recommend observations or evaluations to determine if therapy services would be beneficial. In some circumstances, a child may need additional adult support in the classroom during part or all of their day in order to meet their needs, which could result in increased tuition costs.

If your child has had difficulty in other child care settings, or if you are worried about your child's ability to be successful in a classroom environment, please contact Matt McNiff, Assistant Director of ECE, at (952) 548-8771.

### **Why does my child need a medical release form?**

St. David's Center provides exceptional care and early learning experiences through a multi-disciplinary approach to all areas of a child's development. This means that our experienced teachers collaborate with early childhood mental health professionals, speech pathologists and occupational therapists each day. We also know that early intervention is the most effective way to address developmental needs as they arise and provides children with the best possible start in life. By submitting a medical release form for your child as part of our enrollment process, your child's teacher will be able to access the expertise of our highly-trained specialists to address children's needs in the moment. Most of the time, therapists simply provide tips that support any child's ability to learn and be successful in the classroom. Occasionally, specialists might help teacher's flag more significant developmental concerns that could benefit from classroom strategies or referrals for evaluation and assessment. Please note that we will never evaluate, assess, or treat your child for a development delay without your prior knowledge and fully informed consent.

## **What if my child needs to come early or stay late one day?**

Drop-in care is available when space permits during the early mornings from 7 - 8:45 a.m. and during the afternoon from 11:45 a.m. – 6 p.m. Drop-in care is charged on an hourly basis and is billed monthly on your tuition statement. Please refer to the Tuition Rates sheet for drop-in rates. In order to maintain the quality of our 6-hour and full-day programs, there are no more than 1 or 2 spots available in most classrooms at any given time. In some cases, there will be no spots available. Drop-in care is not intended for regular schedule accommodations and is typically limited to 2 requests per month.

### **Requests for drop-in care must be made in writing and at least two days prior to the requested date.**

Please be aware that our rates increase for requests made with less than two days (48 hours) notice. Requests may be made by submitting a completed drop-in form located outside of ECE Leadership Office 123. A member from the leadership team will contact you as soon as possible regarding the availability of your request.

## **When can I meet my child's teachers and see the classroom?**

We will be holding two Open Houses on January 31 and another in late spring. The Open House is an opportunity for prospective families to see our space, meet our teachers and leadership team, and learn about the exciting things St. David's Center is doing in the classroom. Along with touring the building and classrooms, you will have the opportunity to ask all of your enrollment, curriculum, and other general questions. Come join us for some light snacks as you see what St. David's Center has to offer. Please note that childcare will not be provided but children are welcome to attend. If you are new to St. David's Center and cannot attend an Open House, please feel free to call our CORE Office at (952) 548-8700 to arrange a program tour.

Summer class lists are finalized in May and fall class lists are finalized in August. St. David's Center teachers will contact parents before the program starts to inform them of their child's room placement. A Meet and Greet will be held on June 6, 2019 and August 29, 2019, respectively so that your child may meet their teachers and see their classroom before the first day of school. A parent orientation night will be held on September 17, 2019 to allow parents to come and learn more about the day-to-day life in the classroom and the bigger philosophies of St. David's Center. **Please do not assume or tell your child that he or she will be in a particular classroom or have a specific teacher before the Fall Meet and Greet.**

## **Where can I find the Parent Handbook and tuition information?**

You can find copies of important documents like the Parent Handbook, Tuition Policies, a printable program calendar, and more at <https://www.stdavidscenter.org/preschool/information/>.

## **What other services are available at St. David's Center?**

In addition to our high-quality inclusive early childhood education program, we also provide a range of services focused on addressing children's mental health, child abuse and neglect, and physical, mental, emotional and/or behavioral disabilities, including occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, autism day treatment, outpatient and in-home mental health services and psychological testing, early childhood home visiting, foster care, a range of supported living services and therapeutic recreation for adolescents and young adults with special needs, and much more! For a full list of services, visit [www.stdavidscenter.org](http://www.stdavidscenter.org) or call (952) 958-8700. Thank you for choosing St. David's Center!