Pre-K 4-SA

Early Inspiration. Future Success.

Family Handbook

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Definitions

Active Learning	Children are active participants in the learning process.
Administrator	A person in charge of the Center, including Head of Schools or Extended Day Manager.
Adult-Child Ratio	The number of adults compared to the number of children being supervised.
Assessment	The process of gathering information to determine the level of a child's learning.
Bilingual	Teaching children in two languages which consist of Spanish and English, rather than one language.
Calculated Risk-taking	The practice of allowing children to build self-confidence and resilience through self-directed play that involves taking healthy chances, making mistakes, and experimenting with materials and equipment in new ways.
Center	Short for Education Center, one of Pre-K 4 SA's model schools.
Child Protective Services (CPS)	A division of DFPS that is responsible for investigating reports of abuse and neglect of children
City Explorations	Teachers choose a location in the city that is free and teachers, families, and children's families meet and to explore the location together for inspiration for the Gracias Art Project. City Explorations were created to give our children and families the opportunity to extend learning outside the classroom and into the community.
Civic Engagement	Collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern
COSA	City of San Antonio
Culturally Responsive	Connects children cultures, languages, and lived experiences to what they learn in the classroom
Curriculum	A planned sequence of instruction and learning experience
Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)	The state agency responsible for protecting children and vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
ESL	English as a second language
External Program Evaluation	Evaluation of a program that is conducted by an organization who is external to the program
Extended Day Manager	Supervises staff and children during the extended-day program and acts as a second Administrator during the school day.

Extended Day	The instructional period from 3:00-6:00 p.m.
Family	A person with legal authority to make decisions on behalf of a child. This includes guardians.
GRACIAS : Children as Citizens Project	Year-long civics project in which children vote for a non-profit, explore the best of San Antonio's landmarks, and bring their exploration to life through art. Artwork is sold in annual auction and donated to the non-profit.
Head of School	Head of Schools are similar to a Principal of the education site.
HighScope	The curriculum used by Pre-K 4 SA.
Instructional Staff	Any staff member responsible for providing any type of instructional service to children.
Licensing	Child Care Licensing (CCL), a division of HHS.
NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children.
Ongoing Program Evaluation	Continuous monitoring of child progress and high-quality instruction
ProCare	The software system used for daily check-in and check-out and for collecting other family/child data.
Staff	Any employee of Pre-K 4 SA.
Teacher	Any Education Center staff member serving in an instructional capacity, including Master Teacher/Teacher, Assistant Teacher, Teacher Aid, and Substitutes.
Transitions	The process of moving from one activity, space, or event to another during the school day
TX Dept of Health and Human Services (HHS)	The state agency that sets policies and requirements for childcare centers.

Program Mission and Philosophy

Vision: A strong beginning for children builds a thriving future for all.

Mission: Pre-K 4 SA advances early learning by building enduring systems, driving innovation, collaborating across sectors, and scaling proven solutions for a vibrant, more prosperous San Antonio.

Beliefs and Values

Beliefs	Values
Every child deserves a high-quality education from the start.	**Excellence**
Families are children's most important teachers.	**Community**
San Antonio's toughest challenges in early learning are solvable with bold thinking and courage.	**Innovation**
A thriving future for San Antonio takes every sector working together for its youngest children.	**Service**

Strategic Goals

1. Expand access to high-quality early learning across San Antonio to ensure our youngest children are prepared for lifelong success.
2. Build a sustainable and transformative early learning ecosystem for San Antonio.
3. Elevate families through meaningful relationships by fostering intentional engagement and connecting families with community resources.
4. Build a strong early learning workforce by creating clear professional pathways and investing in talent development.
5. Expand Pre-K 4 SA's position as a premier, innovative leader in early childhood education by advancing and sharing research-based, replicable approaches that strengthen the early learning system and shape the future of San Antonio.

Commitment to Collaboration

Pre-K 4 SA promotes positive relationships among all children and adults. We encourage each child's sense of individual worth and belonging as part of a community, and we foster each child's ability to contribute as a responsible community member. In order to build a strong academic and social and emotional foundation for children, Pre-K 4 SA asks for the following commitment from children, families, teachers, and administrators:

The Child:

- will be friendly and safe with others and self;
- will solve problems in collaboration with others;
- will grow and learn through play every day.

The Family:

- will bring the child to school by 7:45 a.m. each day;
- will pick up the child promptly at the end of the day;
- will ensure the child attends school each day unless the child is ill;
- will communicate regularly with the teacher, including sharing information about changes in the child's life outside of school;
- will work collaboratively with teachers and staff to support the child's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development;
- will ask questions and share concerns with the teacher or family liaison before requesting the school administrator to intervene;
- will attend two family-teacher conferences throughout the year;
- will support the school community through active engagement in events such as garden days, family education classes, community explorations, and school-sponsored family events, walk in our shoes, etc.
- will follow all school policies and procedures.

Teachers:

- will welcome the child to the classroom each day;
- will create a positive classroom atmosphere;
- will use developmentally appropriate practices to support the child's social, emotional, physical and cognitive development;
- will maximize instructional time to ensure the child gets the most out of each school day;
- will seek family input to better understand and accommodate the child's individual needs and interests;
- will communicate regularly with the family about the child's progress and what the child is learning in the classroom;
- will share any concerns about changes in the child's demeanor or behavior;

- will actively engage the family in resolving any difficulties that may arise;
- will provide opportunities for families to be actively engaged in the learning environment;
- will follow all school policies and procedures.

Administration:

- will provide a safe, nurturing, and educational environment for all children.
- will ensure the school's focus is on developmentally appropriate practice to support the children's social, emotional, physical and cognitive development;
- will ensure the needs of the children are prioritized over the needs of adults;
- will support families in being advocates for their children's education;
- will provide opportunities for families to be actively engaged in the learning environment;
- will enforce school policies and procedures;
- will meet with children to resolve difficulties that may arise;
- will determine disciplinary actions when necessary; and
- will work with families to resolve concerns.

Standards and Accreditation

National Program Standards

Pre-K 4 SA preschools are accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), which sets the highest standards for early childhood education programs. All Pre-K 4 SA Schools, including Gardendale Early Learning Program, adhere to NAEYC standards and all staff are expected to uphold these standards. For more information, please visit https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/for-families.

NAEYC Standard 1: Relationships: Creating a Caring and Equitable Community of Learners

The program supports positive relationships with each child and family in ways that: promote individual children's self-worth, takes action to foster children's sense of belonging as part of a caring community of learners, centers children's and families' cultural values, integrating their home languages/dialects/communication needs, and identifies and addresses potential biases that exist within the staff and program structures.

NAEYC Standard 2: Families and Community: Engaging in Reciprocal Partnerships with Families and Fostering Community Connections

The program develops reciprocal relationships with each child's family responsive to culture, language, and individual needs; continuously engages children's families as vital members of the learning community; works to be a positive member of the larger community around it; and draws upon community resources (including both funds of knowledge and financial resources) to support program goals.

NAEYC Standard 3: Curriculum: Planning and Implementing an Engaging Curriculum to meet Meaningful Goals

The program uses a curriculum: based on current research to support children's development and learning; includes developmentally appropriate goals, a scope and sequence aligned with research in appropriate content areas, and rich content to guide teachers in all areas of development and content (literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, and the arts); and is culturally and linguistically responsive and reflective, builds on children's strengths, respects their cultural backgrounds, and supports their identities and home languages.

NAEYC Standard 4: Teaching: Teaching to Enhance Each Child's Development and Learning

The program uses teaching practices that are nurturing and inclusive; equips educators to support each and every child's development and learning through individualized and intentional practices; uses teaching practices that are culturally affirming and linguistically responsive to the children being served; and supports learning through play and hands-on activities.

NAEYC Standard 5: Assessment: Observing, Documenting, and Assessing Children's Development and Learning

The program uses an ongoing mix of formal and informal assessment to monitor children's development and learning to guide instruction; uses assessment from classrooms to plan, identify resources, and improve professional development to ensure all children are making progress in their development and learning; and conducts assessments in partnership with families, ensuring open communication and collaboration.

NAEYC Standard 6: Health: Promoting Health and Well-Being in Early Childhood Programs

The program promotes the nutrition and health of children and staff and protects them from illness; promotes the physical safety of children and staff, protecting them from injury while also encouraging healthy risk-taking that supports learning, exploration and development; and nurtures infants', children's, and staff's emotional, mental, and behavioral well-being.

NAEYC Standard 7: Physical Environment: Designing Physical Environments that are Safe, Engaging, and Accessible

The program provides access to appropriate and well-maintained indoor and outdoor spaces for both child-directed and teacher-guided activities; ensures indoor and outdoor spaces are adequately sized and accessible to all children, including children with disabilities and those who need individual accommodation; and offers a physical environment that reflects the languages and cultural backgrounds of children and their families.

NAEYC Standard 8: Professionalism: Demonstrating Professionalism as Early Childhood Educators

The program employs a staff that has education and knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions to support the development, learning, and well-being of all young children and ensures fair and equitable access to professional development opportunities that help educators deliver high-quality early learning experiences and environments.

NAEYC Standard 9: Leadership and Management: Supporting Staff, Children, and Families Through Effective Leadership and Management

The program has policies, procedures, and systems that reflect high-quality HR practices, are aligned with the program's vision and philosophy, and ensure developmentally appropriate experiences for young children; maintains financial records that help leaders to make decisions and contribute to the program's long-term success; has policies that guide staff, educator, and volunteer orientation and continuous reflection, setting them up for success; and implements policies, procedures and systems that support confidentiality regarding information about enrolled children and their families.

State Standards

Pre-K 4 SA is committed to ensuring each child receives the highest quality of care and instruction in a safe learning environment. Pre-K 4 SA abides by the *Texas Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).* A copy of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Minimum Standards and current Licensing Inspections may be viewed at the administrative office of each Pre-K 4 SA Education Center. Pre-K 4 SA will meet or exceed all of the standards set forth by DFPS.

Licensing Contact Information
P.O. Box 23990 Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400 3635 SE Military Dr.
San Antonio, TX 78223
(210) 337-3399
https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/family-safety-resources/child-care/information-parents

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

As a licensed childcare center, Pre-K 4 SA is required by state law to notify the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and/or local law enforcement officials if it appears a child is being neglected or abused or the child has made a verbal outcry. All staff is trained annually in the identification signs and requirements for reporting child abuse and neglect. DFPS may investigate and interview a child while at the Center. The DFPS investigator will determine whether or not a staff member should be present during the interview. The DFPS investigator may determine whether or not families are notified of the interview. Once there is an open DFPS investigation, Pre-K 4 SA staff will defer all questions to the identified case worker.

Sexual Abuse

The Texas Family Code defines sexual abuse as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare, as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. Staff will look for possible physical and behavioral indicators of sexual abuse. When sexual abuse is suspected or a child makes a verbal outcry, a staff member will immediately contact administration. Pre-K 4 SA's first priority will be to seek any necessary medical help for the child. A report will be filed with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services when the staff is informed of a child outcry or suspects a child has been sexually abused. Reports of abuse may be made to:
Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
1-800-252-5400
http://www.txabusehotline.org

Code of Ethics

- The Pre-K 4 SA Education Centers (Pre-K 4 SA) follow the NAEYC's (National Association for the Education of Young Children) Code of Ethical Conduct as well as The State Board of Education Code of Ethics for Educators, found at: https://texas-sos.appianportalsgov.com/rules-and-meetings?$locale=en_US&interface=VIEW_TAC_SUMMARY&queryAsDate=08%2F06%2F2026&recordId=229013
- The Code of Ethics offers guidelines for responsible behavior and sets forth a common basis for resolving the principal ethical dilemmas encountered in the field of early childhood. Please refer to the *Code of Ethical Conduct & Statement of Commitment* at: https://www.naeyc.org/resources/position-statements/code-of-ethics

Program Eligibility and Enrollment

Pre-K 4 SA is a specialized prekindergarten program designed to provide children with a strong academic start. Enrollment at each Pre-K 4 SA Education Center is limited. Families must apply for enrollment. Applications are reviewed in the order they are submitted, and enrollment is processed on a rolling basis, without regard to race, religion, color, sex, national origin, or disability.

To be eligible for enrollment in the Pre-K 4 SA program, children must live within the city of San Antonio or the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) of San Antonio. Children enrolled in a partner school district are also eligible for enrollment, regardless of where the child lives.

Children who are three- or four-years of age by September and who meet one or more criteria for prekindergarten program eligibility as established by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) may be eligible for free enrollment by dually enrolling in a partner school district. TEA prekindergarten eligibility criteria:

- Is eligible for the National Free and Reduced Lunch Program or receives SNAP or TANF or Medicaid benefits; or
- Is unable to speak and comprehend the English language (as determined by district or public school assessment); or
- Is homeless, as defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (as determined by district or public school); or
- Is the child of an active duty member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who is ordered to active duty by proper authority; or
- Is the child of a member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who was injured or killed while serving on active duty; or
- Is or has been in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services following an adversary hearing;
- Star of Texas Award, child of eligible person; or
- Child of a public school teacher in Texas.

All qualifying children must verify their eligibility during the Pre-K 4 SA registration process. Children who do not meet eligibility for the TEA prekindergarten program may attend Pre-K 4 SA through the affordable **sliding-scale tuition** options.

Tuition Plans

Tuition is due on the 1st **of every month. A $25 late fee is charged if payment is not received by the 8thof the month**. Families sign a tuition agreement during their registration appointment and must follow the tuition guidelines. Tuition is charged based on the signed *Pre-K 4 SA Tuition Agreement.*

Alternate Plans

Any deviation from the approved payment plans requires approval in writing of the Program's CEO or Designee.

Payment Methods

Acceptable Forms of payment

- Credit card
- Check made out to City of San Antonio
- Money order made out to City of San Antonio

Cash is not accepted

Ways to Pay

1. Education Center Office – bring credit card, check, or money order along with the account number and invoice number to the office during regular business hours.

2. Online - Credit card payments may be made online through the tuition payment portal on the Pre-K 4 SA website: https://prek4sa.com/parents/current-parents/tuition-payments.

3. Phone – credit care payments may be made by calling 888-502-7751. Be sure to have account number and invoice number available. Only payment in full is accepted via phone.

4. Mail – send check or money order to the City of San Antonio at Revenue Collections, PO Box 839975, San Antonio, Texas 78283-3975. Include the account number and invoice number, and payment in full.

Temporary and Unusual Circumstances

If temporary or unusual circumstances create a financial hardship for a tuition-paying family which may result in a late payment, the family should complete a Request for Late Payment form and submit the completed form to the Center prior to the payment due date in order to avoid any late fees. This option is limited to one instance per family per school year.

Checks with Non-Sufficient Funds
Non-Sufficient Funds Checks will result in a $30 reprocessing fee. Upon receipt of a second NSF check, the program may require that all future payments be provided in the form of a cashier's check, money order, or credit card. NSF Checks must be paid within 10 business days to avoid further action.

Program Withdrawal for Non-Payment
If a family fails to submit tuition fees by the 15th of the month, the family may be subject to withdrawal from the program.

Tuition Refunds

- Request Submission: In the event of a change in household size or change in income, family should obtain a "Tuition Revision Request" and submit to the Head of School or designee. Documentation of applicable changes must be provided to the Head of School or Designee before any request will be considered.
- Request Approval: Upon approval of the request, a revised tuition amount will be calculated and prorated from the date of the change. The Head of School will then notify the Program's Fiscal Administrator to adjust any fees and payment plans.
- Invoice and Tuition Revision, and Payment Refunds: If necessary, revised invoices and/or statements will be mailed to the family at the completion of the request. If a request is processed and approved after full payment is received, an amount due (refund) to the families/guardians will be calculated and sent to the family/ guardian via check. In the event the family has another eligible child that has been accepted for the following school year, the families/guardians may elect to apply any amounts due to the family to the subsequent school years tuition.

Pre-K 4 SA Education School Locations

North Education Center
3635 Medical Drive
San Antonio, TX 78229
(210) 206-2800

South Education Center
3510 S WW White Rd
San Antonio, TX 78223
(210) 206-2700

East Education Center
5230 Eisenhauer
San Antonio, TX 78218
(210) 206-2850

West Education Center
1235 Old Hwy 90 San Antonio, TX 78227
(210) 206-2900

Gardendale Early Learning Program
1731 Dahlgreen Ave San
Antonio TX 78237
(210) 898-4190

Hours of Operation

Pre-K 4 SA Education Centers are open from 7:15 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The prekindergarten instructional day is 7:45 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Families may drop off their children as early as 7:15 a.m. and pick up between 2:45 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. An extended day program is offered for children who qualify for extended day. Qualification and hours are based on families work or school schedule and pick-up time can range from 3:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. The Education Center administrative office is open from 7:15 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The instructional day schedule may be adjusted to ensure a safe drop-off and pick-up routine.

The South Education Center offers a limited number of seats for infants and toddlers. Children enrolled in the infant/toddler program are qualified to attend 7:15 and 6:00 pm. As with the preschool program, the infant/toddler program is an educational program and children are expected to attend a full day each day.

School Calendar

The Pre-K 4 SA school calendar is developed with input from families and staff. The calendar for the current year maybe be viewed and downloaded from our website: https://prek4sa.com/education-centers/families/school-calendar/

Pre-Kindergarten Extended Day

The Pre-K 4 SA Extended Day Program is available for families whose work or school schedule prevents them from picking up their child at the end of the regular instructional day. In order to qualify for the extended day program, families and/or guardians are required to adhere to the employment and/or school verification procedures. Qualification is determined based on the documentation submitted. As Pre-K 4 SA is a licensed facility, the 1:10 adult-to-child ratios followed during the instructional day will continue in the extended day program.

To ensure the highest quality of care and to meet licensing regulations, the following guidelines must be followed:

1. The Extended Day Program hours are from 3:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. Qualification and hours are based on families work or school schedule and pick-up time can range from 3:30 p.m.–6:00 p.m. Children MUST be picked up on or before their qualifying time. If a child is not picked up on time, a fee will be charged. ($5.00 for children picked up between 1 and 5 minutes late and a charge of $1.00 for each additional minute.) Late fee payments must be made before the child is allowed to continue in the Extended Day program.
2. All late pickups will be documented by the Extended Day Manager. After the third late pick up, the child will lose the privilege of Extended Day.
3. Children must be signed out through the ProCare app prior to their release.

Please note that while this program is beneficial for children and families, some three- and four-year- olds have difficulty being in school for such an extended amount of time. The Extended Day program cannot meet the needs of children who display behaviors that require one on one support or pose a safety hazard to self or others.

When individualized interventions have been implemented and the child continues to persistently display behaviors that are harmful to self or others, the administrator will contact the family to discuss alternative program options and resources to support the child. The administrator has the final authority to determine whether the Pre-K 4 SA Extended Day program can meet the child's needs.

School Supply List

Pre-school children need to bring the following: (All items listed below should be labeled with the child's first and last name.)

- A complete set of change of clothes including socks and underwear in a Ziploc bag. (Each item should be labeled on the inside with the child's first and last names).
- Water bottle

Pre-K 4 SA will provide all other supplies. A blanket, towel, and backpack will be provided to each child.

Infants and toddlers may require additional supplies, such as diapers and wipes. The infant/toddler program staff will provide the list of required items to each family based on the child's age and needs.

Toys from Home

Pre-K 4 SA understands that children may form a special bond and attachment to certain toys, smart watches and other items. In order to prevent a special toy, device, or item from being lost or broken, children are encouraged to keep these items at home. Toys and personal items brought from home are not permitted in the classroom.

Lost and Found

All personal child items should be labeled with the child's first and last name (for example, jackets, sweaters, coats, gloves, etc.) Children who have lost articles should inquire in the school office where the Lost and Found is kept. Items not claimed from Lost and Found at the end of the school year will be given to a charitable organization.

Child Dress Code

Children should be dressed and groomed in a manner appropriate for active learning and playing.

Appropriate dress includes: jeans, shorts, t-shirts, and tennis shoes/sneakers. Families/guardians are encouraged to dress children in clothing appropriate for play as the children will participate in painting/messy art activities and outdoor play.

Inappropriate dress includes, but is not limited to: see-through clothing, tank-tops, tops that are low cut or do not cover the mid-drift, clothing advertising or depicting tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs or offensive/obscene language or pictures.

Children should wear shoes that fully cover their feet and are safe for running, jumping, and playing. Sandals, flip-flops, roller shoes, child-size heels, or dressy shoes, should not be worn as these types of shoes do not provide protection and could be a safety hazard. For safety purposes, we ask that children not wear necklaces and rings. Children may wear stud earrings. Dangling or hoop earrings could pose safety hazards.

The Education Center Head of School makes the final determination on appropriate dress.

Attendance Policies & Procedures

Regular attendance is essential for a child's academic success, social development, and long-term educational outcomes. Establishing daily attendance habits in prekindergarten helps children build classroom routines, friendships, and a strong learning foundation. Pre-K 4 SA is a limited-enrollment program funded by the citizens of San Antonio. **Daily on-time attendance is a requirement for continued enrollment**. Excessive absences may result in withdrawal from the program. Excessive absence is defined as more than 5 consecutive or 10 cumulative days.

Daily Attendance Requirement

Children are expected to be in the classroom no later than 7:45 a.m. each day. Arrival after 7:45 a.m. is considered tardy. Children arriving after 9:00 a.m. will not be admitted.

Reporting Absences

If your child will be absent:

- Call the Education Center front office by 9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence.

- Submit a written note or email to the teacher that includes:

  - Date of absence
  - Reason for absence
  - Child's full name
  - Teacher's name
  - Parent/ Guardian signature

Absences Requiring a Doctor's Note

If a child is absent for 3 or more consecutive days due to illness, a note from a medical professional clearing the child to return to school is required. Families needing help to access medical care should contact the teacher or Head of School.

If a child is absent for part of the day to attend a medical appointment, the child will not be counted absent if a note from the medical professional is provided. A child who arrives after 9:00 am due to a medical appointment will be admitted if a note from the medical professional is provided.

Pre-K Compulsory Attendance Law

Under Texas Education Code §25.085(c), parents/ guardians must ensure their child attends school regularly. Pre-K 4 SA submits attendance data to local school districts. School districts may take any of the following actions for children who are absent or tardy for 10 or more days in a six-week period:

- Send a written warning about attendance
- Schedule a parent/ guardian conference
- Require a truancy prevention course

Daily Child Sign-In/Sign-Out Procedures

Pre-K 4 SA uses ProCare software system to manage drop-off and pick-up. Families/guardians are required to designate, in ProCare, all persons authorized to pick up their children. ProCare will assign a unique PIN for each person authorized to pick up the child. The PIN will allow the person to sign into ProCare. The family is responsible for ensuring the authorized person has the ProCare app and PIN. The person picking up the child must sign into ProCare to generate a secure QR code before the child will be released**. Instructional staff is prohibited from releasing a child without scanning a valid QR code from the Pre-K 4 SA device to the device of the person picking up the child.**

Daily Sign-In/Sign-Out Procedures:

- Pre-K 4 SA staff will greet children and families/guardians outside at the drop-off point or at the bus stop.
- Families/guardians will sign in their child in by using a phone to open the ProCare app, which generates a QR code on a Pre-K 4 SA device. A Pre-K 4 SA staff member will present the QR code, and the family will scan it using a phone. A family without a phone may sign- in using ProCare on a Pre-K 4 SA device.
- Families/guardians will sign out in the afternoon following the same procedures.
- If at pick up time, family cannot sign into ProCare, instructional staff will contact the administrator on duty. The administrator will confirm identity and document the incident.
- A child may only be released to either a family or a person authorized by the family within the ProCare platform.
- A valid physical government/state issued ID is required to sign children out each day from the center.

- Only an administrator may authorize the release of a child to a person not listed in ProCare. If a family calls to authorize the emergency release of a child to a person unknown to Pre-K 4 SA staff, the administrator will verify that the caller is the family/ guardian and inform the family how to add the person to ProCare. The person picking up the child must sign into ProCare to generate a valid QR code before the child will be released. The family is responsible for ensuring the authorized person has the ProCare app and PIN to generate the QR code.

Any person unknown to Pre-K 4 SA staff, or the administrator will verify that the caller is the family and inform the family how to add the person to ProCare. The person picking up the child must sign into ProCare to generate a valid QR code before the child will be released. The family is responsible for ensuring the authorized person has the ProCare app and PIN to generate the QR code.

If Pre-K 4 SA staff suspect an individual picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, they will immediately notify an administrator. The administrator will conference with the individual and determine the most appropriate action. Local law enforcement and CPS will be contacted, if deemed appropriate. Only law enforcement officers and HHS Child Protective Service staff have the authority to remove a child without permission.

Emergency Contact

Families must complete the *Emergency Contact Information* on the Pre-K 4 SA Child Profile Sheet at their child's school, which identifies the authorized adults (18 years or older) who are permitted to pick up their child. Families must also enter information for authorized adults in the ProCare app. It is the responsibility of the family to update this information to ensure Pre-K 4 SA has the most recent information on file. Phone calls do not serve as authorization for release of your child to an adult not previously designated. Authorized adults must download the ProCare app onto their phones, sign in using a PIN, and scan the QR code presented by staff in order to pick-up/drop off a child.

Emergency contact information will be kept on the buses.

Child Custody

Pre-K 4 SA will remain a neutral and safe haven for each child enrolled in our program. Conflict among families/guardians is often unsettling for a child and can cause stress that disrupts the child's learning.

Families /guardians should avoid bringing conflict into the school setting. Uncertainty about who will pick up at the end of the day is a common source of stress. To help the child feel secure, families/guardians should determine who will pick up the child after school each day and communicate this to the child.

The Families/legal guardians of a child will retain all education rights, including access to records, authorization to pick up, and access to the child at school, unless Pre-K 4 SA has a copy of an active court order (restraining order, court custody agreement, etc.) on file that restricts the education rights of the family.

If a court order is in effect for a child enrolled at Pre-K 4 SA, the family must provide a copy to Pre-K 4 SA. Once Pre-K 4 SA is in possession of the court order, Pre-K 4 SA will adhere to the terms as to access is authorized to have access to the child and the child's education records. Pre-K 4 SA does not enforce court orders or monitor visitation periods. If a family believes a court order has been violated, this should be reported to the court.

Children after Hours

Young children feel safe when a consistent routine is followed, and they quickly become concerned when families do not arrive on time to pick them up. Families/guardians are expected to retrieve their children promptly after school from the Center or from the bus stop. A child who has not been picked up by a family remains the responsibility of Pre-K 4 SA staff until signed-out by a family or guardian. If all attempts to reach the family and emergency contacts have failed, and a child is still in the care of the Pre-K 4 SA staff at 6:00 p.m., the Department of Family and Protective Services and/or the San Antonio Police Department will be contacted.

End of Regular Day
If a non-extended day child remains in the classroom at the end of the dismissal period, the Teacher will call family. The teacher will take the child to the designated late pick-up area and inform the staff member on duty when the family is expected. If the Teacher is unable to reach the family, the Teacher will inform the front office. If there is no response from the child's family or designated pick-up individuals by 3:30 p.m., Center administrators will coordinate an immediate home visit to seek the responsible adults. If during the home visit no contact is made with the families/guardians or designated adults, Administration will contact SAPD.

Bus Stop
If a family is NOT present at the bus stop within ten minutes of the bus arriving at the assigned location, the staff member supervising children on the bus will call the family/guardian to inform the family that the bus is returning to the Center. The bus will return the child and supervising staff to the Center. Upon return to the Center, supervising staff will take the child to the front office and inform a Center administrator.

Extended Day
If a child is not picked up at the end of Extended Day, the Extended Day Manager and an additional staff member will stay with the child. The Extended Day Manager will inform Center Administration if a child has not been picked-up by 6:00 p.m. If the Extended Day Manager has not successfully reached the family or authorized pick-up by 6:15 p.m., the Administrator will coordinate an immediate home visit. SAPD and/or DFPS may be called pending the result of the home visit. Pre-K 4 SA staff is not permitted to transport children in private vehicles.

Withdrawal from Pre-K 4 SA

Pre-K 4 SA makes every effort to help keep children enrolled in the program for the entire school year. Families that intend to withdraw their child from the program should inform the school office staff in person or through email. The Education Head of School will review the request and contact the family to discuss to whether there are options that would allow the child to continue enrollment. If the family moves out of the San Antonio city limits or Extra Territorial Jurisdiction; the child will no longer be eligible for the Pre-K 4 SA program.

Child Records

During the time children are being cared for, events may occur that require access to child information to protect the child. Families must maintain current personal and contact information in the ProCare system.

All child records are immediately accessible to staff members during hours of operation for use in an emergency. Families have the right to have access their child's records. Children's records are subject to review and/or reproduction by Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

Texas law specifies that certain general information about children is considered "Directory information" and will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it. This information includes:

- A child's name, address, telephone number, and date and place of birth
- The child's dates of attendance, grade level, and enrollment status

Families may object to the release of any or all Directory information for their child. Families must submit this objection in writing to the Head of School within 10 school days of the child's first day of school. Virtually all information pertaining to child performance, including child progress, assessments, and disciplinary records, is considered confidential educational records.

Release is restricted to:

- The families—whether married, separated or divorced—unless families rights have been legally terminated. In such a case, the school should be given a copy, in which an official stamp/seal is clear of the court order terminating these rights or the right to access a child's educational records.

- School officials who have what federal law defines as a "legitimate educational interest" in the child's records. School officials include:
    - trustees and the Pre-K 4 SA CEO
    - the Head of School, teachers, counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff
    - a person or company with whom the Center contracts or allows to provide a particular service or function (such as attorney, consultant, auditor, medical consultant, therapist or volunteer)
    - a family serving on a school committee

"Legitimate educational interests" in a child's records includes: working with a child, considering disciplinary or academic actions, creating/reviewing an individualized education program for a child with disabilities, compiling statistical data, reviewing an education record to fulfill the official's professional responsibility, or investigating/evaluating programs.

- Various governmental agencies or in response to a subpoena or court order.
- A school to which a child transfers to or in which he or she is already enrolled.

Confidentiality

Pre-K 4 SA recognizes the importance of confidentiality. At no time will Pre-K4 SA share a family's information with an unauthorized individual. Families must sign a release of confidentiality in order for Pre-K 4 SA staff to share information with any outside person or agency that does not have the legal right to view such records.

Pre-K 4 SA will aim to protect family's information by:

- Securing confidential documents in a locked file cabinet
- Reviewing and revising confidential information in a secure space
- Holding sensitive conversations and conferences in a private conference space
- Securely storing electronic records

Permission to Photograph or Videotape

Pre-K 4 SA will have various opportunities to display or demonstrate positive learning experiences for promotional and training purposes. Prior to using a child's pictures, videos and/or voices, families will provide written permission.
Pre-K 4 SA also uses video to evaluate the quality of instruction in classrooms. This video is reviewed by a third-party evaluator but is not shared publicly.

Transportation

Pre-K 4 SA provides free transportation for preschool children. Pre-K 4 SA does not provide transportation for children in the infant/toddler program.

Bus Procedures

Pre-K 4 SA takes every precaution when transporting children. School buses equipped with the latest safety restraints and integrated seats are utilized. All children must wear a seatbelt and shoes at all times while riding on the school bus.

Bus drivers are employed with Star Shuttle and have all required licenses and training. Bus monitors are Pre-K 4 SA staff members who have passed the required background and fingerprinting checks and are certified in CPR and First Aid. A ratio of one adult for at a maximum of every 18 children will be maintained on all bus routes. Pre-K 4 SA is committed to providing continuous adult supervision from the time children are dropped off to the time they are picked up.

A list of the bus stop locations will be provided to each family whose child will utilize the transportation service. A bus monitor will be present at each bus stop and will always ride the bus to and from the Pre-K 4 SA center. Families are required to wait with their child and sign their child onto the bus. **In order to pick up their child, families must be present and sign in/out the child using the ProCare app.** If families are not present at the bus stop within 10 minutes of the afternoon drop off time, the child will be taken back to the Pre-K 4 SA center for family pick up.

As per safety regulations, once the bus is in motion, it will not stop to load or unload a child. Pre-K 4 SA requests that families who utilize this service make a commitment to having their child ride the bus on a daily basis.

Children will be assigned seats on their designated bus. A seating chart listing children's names and seats will be kept on the bus at all times.

1. If a family has not picked up their child 10 minutes past arrival time, at least one bus monitor must return with the bus to the center. Call the designated staff member to report the return trip.
2. Call the designated staff member to verify your return to the bus stop and off duty status.
3. Document the incident appropriately.

Bus Procedures for Families

A.M. Bus Pick Up/Family Drop Off

For the safety of the child, families will be required to sign children in daily.
The bus will leave the bus stop promptly at the designated time to ensure children arrive at school before classes begin. Buses travel non-stop, directly from the bus stop to the Pre-K 4 SA center.

Families should arrive at the bus stop with plenty of time to sign the child in and have him/her secured in their seat before departure time. All children will be supervised by a bus monitor until the bus departs.

Due to safety regulations, once the bus is in motion, it will not stop to load or unload a child. If a family arrives at the bus stop **after** the bus has departed, the family will then be responsible for transporting the child to the Pre-K 4 SA center.

P.M. Bus Drop Off/Family Pick Up

For accountability and safety, children receiving bus services must ride the bus home consistently.

The bus will depart the school between 2:30 p.m. and 2:45 p.m. and arrive at the bus stop at between 3:05 p.m. – 3:15 P.M. Exact times will be determined according to the individual bus route.

For safety purposes, every family or authorized adult will be required to use ProCare to sign-out the child each day.

Only adults listed on the Emergency Contact list in ProCare are permitted to pick up the child. The driver/ monitor **cannot release** children to anyone **not listed** in the ProCare app and provide a government/state issued ID. It is the responsibility of the family to arrive at the bus stop just before or when the bus arrives. If the family has not arrived within 10 minutes of the bus arrival time, the bus will transport any remaining children back to the center for supervision purposes. It is then the family's responsibility to pick the child up at the Pre-K 4 SA Center.

Bus Emergency Procedures Medical Emergency:

Should a medical emergency occur during the route to or from Pre-K 4 SA, staff will:

1. Stop the bus in a safe area.
2. Call 911.
3. Provide First Aid medical assistance until the first responder arrives.
4. Call Center with incident location and provide information of the incident.
5. Contact affected families/guardians and provide related information.

6. Secure all passengers and remain on the bus.

Accident/Evacuation:
In the unlikely event that the bus is in an accident to or from Pre-K 4SA, staff will:

Bus Driver

1. Call 911.
2. Check for any injuries.
3. Secure the bus and display warning signs.
4. Evacuate the passengers if needed.
5. Account for all passengers.

Bus Monitor

1. Call Center with accident location and report any injuries.
2. Keep open communication with the Center and provide updates as needed.
3. Account for all passengers.

Head of School

1. Keep open communication with the bus monitor.
2. Contact Extended Day Manager to inform affected families.
3. Contact Pre-K 4 SA's Chief Operating Officer to report the accident.
4. Dispatch Center representatives to the scene if needed.
5. Notify Child Care licensing if needed.
6. Complete NAEYC 72-Hour Incident Report as necessary.

Extended Day Manager

1. Contact affected families/ guardians regarding the bus accident.
2. Inform families/guardians when and where to pick up the children.

Center Receptionist and Family Liaison

1. Assist with Extended Day Manager to contact all affected families/ guardians.

Lead Behavior Specialist

1. Contact Behavior Specialists to provide support to the emotionally vulnerable children who are sent back to the Centers.

Mechanical Failure:
If, for any reason, the bus suffers a mechanical failure, staff will:

Bus Driver
1. Call 911.
2. Contact Administration on Duty.
3. Contact Star Shuttle.
4. Secure all passengers and remain on the bus until another bus arrives.
5. Secure the bus and display warning signs.
6. Evacuate the passengers if needed.
7. Account for all passengers.

Center
1. If emergency call is received, record all accident information.
2. Keep open communication with the driver.
3. Dispatch additional staff to the scene if needed.
4. If the mechanical failure occurs on the route from Pre-K 4 SA Center to the bus stop at the end of the day, Center should contact families/guardians to inform of the delay.
5. If the mechanical failure occurs on the route to one of Pre-K 4 SA Centers in the morning, Center should inform the affected classroom teachers and inform the families/guardians regarding the incident.

Personal Vehicles

Pre-K 4 SA staff is not permitted to transport children in personal vehicles, unless authorized to do so in writing by the Head of School and the family. Pre-K 4 SA staff is never permitted to transport a child without another adult in the vehicle.

Pre-K 4 SA Curriculum and Instruction

Each decision about the curriculum and instructional practice is made considering what is developmentally and individually appropriate for the particular children being served. Pre-K 4 SA is committed to developing children's lifelong skills, including problem solving, critical thinking, interpersonal, and communication skills that are fundamental for successful living in our rapidly changing society.

Pre-K 4 SA promotes positive relationships among all children and adults. We encourage each child's sense of individual worth and belonging as part of a community, and we foster each child's ability to contribute as a responsible community member. Pre-K 4 SA responds to the different learning and developmental needs of young children through the HighScope approach. The following principles, which are based on classroom experience and extensive research into how young children learn, are fundamental to the Pre-K 4 SA approach to teaching and learning and all instructional staff is expected to adhere to these principles.

Integrated Curriculum

The HighScope approach supports active learning and builds on children's interests. Instructional activities are planned by selecting appropriate, developmentally sequenced material and by encouraging children to adopt an active problem-solving approach to learning. HighScope encourages child initiative by providing children with materials, equipment, and time to pursue activities they choose. Small group instruction provides an opportunity for more focused lessons, particularly in literacy and mathematics. HighScope provides teachers with a framework for guiding children's independent activities toward sequenced learning goals. In the resulting integrated curriculum, learning is regarded as a process rather than a collection of facts taught in isolation.

To support infant-toddler development, teachers focus on forming secure attachments by consistently responding to infants' cues—whether hunger, comfort, or curiosity—helping them build trust and a sense of safety. Daily caregiving routines such as feeding, diapering, and rest are viewed as rich opportunities for interaction, language development, and bonding. Infants are encouraged to actively explore their surroundings through sensory experiences, movement, and play with age-appropriate materials, while teachers provide gentle support and scaffolding to extend their discoveries. By honoring each infant's natural rhythm and offering responsive, nurturing care, the HighScope approach lays the foundation for healthy development in all areas—physical, cognitive, social, and emotional.

Kindergarten, First, and Second Grade (Gardendale)

To support literacy development, Kindergarten teachers also integrate the Collaborative Literacy curriculum. Collaborative Literacy is a comprehensive English Language Arts curriculum designed to develop independent readers, writers, and critical thinkers. Bilingual Kindergarten teachers integrate the American Reading Company curriculum designed to develop independent readers and writers in the child's native Spanish language.

Building on the active and integrated learning approach used in earlier grades, first and second grade learning experiences encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning; to develop written and verbal communication skills; to investigate real world problems and develop possible solutions; to develop positive civic behaviors and skills. The use of Responsive Classroom continues the social emotional aspect of the HighScope

approach. Each classroom develops a culture of a close community and fine tune the problem-solving skills developed through HighScope's Conflict Resolution and community building. To support literacy development in first and second grade, teachers implement the Collaborative Literacy curriculum. Collaborative Literacy integrates foundational skills instruction, practice in reading comprehension strategies, and rich literacy experiences with explicit social skills instruction and activities that foster growth as responsible, caring, and collaborative people. Bilingual First and Second grade teachers integrate the American Reading Company curriculum designed to develop independent readers and writers in the child's native Spanish language. First and Second grade teachers also utilize specialized math, science, and social studies curriculum resources to support holistic, integrated instruction aligned to TEKS.

Learning Environment

Pre-K 4 SA learning environments provide a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Learning environments are intentionally arranged to support the developmental needs of the children while reflecting the diversity of the children's home lives, languages, and cultures. Teachers select materials that are meaningful and interesting to children and authentically reflect the children's experiences. Families are invited to contribute to the learning environment by sharing items found in the children's home.

The Infant-Toddler learning environments are designed with age-appropriate furnishings, soft surfaces for exploration, and safe, sanitized materials that infants can grasp, mouth, and manipulate. Spaces must allow for free movement, giving infants opportunities to roll, crawl, pull up, and practice emerging motor skills. The environment should also be emotionally supportive, fostering secure attachments through consistent caregiving routines, warm interactions, and predictable daily rhythms. NAEYC emphasizes small group sizes and low teacher-to-child ratios, ensuring infants receive individualized attention and responsive care. Additionally, environments should reflect cultural and family diversity, including familiar objects, languages, and images, to promote a sense of belonging and security from the earliest stages of development.

The Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten learning environments are set up to encourage and support all levels of play with sufficient materials for all children to use. Interest areas are arranged in such a way that children are able to see materials through all areas. Children are encouraged to use materials in ways that are meaningful to them, including taking materials from one area to another. Children are taught to find, use, and return materials independently (High/Scope Program Quality Assessment: PQA - Preschool Version: Assessment Form. High/Scope Press, 2003).
The First and Second Grade learning environments are arranged to encourage independence in children. The environment is print rich and includes materials that support children's individual learning goals in all content. Children work independently as well as cooperatively in small groups. Lessons reflect the state standards and encourage children to authentically problem solve, think critically, and be reflective.

Active Learning

Children are engaged in active, rather than passive, learning activities. Active learning takes place as children touch and manipulate things. As they develop, they move from concrete activities and materials to those that are representational, and then from the representational to the symbolic. Spontaneous play, either alone or with other children, is a natural way for young children to learn to interact with one another and to understand their environment; play is respected as an appropriate way of learning.

"The ingredients of active learning guide every experience and activity adults and children engage in during their time together. Teachers use the ingredients of active learning as a guide to observing children, planning for children's experiences and interacting with children in any curriculum area." (Hohmann, Mary, et al. Educating Young Children: Active Learning Practices for Preschool and Child Care Programs. High Scope Press, 2008.)

The Five Ingredients of Active Learning

Materials	There are abundant, age-appropriate materials that the child can use in a variety of ways. Learning grows out of the child's direct actions on the materials.
Manipulation	The child has opportunities to explore, manipulate, combine, and transform the materials chosen.
Choice	The child chooses what to do. Since learning results from the child's attempts to pursue personal interests and goals, the opportunity to choose activities and materials is essential.
Child	The child describes what he or she is doing. Through language, the child reflects on his or her actions, integrates new experiences into an existing knowledge base, and seeks the cooperation of others in his or her activities.
Adult Support	Adults recognize and encourage the child's reasoning, problem solving and creativity.

Teachers use a variety of evidenced-based strategies to facilitate active learning in young children such as:

- Organize the learning environment as outlined in the Learning Environment Checklist.
- Establish routines and procedures and consistently implement all components of the Daily Routine.
- Create a supportive climate for learning where adults and children share control of the learning process.
- Balance the freedom children need to explore with the limits children need to feel secure.

- Demonstrate supportive adult-child interactions by:
  - Sharing Control between teachers and children;
  - Participating as partners in play on the children's terms;
  - Taking cues from children;
  - taking on the roles children assign;
  - Demonstrating genuine interests in what captures the children's imagination; and
  - Showing appreciation for children's creative ideas and work.
- Learn from children.
- Plan ways and times for children to lead or share control, such as asking children to choose a way to transition or a song to move to during Large Group.
- Focus on children's strengths.
- Observe children and pay close attention to their interests.
- View situations from the children's perspective.
- Plan around children's strengths and interests.
- Establish authentic relationships with children by:
  - Sharing your own interests with them;
  - Being present and giving full attention to what children are doing and saying;
  - Providing children with specific and detailed feedback about their work and ideas;
  - Asking questions sparingly and deliberately;
  - Asking open ended questions; and
  - Thoughtfully answering children's questions.
- Support children's play by:
  - Observing and understanding the different levels of complexity of children's play;
  - Actively engaging in play with children.
- Provide encouragement instead of praise.
- Acknowledge children's efforts/accomplishments.
- Encourage children to describe their ideas and work.
- Restate children's words.
- Teach children the six steps of conflict resolution and support children in using them during conflicts.
- Encourage children's intentional actions, problem solving, and verbal reflection.
- Form partnerships with children by:
  - Getting on children's physical level;
  - Following children's ideas and interests; and
  - Conversing in a give-and-take style.
- Seek out children's intentions by:
  - Acknowledging children's choices and actions;
  - Using materials in the same way children are using them; • Watching what children do with materials; and
  - Asking children about their intentions.

- Encourage children's thinking by:
  - Listening to children as they work and play;
  - Conversing with children about what they are doing and thinking; and
  - Focus on children's actions.
  - Make comments that repeat, amplify, and build on what the child says.
  - Pause frequently to give children time to think and gather their thoughts into words.
  - Accept children's answers and explanations even when they are "wrong".
- Encourage children to do things for themselves by:
  - Waiting patiently while children take care of things independently;
  - Demonstrating understanding of children's mishaps;
  - Referring children to one another for ideas, assistance, and conversation; and
  - Encourage children to ask and answer their own questions.

  (Essentials of Active Learning in Preschool, HighScope Press, 2014).

Calculated Risk-Taking

Taking a calculated risk means trying something without being certain of the exact outcome. When young children have the opportunity to practice calculated risk-taking, they develop self-confidence, resiliency, and executive function. They are also better prepared to overcome fear and more accurately evaluate risk later in life. Examples of how children take calculated risks include climbing higher, going faster, using real tools, and experimenting with new ways to use materials and equipment. When children take a calculated risk, they will sometimes make a mistake or get hurt. This is also part of the learning process.
Teachers provide support by encouraging children to challenge themselves, acknowledging their attempts, and monitoring for safety.

Daily Routine

Infant/Toddler
The HighScope daily routine for infants and toddlers is designed to provide a consistent yet flexible structure that supports children's natural rhythms and developmental needs. For infants, the routine follows their individual schedules for eating, sleeping, and play, with teachers weaving in responsive caregiving and learning opportunities throughout the day. For toddlers, the routine gradually becomes more predictable, with a balance of active play, small-group activities, caregiving routines, outdoor time, and rest. In both age groups, routines such as feeding, diapering, and transitions are treated as meaningful learning moments, rich in language, relationship-building, and exploration. This consistency fosters a sense of security while the flexibility allows teachers to respond to each child's cues, encouraging autonomy, trust, and engagement in the learning environment.

Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten
Each individual Pre-K and Kindergarten classroom has a daily routine that aligns with the HighScope approach and considers the needs and development of the children enrolled in the class (Appendix A). The daily routine includes a balance on indoor and outdoor, quiet and active, and small group, large group and independent activities. The teacher actively supports the children as they make choices about their activities.

This experience gives children consistent and structured opportunities to express their ideas to adults and to see themselves as individuals who can make and act on decisions. Teachers will post the daily routine, using universal symbols that represent each part of the routine, near the Large Group meeting area, where children can see it and refer to it as needed. A written copy of the Daily Routine will be posted in the classroom and on the Parent Board.

The components of the daily routine for preschool classroom include:

- Greeting Time/Message Board (10 min)
  Children and instructional staff share important information about the day ahead, such as new materials for outside time and the art area.

- Family Style Breakfast (20-30 min)
  The instructional staff and children sit together to share a meal and have authentic conversations in a give and take style.

- Outdoor Learning (60 min)
  The children enjoy physical, noisy, and vigorous play outdoors. The instructional staff participates with children in their outdoor activities.

- Small Group Time (20 min)
  The same small groups of children meet each day with the same instructional staff. The instructional staff introduces the activity, children work with their own set of materials in ways they determine themselves.

- Planning Time (10-15 min)
  The instructional staff provides an opportunity for children to express their intentions about the materials, actions, people, and ideas they want to include in their work-time activities.

- Work Time (45-60 min)
  The children carry out their plans with interest and a sense of purpose. The instructional staff observes, learns from, and supports children's play. The instructional staff participates as partners in play. Encourage children's thinking by:
  - Listening to children as they work and play;
  - Conversing with children about what they are doing and thinking;
  - Focus on children's actions;
  - Make comments that repeat, amplify, and build on what the child says;
  - Pause frequently to give children time to think and gather their thoughts into word; and
  - Accept children's answers and explanations even when they are "wrong."

- Clean-up Time (10 min)
  The instructional staff and children work together to clean-up after work time.

- Recall Time (10 min)
  The instructional staff encourages children to reflect on their actions and what they have learned throughout the day.

- Large Group Time (10-15 min)
  The children and instructional staff participate in a planned Large Group activity together.

- Family Style Lunch (30 min)
  The instructional staff and children sit together to share a meal and have authentic conversations in a give and take manner.

- Rest Time (1 hour 10 min)
  The children have the opportunity to rest, sleep, or choose a quiet activity. Family Style Snack (15 min)

- Snack (10 min)
  The instructional staff and children sit together to share a snack and have authentic conversations in a give and take manner.

- Story Time (20 min. Second Small Group Time)
  The same small groups of children meet each day with the same instructional staff. The instructional staff plans for and reads a story aloud to the group while encouraging conversations and interactions from the children, making real life connections and introducing new vocabulary and concepts.

(Essentials of Active Learning in Preschool, HighScope Press, 2014)

First and Second Grades
Each first and second grade classroom has a daily routine that aligns with the Responsive Classroom approach and considers the needs and development of the children enrolled in the class

Transitions

Transitions at school occur at the beginning and end of the day and between instructional blocks throughout the day. Transitions are an instructional activity and part of the daily routine. To ensure smooth transitions, teachers purposefully plan, teach, and consistently use transition activities that help children anticipate and get ready for the next segment of the day. Whenever possible, teachers should allow children choices about how to make the transition. Children are actively engaged during transitions. As transitions occur through the hallways, children and teachers are expected to sing or chant as they move from one place to another.

To ensure that transitions go as smooth as possible, and to also make them positive learning experiences, instructional staff use the following strategies:

- Adjust transitions times to suit children's development needs
- Plan for transitions with individual children in mind
- Plan for cleanup time, the longest transition

Discipline and Guidance Policy

Pre-K 4 SA staff use developmentally appropriate practices to help children understand classroom routines and expectations. Staff positively guides children's behavior and support children in developing self-awareness, self-direction, self-regulation, and prosocial behaviors.

Pre-K 4 SA staff use positive methods of guiding children's behavior, including:

1. Using descriptive words to acknowledge appropriate behavior instead of focusing on unacceptable behavior;
2. Reminding a child of behavior expectations by using clear positive statements, visual aids, and modeling;
3. Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
4. Seeking counseling or other professional support for a child who is facing challenges that are affecting his/her ability to be successful at school.

Harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. The following types of discipline are prohibited at Pre-K 4 SA:

1. Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;
2. Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;
3. Pinching, shaking, or biting a child;
4. Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
5. Putting anything in or on a child's mouth;
6. Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;
7. Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;
8. Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed and;
9. Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive, such as time-out.

For children with persistently serious and challenging behavior, teachers, families, and other professionals work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success. Each Education Center has a behavioral specialist trained in using appropriate deescalating skills and strategies. Each Education Center also has a crisis team to respond when immediate intervention is needed to prevent a child from causing serious injury to him/herself or others. When a child exhibits harmful behavior that may result in serious injury, the crisis team will implement containment strategies as a last resort. If containment is used, the school nurse will evaluate the child and the families/guardians will be notified immediately.

Supporting Challenging Behaviors

Teachers address challenging behaviors by:

- Consistent implementation of the 6 steps of HighScope's conflict resolution;
- Assessing the function of the child's behavior;
- Collaborating with families and behavioral specialist to develop individualized plans to address behavior;
- Individualizing daily schedules to meet children's needs and;
- Using positive behavior support strategies such as, Conscious Discipline's Safe Spot, visual schedules, and intentional room layout

Bilingual & ESL Education

School districts determine qualification for Bilingual and ESL programs. Based on school districts recommendations, Pre-K 4 SA offers Spanish 90%/English 10% Model. The research-based program uses the child's primary language for 90% of instruction as he/she learns the second language (10% English) and achieves academic success. Research indicates that using the child's primary language as the means of academic instruction supports transition into the second language. Concepts and skills transfer from one language to the other. Strong primary language development helps children learn English. Pre-K 4 SA Bilingual teachers hold a special Texas Certification to teach children who are learning English as a second language. Bilingual teachers are able to identify academic strengths and needs and tailor instruction for children in all academic areas in the targeted language. Bilingual teachers know which concepts/skills in Spanish transfer into English easily and which may require more work. Children will learn grade-appropriate knowledge and skills in his or her native language as he/she learns English as a second language. The Pre-K 4 SA ESL program provides intensive instruction in English using second language acquisition strategies to teach English to children who speak other languages other than Spanish. The academic program model teaches the state-required Texas Pre-K Guidelines. Your child will learn grade-appropriate knowledge and skills from trained teachers who know second language acquisition strategies and approaches as he/she learns English as a second language. Each child's English instruction begins upon entry of the ESL Program, thus reading instruction is an immediate focus for the specialized ESL teachers. Teachers target the development of your child's English oral language, so he/she is able to meet grade-level promotion standards.

Instructional Technology

Pre-K 4 SA follows NAEYC Guidelines for appropriate use of technology with young children. Appropriate technology is available in each classroom. Children are monitored while using technology to ensure appropriate use.

Classrooms are equipped with child iPads. Children may engage with instructional technology and interactive media during Work Time and/or to research concepts of interests while teachers facilitate. Technology devices are used to enhance communication and support instruction. A device is never used in place of a teacher providing instructional guidance.

Outdoor Learning

While most every prekindergarten program has some kind of outdoor play area, none of them compare to the Outdoor Learning Environments at Pre-K 4 SA. Pre-K 4 SA is committed to supporting children in developing physical and cognitive skills as well as an appreciation for nature through strategically designed outdoor learning activities—every day. Each Outdoor Learning Environment provides children with opportunities to interact with open-ended materials—both natural and recycled—in areas that reflect the five classroom interest areas (House, Block, Toy, Art and Book Areas). In designing the Outdoor Learning Environments, special attention is given to helping children develop a sense of wonder and awe about the world around them.

Children are also encouraged to practice calculated risk-taking in the Outdoor Learning Environments. Ways in which children might take calculated risks include climbing on equipment, crawling up a slide, rolling inside a large tire, climbing a tree or sitting on a stack of crates. Teachers provide watchful supervision while allowing children to freely explore the environment.

Pre-K 4 SA provides outdoor learning for children each day. When weather does not allow outdoor play, administration will determine if children will instead participate in physical activity in the indoor motor labs. DFPS Minimum Standards allow for the adjustment in the length of time required for outside play to accommodate weather, air quality, and seasonal changes. For protection against environment health see "Protection against cold, heat, sun injury, and insect-borne diseases" on page 51.

Outdoor learning is a critical component of the instructional program and will not be taken away from children as a consequence.

Field Trips

Field trips will be scheduled during the year to supplement areas of study. A permission form signed by the family or legal guardian must be on file at the center in order for a child to participate in field trips.

Transportation for children to and from the field trip will be by school bus only. Children will not be released to families at the field trip site. All children must return to the school and be signed out by the family or legal guardian.

All families who attend a field trip, must check-in at the school prior to the trip and be approved through the school's RAPTOR system. A volunteer or visitor badge must be worn during the field trip. Families attending field trips are not permitted to bring other children with them on the field trip. Heads of Schools reserve the right to limit the number of families attending a field trip due to space and safety of field trip destination.
All field trip notifications will be posted throughout the Pre-K 4 SA Center with necessary details of the outing.

Pre-K 4 SA will adhere to the following in order to take children on field trips:

- Children will wear a Pre-K 4 SA T-shirt, with a label containing the school name and phone number.
- Children will be transported in school buses, driven by drivers with a valid license.
- 10:1 child-staff ratios will be maintained while the children are on the field trip. Families and child may not separate from Pre-K 4 SA staff during school sponsored events.
- Volunteers/families may accompany the children to the field trip but will not be counted as part of the child-staff ratio.
- Families who attend field trips may not bring other children as field trips are school sponsored events.

City Explorations

In addition to classroom learning opportunities, each classroom will identify at least two City Explorations throughout the year that reinforces child interest and academic content.

The following expectations will apply to each City Exploration:

- Master teachers will submit request to Head of school for approval prior to inviting families.
- Locations of the City Explorations will be easily accessible to families and require minimal entrance fees to the event/activity.
- Conducted outside of the school day.
- Families will sign the Pre-K 4 SA family waiver prior to attending the City Exploration.
- Transportation to and from City Explorations will be the responsibility of the family.
- City Exploration is not a guided field trip; therefore, family must remain with their child and are responsible for his/her safety and well-being.
- Master teachers will align child interest generated from City Explorations into the instructional day.
- Master teachers will model appropriate adult-child interactions during City Explorations and will provide home-school activities to extend the learning at home.

Civic Engagement Initiative

One of the primary goals of the Pre-K 4 SA program is to create a strong educated workforce in our city. To reinforce this goal, children, families, and families are provided many opportunities to become involved as proactive members of our society. Pre-K 4 SA provides children with opportunities to learn about their community and city by actively seeking appropriate community helpers, families, and volunteers to speak to children about their craft. These volunteer opportunities will align with lessons and literature in the classroom.

Throughout the year, families will be given resources to inform them about the community and information on how to utilize these community resources. Pre-K 4 SA aspires to grow responsible citizens for the ongoing prosperity of our city.

Gracias San Antonio

During the fall semester, children and families will have the opportunity to participate in a program-wide election process to select a reputable non-profit organization that Pre-K 4 SA will support throughout the year. Each class will create an authentic art piece to be displayed in a local art gallery. The community will be invited to enjoy the art and bid on the art items via an on-line auction. All proceeds from the *Gracias San Antonio Art Show* will be donated to the non-profit selected in the fall. Participation in this art show provides children with a concrete experience of how their actions can inspire and help others in our community.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Pre-K 4 SA recognizes the diversity of the community in which we are located and honors and celebrates the unique cultures of our families and staff. Teaching children acceptance and encouraging them to embrace each other's similarities and differences in a positive manner is an important goal of our centers. We encourage the sharing of cultural practices and traditions by families and staff, as is developmentally appropriate.

Holidays

In keeping with standards of culturally responsive teaching and high-quality early learning, Pre-K 4 SA staff does not initiate the celebration of specific holidays or traditions in the classroom. Instead, Pre-K 4 SA utilizes a family-centered approach to help children understand the concept of traditions. Throughout the school year, the instructional staff invites families into the classroom to share special traditions with the children. Families are encouraged to bring pictures, artifacts, music, etc., of their traditions and celebrations to make the lesson more meaningful to the children. Families are invited to share traditions and celebrations through video meetings.

Birthdays

Pre-K 4 SA recognizes that birthdays are a special time for children and families. In lieu of traditional birthday parties, the Master Teacher/Teacher will invite families and children to complete an "All About Me" project that reflects the unique qualities of each child. The intent of this activity is to create a meaningful memory for the child. Families will be invited on their child's birthday to help present the "All About Me" poster to the class. Should a family not be available to attend, the Master Teacher/Teacher will encourage families to identify another family member to attend or they are welcome to attend virtually.

Transition to Kindergarten

Pre-K 4 SA collaborates with local schools during the spring semester to provide families with information regarding kindergarten program options. Once families have determined where their child will go to kindergarten, Pre-K 4 SA staff work with the family to ensure a smooth transition.

To assist with this transition, Pre-K 4 SA has partnered with Gardendale Early Learning.

Families that are interested in continuing the Pre-K 4 SA appraoch through 2nd grade, are encouraged to apply at our Gardendale location (1731 Dahl Green Ave, San Antonio, TX 78237) Gardendale Early Learning Program can be reached at 210-898-4190.

Supervision

Teacher-Child Ratio

Teaching staff-child ratio of 1:10 is maintained during all hours of operation, including indoor time, outdoor time, field trips and extended day.

Primary Caregiving

The center will implement a primary caregiver system in which a primary caregiver is assigned to each child in the center. It is a goal of our program to promote continuity of care and whenever possible children will remain with the same primary caregiver. The primary caregiver plays the role of caregiver, teacher, communicator, observer, and evaluator of the child's experiences.

Classroom Transitions

Continuity of care is important to the mission of Pre-K 4 SA. It is our goal to maintain continuity of care as the children transition throughout the center. Children who are enrolled in the Extended Day program transition to other classrooms at the end of the school day. In our efforts to support continuity of care, children may transition in small groups or as a whole class. In addition, one or more of their caregivers may transition with them.

Rest/Nap Time

Purpose is to provide proper rest time environment and requirements to ensure the health and safety practices of the children in care. Nap time is a rest time for all children, even those who cannot sleep.
Procedures:

Rest time is an essential component of the daily routine for children under age six. A proper rest time ensures the health and safety of the children in care. Rest time is an opportunity for all children to relax. In prekindergarten, most children will nap during rest time, although they are not required to do so.

Procedures for Infant-Toddler Rest Time:

Safe Sleep Environment

- Place infants on their backs to sleep, unless otherwise directed by a physician (per safe sleep guidelines)
- Use only firm, safety-approved cribs or cots with tight-fitting sheets.
- Keep cribs/cots free of soft bedding, pillows, toys, bumper pads, and loose blankets to reduce suffocation risks.
- Each child has an individual, labeled crib or cot that is used only by them.

Supervision During Rest

- Staff maintain active supervision at all times; infants and toddlers are never left unattended while sleeping.
- Teachers position themselves so that all resting children are within sight and sound.
- Staff conduct regular visual checks to ensure children are breathing normally and sleeping safely.

Individualized Rest Schedules

- Infants follow their own sleep/wake patterns, not a fixed group schedule.
- Toddlers are offered rest time daily but are not forced to sleep. Quiet, restful activities are provided for children who do not nap.

Procedures for Preschool Rest Time:

- A supervised rest/nap time will be provided for all children.
- The rest/nap time will not exceed 90 minutes.
- Children are to be on their own mat.
- Children are not required to sleep; therefore, an alternate quiet activity for those children will be allowed. However, children who are doing a quiet activity are to do that activity independently on their own mat.
- Following the lunchtime meal, staff will develop a system for restroom use so that a few children at a time go to the restroom, wash hands, and prepare for rest/nap time.
- Staff will plan a quiet activity and set up mats as follows:
  - Mats are arranged so that each child and caregiver have access to a walkway without having to walk on or over the mats of other children;
  - Mats are arranged so that caregivers can easily see all the children in the group. Children should sleep head-to-foot with the children next to them.
- The classroom must have dim lighting (not complete darkness) and hallway blinds must remain open.
- Pillows are not allowed on mats while children are resting.
- Staff will monitor and ensure that children do not cover their heads with blankets or any other objects.
- Children will keep their shoes on during rest/nap time in case an emergency arises which requires evacuation.

Restroom Supervision

Pre-K 4 SA staff supervise all children during restroom time to ensure children are supported, if needed, follow proper hand washing procedures, and are respectful of other children's need for privacy in the stall.

Toileting

Toilet training is a process that varies from age to age and ability to ability. Typically, children are toilet trained between the ages of 2 and 3 years old. Therefore, most children entering the Pre-K 4 SA preschool program are able to toilet themselves with minimal supervision, including properly wiping. If the child is not fully toilet trained, a toilet training plan will be developed. The plan will be developed in collaboration with the families/guardians and reflect the level of support necessary for the child to be successful.

For toileting accidents or non-toilet-trained children:

- Staff immediately assist a child by providing the child with a change of clothes, wipes and verbal support to "talk" the child through the process of changing clothes, providing assistance as needed.
- Staff wear gloves during this process. Staff will talk to the child while he/she is changing to help him/her feel safe.
- Staff place soiled clothing in a plastic bag or place it in an area outside of children's reach.
- Staff and child must wash hands following all toileting activities.
- If a child needs additional assistance, such as bathing, the family may be called to assist the child.

Whenever assisting children with toileting or changing clothes, staff will ensure another staff member is aware and within range to hear the interaction.

Diapering Infants and Toddlers

Before diapering:

- Gather all supplies (diaper, wipes, gloves, ointment if needed, clean clothes, plastic bag for soiled items).
- Wash hands.
- Put on disposable gloves.
- Ensure the diapering/toileting area is clean, sanitized, and stocked.

During diapering:

- Place the child on a safe, sanitary, designated diapering surface (never leave the child unattended).
- Remove the soiled diaper carefully, avoiding contamination.
- Clean the child's diaper area thoroughly from front to back using disposable wipes.
- Apply ointment/cream if provided by the family (labeled and for individual use only).
- Put on a clean diaper and secure it snugly.
- Comfort, talk, or sing to the child throughout the process to support positive interactions.

After diapering:

- Place the child in a safe area.
- Remove gloves carefully and dispose of them in a covered, hands-free trash can.
- Clean and disinfect the diapering surface with a three-step process.
  1. Clean with soap and water.
  2. Rinse with clear water.
  3. Disinfect with an approved solution (allow to air-dry).
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water.
- Wash the child's hands with soap and water (even infants—hands can be gently wiped with a clean, damp cloth if necessary).

Assessment of Child Progress

Assessment is an essential component of the teaching and learning process. High-quality programs use assessment data to measure child growth and development, guide instruction, and inform programmatic decisions. Types of assessments used in Pre-K 4 SA classrooms are described below.

Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten

Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten children are authentically assessed daily through observations and anecdotal note taking. Staff are trained in using Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment to document progress and development. GOLD obtains information on all areas of children's development and learning, including cognitive skills, language, social-emotional development, approaches to learning, health, and physical development. This assessment tool is recognized by the State of Texas and nationally as a best practice to assess young children. Checkpoints are completed three times a year and progress is reported to parents/guardians. During the first parent/teacher conference, parents/guardians will be introduced to the GOLD Assessment and will collaborate with teachers to create child goals for the school year. Goals will be reviewed and updated during parent-teacher conferences. GOLD Family Conference Form will be shared with the family during the mid-year parent/teacher conference. The GOLD Developmental and Learning Report for each child will be shared with families and our partner districts at the end of the school year. All assessment information is kept confidential and shared only with legal guardian(s) and Pre-K 4 SA staff who have a need to know.

Infants and Toddlers

For infants and toddlers, GOLD emphasizes developmental trajectories rather than discrete academic outcomes, allowing educators and families to identify emerging abilities and provide individualized support. This approach not only strengthens caregiver responsiveness but also ensures that learning experiences are tailored to each child's unique pace and needs, fostering secure relationships and promoting optimal early development.
GOLD is an ongoing assessment that reflects evidence of the child's growth

Kindergarten children are also assessed using mClass, one of the kindergarten readiness assessments authorized by TEA. Edgewood ISD also requires the use of MAPS Growth in kindergarten.

First and Second Grades

First and Second Grade children's progress is monitored through authentic assessments, informal reading inventories, and district assessments given at the beginning, middle and end of year. EISD requires the use of mClass and MAPS Growth in first and second grades.

Review of Progress

At the beginning and middle of the year, teachers collaborate with administrators and other professionals (possibly including: therapists, family liaison, specialists, social worker, nurse, etc.) to discuss the needs of children and to plan accordingly.

Family/Teacher Conferences

All families are requested to share in their child's education and progress, including interests, approaches to learning, and developmental needs, by participating in two regularly scheduled conferences which take place during the fall and spring. During conferences, Pre-K 4 SA staff will inform families about the assessment process, purpose, and results. Families may contact the child's teacher to schedule additional conferences at any point during the school year.

Please note: In order to properly supervise children, teachers are not allowed to engage in family conferences at the door of the classroom or during the instructional day.

External Program Evaluation

Pre-K 4 SA conducts a yearly outside evaluation in order to track progress on the long-term outcomes for children that include: long-term social success, long-term academic success, positive progression in school, and reduced special education placements. Each year the assessment is conducted by an established local research firm in conjunction with National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) and Rutgers University in New Jersey.

Outside evaluators analyze Pre-K 4 SA child data using the following authentic assessment tools:

- Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)
- Teaching Strategies Gold

The yearly program evaluations also included:

- Child Attendance Data
- Family Participation in Center Activities

Data collected from this yearly evaluation assists Pre-K 4 SA administration to plan appropriate professional learning for staff, gather needed materials for children, and align instruction to better prepare our children for school success. The outside program evaluation is presented annually to Pre-K 4 SA staff, Pre-K 4 SA Board of Directors and City Council. In collaboration with the Pre-K 4 SA Board of Directors, administration sets goals for the program based on these yearly evaluations. All outside annual evaluations for the program are posted in full on the Pre-K 4 SA website.

Ongoing Program Evaluation

Pre-K 4 SA administrators continually monitor child progress and high quality of early childhood instruction using the following tools:

- Pre-K 4 SA Program Checklists
- HighScope Preschool Quality Assessment (PQA)
- GOLD Data Meetings after each GOLD Check-point period

Pre-K 4 SA staff meets with administrators, instructional specialists, and colleagues to create lessons that meet the needs of their children.

Health and Wellness

Meals and Nutrition

Meals and snacks are part of the instructional program and are a natural opportunity to teach children about the importance of healthy eating, the science of nutrition, and common table manners. The instructional staff provides explicit instruction and guided practice to help children learn to wash their hands before eating, set the table, and to clean up after themselves. The instructional staff will eat the foods the children eat to serve as role models. The instructional staff will model table manners and engage in meaningful child–initiated conversations, to include topics that engage children in collaborative conversation and extend their thinking. **For the safety of all children, our education centers and food vendors are strict with meal processing and are nut-allergen free facilities**.

Breakfast: 8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.
Lunch: between 11:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Snack: after 1:15 and during Extended Day

Pre-K 4 SA provides all meals and snacks for children. Pre-K 4 SA consults with a licensed dietician and food service agency to develop menus that support nutritional and instructional goals. A variety of meals and snacks are offered throughout the school year to encourage children to try new foods and to learn about the food cycle. Each fall and spring the children plant and harvest fruits, vegetables, and legumes in the outdoor garden. Children learn to prepare simple recipes from the food grown in the garden. The food service agency also incorporates the types of food grown by the children into the monthly menu to further support children's learning.

Because meals and snacks are an integral part of the instructional program and some children who attend the Center have food allergies, **food from home is not permitted**. For children with dietary restrictions, special meals are available (see below).

The food service agency ensures food safety in its provision and preparation of drinks, meals and snacks. Pre-K 4 SA adheres to Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) regulations and policies on meal requirements, food storage, preparation, service, and sanitation practices. Meals and snacks offered to the children provide a variety of nourishing foods on a frequent basis to meet the nutritional needs of young children.

Hot drinks are not permitted in the building around children, including hallways, as they may result in burns if spilled.

Food is stored, served, and prepared in accordance with the USDA and CACFP guidelines. All meals are prepared offsite and delivered to Pre-K 4 SA.

Clean, sanitary drinking water is made available to children throughout the day. All staff must wash hands and wear gloves when handling food and meal items (milk, trays, napkins, etc.).

Menus are posted on the Family Board outside each classroom. Families/guardians may obtain a copy of the menus from the Pre-K 4 SA Website at www.prek4sa.com or request a hard copy at the front office.

Special Diets

Pre-K 4 SA offers several specialized meal plans for children with dietary restrictions due to medical conditions or religious practices. Families/guardians will have the option to select one of the specialized meal plans at the time of enrollment. Any changes to a child's meal plan must be submitted in writing to the Nutrition Services Specialist at least seven days in advance of the needed change.

Questions about meal plans should be directed to the Nutrition Services Specialist.

Special Diets Due to Medical Needs

Families/guardians of children with food allergies or other medical needs must submit the child's Medical Statement for Children with Special Dietary Needs form to an enrollment team member. The form requires a physician's signature.

The Medical Statement for Children with Special Dietary Needs for will be reviewed by the Nutrition Services Specialist, School Nurse, and an external Registered Dietician.

- Accommodations will be processed by the Registered Dietician utilizing federal and state guidelines.
- Pre-K 4 SA will make every attempt to REASONABLY accommodate children who have dietary restrictions that are not life threatening or reported by a physician as a disability.
- Medical Statement for Children with Special Dietary Needs form MUST be completed by a licensed physician/medical authority (physician, physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner) and turned into the school nurse.
- Notes, letters, parent/guardian verbal statements of food allergy/intolerances, or diet instructions written on prescription pads will NOT be accepted.
- Once a form is received, the school nurse will contact the family to confirm receipt.

With a proper medical release form, the food vendor's Registered Dietician will contact the medical authority to ask questions or clarify the information on the Medical Statement for Children with Special Dietary Needs form.

If changes/additional restrictions need to be made or if the diet orders need to be discontinued or stopped, a new form must be completed by a licensed physician/medical authority (physician, physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner) and submitted to the school nurse.

Cleaning and Sanitation

Classrooms, restrooms and all other areas will be cleaned and sanitized daily by staff. Pre-K 4 SA staff will follow the four-step process for sanitizing tables before and after every meal. The four-step process is as follows:

1. Wash with water and soap
2. Rinse with clear water
3. Spray on the disinfecting solution and let sit for two minutes
4. Allow the surface to air dry

All other surfaces will be cleaned and sanitized as needed. Each classroom will have a sanitation schedule posted indicating when classroom materials are cleaned.

Hand Washing Procedures

Pre-K 4 SA promotes effective hygiene, to reduce health risks to children and adults and model health and safety practices that prevent the spread of germs. In order to minimize the spread of germs, all four Education Centers were retrofitted by implementing touchless sinks, toilets, doors, and paper towel dispensers.
Staff, volunteers and children must wash their hands with soap and running water:

- After arriving at the center, prior to commencing any/all classroom activities
- After outdoor activities
- Before/after eating or handling food or medication
- After assisting a child with toileting and/or toileting accident
- After toilet use
- After handling or cleaning bodily fluids such as blood, wiping noses, mouths or other body parts, tending skin abrasions, irritations, etc.
- Before any food-related activity, such as before and after setting the table for meals, nutrition activities, etc.
- After use or handling of any cleaners or toxic chemicals
- After handling or feeding animals
- After playing in water that is shared by two or more people

Additionally, staff must wash their hands:

- Before and after giving medications
- Before and after treating or bandaging a wound
- After assisting a child or adult with a communicable disease

Effective hand-washing techniques include:

- Wetting hands with running water that drains appropriately
- Applying soap from a soap dispenser (not bar soap)
- Rubbing hands together, especially between fingers, for at least 20 seconds
- Using a clean nail brush for under fingernails when removing blood and/or other bodily fluids
- Rinsing hands well under running water
- Drying hands thoroughly with paper towel(s)
- Turning off faucet with a paper towel
- Registered Nurse
- Each Pre-K 4 SA Center has a full-time Registered Nurse on site. The RN complies with all local, state and federal requirements for children in preschool. In addition, all instructional staff members are CPR and First Aid trained. (Texas Health and Human Services https://www.dshs.texas.gov/schoolhealth/schnurs.shtm)
- Daily Health Checks
- On a daily basis, teachers briefly observe each child as they greet and dismiss them noting anything unusual in their appearance or behavior. If the concern continues, the teacher may escort the child to the clinic for the nurse to check. If there is a concern, the Nurse or teacher may call the family to discuss the observations.

Illness, Accidents and Communicable Disease

Child Illnesses
Pre-K 4 SA has established illness and exclusion criteria in accordance with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Minimum Standards for Licensed Child Care Pre-K 4 SA (Communicable Disease Chart). Pre-K 4 SA will not admit or allow a child to remain in school, if one or more of the following exists:

- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in the Pre-K 4 SA activities, including outdoor play;
- The illness results in a greater need for care than Pre-K 4 SA staff can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of other children in care;
- The child has one of the following:
    - High Fever of 100.4 or higher without any other symptoms,
    - Fever accompanied by other symptoms of illness, or without fever reducing medications (Tylenol, Ibuprofen, etc.)

- Signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, two or more vomiting episodes in 24·hours, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, or other signs that the child may be severely ill; or
- A health care professional has diagnosed the child with a communicable disease, and the child does not have medical documentation to indicate that the child is no longer contagious.

- Pre-K 4 SA should be notified by the designated person if the child has received medical attention or has been hospitalized while enrolled. A doctor's release must be provided by the attending physician.
- The child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease, until medical evaluation determines that the child is no longer contagious and is able to participate in Pre-K 4 SA activities.
- Should a child become ill while at school, the child will wait in the clinic, away from other children and the family will be notified via emergency telephone numbers and informed of the child's condition. The family or a designated adult is expected to pick the child up within one hour of being contacted. If the child is not picked up in a timely fashion and left ill at the center, the Pre-K 4 SA staff reserves the right and is required, under law, to make a report with Child Protective Services.

When a child is sent home from school for an illness, prior to attendance being taken, the child will receive an excused absence.

An ill child must be out for 24 hours and/or a doctor clears the child for admittance to school.

Any time a child has an accident resulting in an injury at a Pre-K 4 SA Center, the child will be given First Aid or CPR, as deemed necessary, and every effort will be made to contact the family at the time of the accident.

Accidents will be recorded on the Pre-K 4 SA Accident/Illness Report. A copy of the referral is given to the family on the day of the accident. The report form is completed on all accidents, no matter the severity.

If critical illness or injury requires immediate attention of a physician, the Pre-K 4 SA Staff will:

- Contact EMS to take the child to the nearest emergency room
- Give the child first-aid treatment or CPR when needed
- Contact the child's family
- If a child must be transported to the nearest hospital and a family is not present, a Pre-K 4 SA administrator will accompany the child in the ambulance and remain with the child until the family arrives at the hospital.

Accident/Incident & Illness Reporting

The health and safety of children is paramount. In the event of an accident, these steps will be taken:

- The child will be escorted to the clinic by an available staff member, while maintaining required ratio. In the event of an emergency, staff member will contact the office and request the nurse.
- The nurse will evaluate the child for visible injuries and determine the possibility of non-visible injuries.
- The nurse will report all serious injuries and possible communicable diseases to the Pre-K 4 SA Head of School or Extended Day Manager.
- The nurse will complete the Pre-K 4 SA Accident/Illness Report for all injuries and provide a copy for the families on the day of the incident. The copy will be signed and dated by the nurse or Pre-K 4 SA Head of School or Extended Day Manager. and family. The nurse will contact families about any injury and document communication on the Pre-K 4 SA Accident/Illness Report.

Incident/accident reports will be presented to families by a staff member, Pre-K 4 SA Head of School or Extended Day Manager., when possible. The Pre-K 4 SA Accident/Illness Report will not be placed in cubbies for families. When completing the reports or in conversation with family members, staff members will not use names of other children involved. All information is confidential. It is critical that the family keeps all emergency contact information, including phone numbers, up to date.

Communicable Diseases

Should a child be exposed to a serious communicable disease, such as Chicken Pox, Tuberculosis or Hepatitis, families are required to notify the Pre-K 4 SA Center staff of the exposure, so that appropriate precautions can be taken to prevent the spread of the illness. A child who contracts a contagious illness will be temporarily excluded from program participation for a period of time corresponding to the duration of the communicability of the disease as established by the Texas Administrative Code. Upon return, the child must report to the campus nurse for readmission. Readmission will be given with a doctor's release; health authority permit; or exclusion for the period of time corresponding to the illness. Please refer to the Communicable Disease Chart and Notes for Schools and Childcare Centers issued by Texas Department of State Health Services.

All families/guardian will be notified, in writing, within 48 hours of the Pre-K 4 SA Staff becoming aware that a child or staff member has contracted a communicable disease deemed notifiable by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

Lice

Pre-K 4 SA will provide written notice to all families within 48 hours of becoming aware of an outbreak of lice or other infestation at the center. Sweeping lice head checks for an entire class are not permitted. Pre-K 4 SA follows the Texas Department of State Health Services Recommendations for Lice.

Immunizations & Tuberculosis Screening

Children are required to have their 3- and 4-year old immunization and submitted upon enrollment or within the first 30-days of enrollment.

DtaP	Polio	HepB	Hib	PCV	MMR	Varicella	HepA
4 Doses	3 Doses	3 Doses	3 Doses	4 Doses	1 Dose*	1 Dose*	2 Doses

**Prior to entering kindergarten, your child will need a second dose of MMR and Varicella.*

Exemption to Immunizations Requirements –Texas Administrative Code (TAC) allows exemptions on an individual basis for medical contraindications, reasons of conscience, including religious belief, and active duty with the Armed Forces of the United States.

A request must be made through the Department of State Health Services. An original Affidavit of Exemption from Immunizations for Reasons of Conscience must be presented to the center nurse and kept on file until the end of the school year, when it is returned to the family. The form can be found at: https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/school/exemptions.aspx.

If there is an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease in the center, the child will be excluded from school until there is no longer a risk of contagion.

When a child is overdue for any routine health services, screenings, or immunizations, family/legal guardian are required to provide evidence of an appointment for those services before the child's entry to the program as a condition for remaining enrolled in the program.

As per the City of San Antonio's Metro Health, Pre-K 4 SA children are not required to obtain a TB screening.

Staff Immunization

Pre-K 4 SA encourages, but does not require, all employees to obtain the influenza vaccine once a year. The City of San Antonio provides the vaccine at no cost to the employee.

Due to the age of Pre-K 4 SA children and the duties assigned to staff, employees are not required additional immunizations. All employees meet the expectations of proper hand washing and are excluded from direct care when they have signs of contagious illness.

Administration of Medication

Pre-K 4 SA staff administer both prescription and over-the counter medications to a child only if the child's record documents that the family or legal guardian **and a licensed health provider** has given the program written permission. The child's record must include instructions from the licensed health provider who has prescribed or recommended medication for that child. Alternatively, the licensed health provider's office may give instructions by telephone to the center staff.

A record is kept on all medications given to children and signed by the Pre-K 4 SA center nurse administering the medication(s). All medications must be in the original container and properly identified with the child's name, date, direction to administer, and name of the prescribing physician.

All medication administered at a Pre-K 4 SA center, will be given by a designated Pre-K 4 SA nurse or other trained professional.

The training must include the following practices of administration of medication:
(1) Verify that the right child receives the (2) right medication (3) in the right dose (4) at the right time (5) by the right method with documentation of each right each time the medication is given.

The following guidelines will be used to administer medication:

1. Families will hand deliver all medication to the Pre-K 4 SA center nurse in a pharmaceutical, properly labeled container with the original prescription label. For OTC medications, the label must have the child's first and last names.
2. Families will complete "Medication Requirement Form," which may be obtained from the school nurse. The form must be completed in its entirety and signed before medication will be administered.
3. The school nurse will store all medications, according to label instructions, in a designated, secure location in the nurse's clinic. Medication requiring refrigeration will be stored in a secure, designated refrigerator in the nurse's clinic.
4. The school nurse ensures that medications are secure at all times. The school nurse will administer medication as noted on prescription label and document that medication was given on the *Clinic Daily Log*. The school nurse or trained individual will also document the dispensing of medication on the individual child's *Daily Medication Log*.

5. Any changes in the child's behavior or adverse drug reactions will be recorded and discussed with the family.
6. For medication designated "as needed", the same procedures will apply. Medication designated "as needed" will be administered as directed on the medication label and "Medication Requirement Form". "As needed" medication will be returned to the family upon expiration or at the end of the school year, whichever comes first.
7. The school nurse will return all unused medication at the time of expiration or at the end of the prescribed time period. The family will sign for returned medication on the nurse's "Returning Medication Log Sheet"
8. Under no circumstances will children be allowed to carry medications in their backpack (inhalers, cough drops, over-the-counter and all other medications).

Please note: Family authorization is not required if Pre-K 4 SA staff administers a medication to a child in a medical emergency to prevent the death or serious bodily injury of the child, provided that Pre-K 4 SA staff administers the medication as prescribed, directed, or intended.

Special Health Plans

Families of children with special medical needs such as allergies or chronic illness (e.g. asthma, hearing or vision impairment, feeding needs, neuromuscular condition, urinary, seizures diabetes,) must obtain medical orders to ensure that the appropriate plan will be followed at school. Families of children with asthma, who require a nebulizer, must supply the medication, tubing, and mask to the nurse. The school has a nebulizer.

Protection Against Cold, Heat, Sun Injury, and Insect-Borne Diseases

Pre-K 4 SA provides children the opportunity to play in the shade. Families are encouraged to dress their child in sun-protective clothing in warm weather and layered clothing for warmth in cold weather. During peak seasons, families are encouraged to apply sunscreen and/or insect repellant at home. If the family wishes that either of these be applied at school, instead of at home, the family must complete *Pre–K 4 SA Sunscreen and Insect Repellant Form* and supply the product, labeled with the child's name. As recommended by public health authorities, insect repellant should only be applied once daily; therefore, it should not be applied at home and then again at school. All sunscreen and insect repellant will be kept out of reach of children.

Water Play and Activities

Children will not participate in swimming or wading pool activities while in attendance at Pre-K 4 SA during the school day, including field trips and Extended Day.

Children will have opportunities, throughout the year, to explore with sensory materials in sand and water tables, both indoors and outdoors. When water is used, precautions are taken to ensure that communal water play does not spread infectious diseases. Children are prohibited from drinking the water. Children with sores on their hands are not permitted to participate in communal water play. Fresh potable water is used, and the water is changed before a new class of children participates in the water play activity.

Pre-K 4 SA Water Safety Program

Pre-K 4 SA partners with the Ms. Tristan Foundation to provide water safety classes for children. Children attending Pre-K 4 SA participate in the 13-week program from January to May. School centers utilize an Aqua-Tots facility, the YMCA, SAISD's Natatorium and four Emler Swim School facilities. Daily in-classroom instruction focuses on a key feature of water and pool safety for five days. The instruction then switches to a pool facility with trained instructors facilitating swim lessons for four days. Pre-K 4 SA and the participating children will receive instruction with five certified or trained instructors per class. Insurance, transportation, classroom curriculum kits, and backpacks with supplemental materials and a life jacket are provided to children and their families. Families are invited to observe the swim lessons with their children.

Family Engagement

Pre-K 4 SA believes in the importance of supporting families in order to help children have a successful learning foundation in our program. The Pre-K 4 SA Family Engagement Team consists of an Extended Day Manager, a Family Engagement Specialist, a Family Engagement Manager, and seven Family Liaisons who work with families to support them in being the most important teachers and advocates for their children. The Family Engagement Team offers the following types of family support services:

1. Support to help families with accessing education services
2. Support with child attendance
3. Workshops on talking with your child's teacher
4. School leadership and volunteer opportunities
5. Adult education classes
6. Family engagement activities
7. Computer access
8. Referrals to community agencies for assistance in a wide range of services
9. Support with transition to kindergarten by providing general information on enrollment procedures and practices and facilitating visiting opportunities to partnering schools

The Family Café

Each Center has a Family Café, which is a designated space for families. The Family Café is designed to be welcoming environments equipped with computers with internet access, toys and games for children, and a variety of information on community resources. The Family Engagement Team works out of the Family Cafés and are available on a walk-in or appointment basis.

Family Communication

Pre-K 4 SA understands and values the important role families play in the education of young children. Pre-K 4 SA is committed to supporting families as the first and most important teachers and advocates for children. Pre-K 4 SA strives to develop authentic and meaningful relationships with families. Pre-K 4 SA invites families to share ideas, questions, and concerns with us.

Pre-K 4 SA shares information with families using a variety of approaches. All communication is provided in English and Spanish.

1. Classroom Newsletter
2. Monthly Event Calendar
3. Family notices (field trips, classes, trainings, clinics, etc.)

4. Flyers/brochures
5. Child/Family Handbook
6. Email, Remind 101, Etc.
7. Surveys

Pre-K 4 SA centers have a designated family information display in the Family Café with up-to-date program information, family training schedule, field trip notices and other pertinent information including community resource organizations such as health, mental health, assessment and educational services. Translation services can be utilized as needed.

Family and teacher conferences will be offered at least twice throughout the year. Conferences are an opportunity to talk individually with family members about their child's growth, development, and accomplishments. If staff suspects that a child has a developmental delay or other special need, this possibility will be communicated to families in a sensitive, supportive, and confidential manner and documentation will be provided through the RTI process (see Curriculum section for more information on RTI.) Staff will use information gathered from families to adapt program environment, curriculum, and teaching methods. Teachers are required to make contact with 100% of their families during these conferences. Administration will help contact hard to reach families/guardians.

Information about a child is privileged and will only be shared with the families/guardians who are legally responsible for the child, unless family has otherwise provided written request.

Annual NAEYC Family Survey

Pre-K 4 SA families are asked to complete an annual NAEYC survey in order to provide Pre-K 4 SA administrators with feedback on how to best improve the program. All families registered in the program are offered the opportunity to respond confidentially and anonymously to the survey. The survey is administered in English and Spanish. The survey may be conducted on paper or online. For assistance in acquiring a survey please contact a Pre-K 4 SA center.

Messages

Instructional time with children is critical to success. School personnel will not interrupt classes to deliver personal messages. For that reason, families/guardians must make plans for children before they arrive at school. Last minute phone calls or changes in plans are difficult to deliver and cause confusion for children and staff. In cases of extreme emergency, exceptions may be made based on unique and individual circumstances as approved by the Head of School. Families/ guardians may leave messages for teachers with the school office. Teachers will return calls within 24 hours.

Nursing Mothers

Pre-K 4 SA respects the right of mothers to nurse a child while at the center. A designated place will be provided.

Family Concerns

Families wanting to voice a concern are encouraged to contact the teacher first. If the concern is not resolved, the family should contact the Head of School or Extended Day Manager in order to discuss and resolve the situation in a timely manner. If the concern persists after meeting with the Head of School, the family may contact the Pre-K 4 SA Chief of Schools, Mrs. Tonda Brown, at (210) 206-2899. Mrs. Brown may also be reached via email at Tonda.Brown@sanantonio.gov.

Families as Partners

Each Center will designate one day a month (at elected times that are mindful of family schedules and availability) for families to participate in and interact with one another in a "Families as Partners" group. This time will allow families to engage in conversations about upcoming events, philosophy and curriculum objectives, and effective strategies for promoting learning, etc. Families can work collaboratively to find mutual solutions to common concerns. They will have the opportunity for active discussion in question and answer sessions with administration and can also provide advisory input on curriculum and activities throughout the year. Families can work together, assume leadership roles, and collaborate and with family liaisons in the designated Family Cafe.

Volunteer Information

Pre-K 4 SA offers a variety of culturally diverse activities in which children and families can participate. Pre-K 4 SA welcomes help, support, and assistance from families. Families should contact the child's teacher for opportunities to do so. To ensure the safety of children, families and other adults who wish to volunteer in the classroom must attend volunteer training and undergo a criminal background check. This process may take up to 2-3 weeks to complete. The criminal background check form can be found in the center main office. We have an open-door policy and families are welcome to observe in the classroom. We ask that families allow at least 4 weeks for the child to acclimate to the school setting and routine and the visits are not a disruption to their child and the learning of other children. Teaching and learning occur throughout the day from the moment the child arrives in the classroom until dismissal; therefore, we ask that families not engage in conversations with teachers during instructional time.

Safety

Building Security

For the safety of all children and staff, Center doors are locked during the instructional day. Any family, visitor, or volunteer visiting the Center must present a valid I.D. The I.D. is scanned and a badge with the visitor's picture, date and time of arrival, and Center location is printed. All visitors must wear the badge while at the Center and return it to the front office at the end of the visit.

Drills and Emergency Procedures

Children, teachers, and staff participate in regular drills of emergency procedures during the school year (i.e. such as fire drills, lock down, and evacuation). Explicit evacuation instructions are provided to each class for emergency drills. During all drills, staff members have the following information:

- Family and emergency contact telephone numbers for each child;
- Authorization for emergency care for each child.

Fire Drills – Fire Drills are conducted monthly to ensure safety and familiarize the children and staff with the routine. Fire Evacuation Routes are posted in each room.
Emergency Evacuation– Each Center has a designated safe location to relocate children in the case of an evacuation. Families will be notified with information as it is made available during an emergency situation.
Lock Down – A "lock down" will be ordered by Administration when a threat to the safety of children and staff exists. The threat could exist within the school itself or in the immediate area of the Center. The lock down will be ordered as a precautionary measure and will continue until the threat no longer exists. Administration will work closely with the San Antonio Police Department when these situations arise. Everything possible will be done to keep children and staff safe.

Protection from Environmental Hazards

Pre-K 4 SA receives health notices from Metro Health advising of potential environmental hazards such as: air quality, high/low temperature alerts, health concerns and addresses steps to protect children and adults accordingly.

Inclement Weather Policy

Pre-K 4 SA's CEO works closely with partnering school districts in making decisions about closing school during inclement weather; therefore, please tune in to local news stations, Pre-K 4 SA social media channels, the Pre-K 4 SA website, or City of San Antonio website for delay-of-start or school closure updates. Pre-K 4 SA may also share updates via email or Remind.

Staff needs to watch the news and wait for a message from the Head Of Schools or a designated staff member If inclement weather demands schools to close early, staff will call families to inform them of mid-day closing. In addition, the Extended Day Program will be cancelled, and bus transportation may not be available.

Gun, Drug and Gang-Free Zones

The safety of our children, families and staff is of utmost importance at Pre-K 4 SA. In order to ensure the highest level of safety, Pre-K 4 SA is a weapon-free, drug-free and gang-free facility.

Pre-K 4 SA Centers are a drug-free and gang-free zones, which include school buses and any location within 1,000 feet of any City-owned or leased property or center playground.

Effective January 1, 2016, HB 910 replaced the Concealed Handgun License with a License to Carry Handgun which will allow a license holder to openly carry a handgun in a shoulder or belt holster. However, under state law, buildings where a school or educational institution activity is being conducted will continue to be prohibited areas. In accordance with established policy, the possession of firearms or weapons of any kind is strictly prohibited within all Pre-K 4 SA facilities. This restriction applies to all individuals, without exception. All Pre-K 4 SA centers are designated as weapon-free zones to ensure the safety and security of all children staff and visitors.

Physical Spaces Needed for Children

Pre-K 4 SA staff will adhere to the following ratios at all times:

- Each child will have 35 square feet of indoor activity space indoors.
- Each child will have 75 square feet of outdoor activity space for each child.

In keeping with staff responsibility for the on-going supervision of each child, appropriate visual, auditory awareness, and physical proximity will be consistently maintained. Staff will supervise children while they are using the restroom by standing in close proximity. In the event the restroom is not within the classroom area, sufficient staff will be on duty to maintain required child-staff ratio at all times. Staff will accompany the child to and from the restroom, if the restroom is not in the immediate area where the children are located.

Product Safety

Pre-K 4 SA administrators will review the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recall list at www.cpsc.gov. Pre-K 4 SA staff is committed to ensuring that there are no antique, collectible children's product or a child's product that has been retrofitted to make it safe.

Pre-K 4 SA administration will certify annually in writing that we have reviewed each of the recall notices issued by the CPSC and that there are no unsafe products in the center. Pre-K 4 SA Center administration will post a notice for families and employees in the entryway along with all other family information. This notice will include information on how to access a listing of children's unsafe products through the CPSC Internet website or through the DFPS Internet website www.dfps.state.tx.us.

Smoke-Free Environment

Smoking, vaping and the use of tobacco products shall be prohibited in all Pre-K 4 SA education center properties and at all center related events.