

# St. Therese Early Education Center

## FAMILY HANDBOOK

2008-2009

7207 N.W. Highway 9  
Kansas City, Missouri 64152  
Tel: 816-746-1500  
Fax: 816-741-0533

[www.sttheresenorth.org](http://www.sttheresenorth.org)



## Our Mission Statement

To provide a developmentally appropriate, safe, happy and nurturing environment for our children to learn, grow and love in a Christian manner.

## Our Philosophy

The child is the primary focus of St. Therese Early Education Center. We endeavor to meet each child's individual, developmental needs. We value a strong self-esteem and a clear self-concept in each child. We strive to be an extension of the child's family unit and therefore provide security, warmth, support and a feeling of family among our community of children and staff members. We believe learning occurs when children are actively involved with their environment, other children, and adults. We hold as basic Christian tenets that God is love, God loves us, and we and our world were created for good.

## Core Values

Standards of ethical behavior in early childhood care and education are based on commitment to core values that are deeply rooted in the history of our field. We have committed ourselves to:

- Appreciating childhood as a unique and valuable stage of the human life cycle
- Basing our work with children on knowledge and experience of child development
- Appreciating and supporting the close ties between the child and family
- Recognizing that children are best understood and supported in the context of family, culture, community and society
- Respecting the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual (child, family, member, and colleague)
- Helping children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust, respect, and positive reward

## Curriculum

Our age-grouped classes encourage children to be actively involved in the learning process as they experience a variety of developmentally appropriate activities. The daily schedule is planned to balance indoor/outdoor, active/quiet, individual/small group/large group, large muscle/small muscle, child-initiated/ teacher initiated activities within a child-oriented context. These activities are designed to foster self-concept, develop social skills, encourage children to think, reason, question, and experiment, encourage language development, develop physical skills and creative expression and to enhance sound health, safety, and nutritional practices.

Teachers design lesson plans based on state and national standards to teach specific skills necessary for age-appropriate development. These activities are directly related to the assessment used for each specific age group and are designed to promote the development of the whole child and address the spiritual, social, emotional, physical, and cognitive skills necessary for lifelong learning.

St. Therese Early Education Center, through an age appropriate curriculum, weaves “safe environment” training for children into daily classroom life. Through the use of games, songs, stories, we present children with important life skills that empower them to help protect themselves and encourage them to respect themselves and others. Our Pre-Kindergarten Classes utilize the *Personal Safety Curriculum* by the *Committee for Children* called *Talking about Touching*, as required by the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph. This program teaches children skills that will help keep them safe from dangerous or abusive situations. Our safe environment curriculum information is distributed and explained to all parents at the beginning of the year during our parent orientation evenings.

As part of our Catholic Early Education Program, we are using the Sadlier Discovering God's Child and Discovering God's World in our 3's and PreK classes. Joyful songs, poetry and hands-on activities introduce children to God's gifts of self, creation, and love with family and the church community. This specially designed program addresses the social, emotional, intellectual, and physical readiness of children in an early education program.

## Goals for Children

The goals of St. Therese Early Education Center include the basic concepts that we will strive toward as we serve your child and family.

- To provide a Catholic early childhood environment where spiritual values are nurtured
- To provide a physical environment that is safe, clean, healthy, and child-oriented
- To encourage the unique qualities of each child and to be sensitive to his/her individual needs
- To cultivate in each child a healthy respect for self and others
- To maintain a positive classroom atmosphere which encourages successful experiences and a love of learning
- To assist the children in exploring the world around them as they broaden their sense of discovery and develop their scope of learning
- To create a caring and nurturing atmosphere that fosters creativity and a positive self-image
- To develop the child's understanding of receptive and expressive language
- To foster the child's enjoyment of children's literature and music
- To provide a multitude of hands-on activities designed to encourage the child's understanding of mathematical and scientific concepts
- To provide hands-on opportunities with current technology and computers
- To develop physical coordination and skills
- To cultivate in each child compassion, tolerance, and acceptance of other people, in an effort to eliminate prejudice and discrimination of all kinds
- To broaden each child's knowledge of his/her community and the many diverse cultures and peoples within it
- To support teachers with training, resources and the freedom to create a unique learning experience for children.
- To create an atmosphere of mutual respect between parents and teachers and support frequent communication to ensure a quality program for each

## Discipline

St. Therese Early Education Center strives to discourage all forms of unacceptable behavior by maintaining an appropriate classroom environment. St. Therese EEC embraces a philosophy of positive reinforcement, redirection to appropriate behavior, addressing actions rather than children, and giving children a clear understanding of the consequences of unacceptable behavior. The teacher will handle discipline by various methods of communication and, if necessary, removal from the activity. We use the Conscious Discipline model in the classroom and staff members are trained in utilizing the safe place technique for children who may need time away from the group. Conscious Discipline includes *I Love You Rituals* which make human connections which create neural connections in the brain. Our brains are shaped by our loving relationships, and the health of a child's relationships with others is the vital link to academic success.

The teacher and the administration will contact the parent for a conference concerning any negative behavior that does not respond to this technique. Under no circumstances will a child be subjected to discipline, which is severe, humiliating, frightening, or associated with food, rest or toileting. Parents are encouraged to discuss the needs of their child with the teacher so that we can know how to best serve the needs of each child in our center.

If a situation arises where a child experiences difficulty complying with redirection, time away in the safe place, or displaying a behavior or language that is violent toward a staff member or another child, the parents will be notified. In some situations, it may be necessary to restrict the child's daily attendance, or require time away from the Center. In cases such as this, we emphasize communication between the parents, Early Education Center staff, administration, and child. In all situations, our focus will be to keep as a priority, the healthy development and safety of the children, the staff, and the Center as a whole.

No form of corporal punishment is allowed by anyone (including families) while on Center property. Staff members are mandatory reporters of child abuse.

## **Parent-Teacher Conferences and Child Assessment**

Communication between teacher and parent is essential to the success of our program. Teachers will be in contact with you throughout the year to keep you informed of your child's progress in the classroom, via phone calls, notes home, and parent/teacher conferences. All children will be given a developmental screening within the first 3 months of the school year and parents will be provided information either verbally or in writing about their child's development and learning on at least a quarterly basis, with written reports at least 2 times a year. Our teachers work very diligently to use any assessment results to align their curriculum and teaching practices to the interests and needs of each particular child.

Individual conferences will be held in the fall and spring during our conference days. At the end of the year, you will receive a portfolio assessment, which is an authentic collection of your child's work, showing their progress throughout the year. Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns with the teachers or the administrators at any time. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

St. Therese Early Education Center uses various assessments, based on the age of the child, including the Diocesan assessment and the developmental screening instrument, "Ages and Stages Questionnaire." The purpose of "Ages and Stages" is to identify strengths and weaknesses in the child's developmental and learning levels and is used if there is a particular area of concern. After the screening tool is completed, the results will be shared with you. In some cases, areas of possible delay may be discovered and this would enable the parent to receive early intervention services for their child if needed. Research shows strong evidence that the earlier a possible problem is identified, the more successful the child will be in subsequent educational years. The Diocesan assessment tool is based on Missouri state standards and NAEYC criteria. These tools will allow you to see exactly where your child is in his/her development and enable you to see our goals for each age level and how your child is meeting those age-based goals.

## **Hours**

The Center opens at 6:30 A.M. and closes at 6:00 P.M. Children in our full-time program must be checked into and out of the Center at the front desk. Part-time program hours are 8:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. for the morning session, 12:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. for the afternoon session, and 8:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. for the MWF full day session. The Tuesday/Thursday morning class also has the option for children to stay until 3:00 for an extended day based on availability.

## Services and Descriptions

Infant Room - Infants will be held, played with, fed and cared for in a nurturing and loving environment. A warm and nurturing relationship with adults is particularly important in developing a child's trust in the world.

A record of all activities including feeding, diapering, medications, and any other pertinent information and activities will be provided for the parent daily. Written instructions, on a form provided by the Center, should be completed and updated by the parents of new infants entering the Center to help with the development and consistency of a schedule for your child.

Bottles & Food - In order to maintain consistency from home to the Center, and to meet the individual needs of children, babies will eat according to their own schedule. For infants, parents need to supply fresh formula and baby food. Please have the bottles for the day prepared according to the manufacturers instructions and brought to the Center daily. Your child's bottle should be plastic and capped and all bottles and caps should be labeled with your child's full name or initials. All bottles will be sent home at the end of each day. Parents supply baby and junior food, once the child is at least 6 months old, and these should also be labeled with initials. For older infants, the Center will supply snacks and lunch which is listed on our menu, once the parent informs the caregivers that introducing table food has begun, to ensure that it follows the infants' individual nutritional needs and developmental stage.

Breast-Feeding - If you are a nursing mother, we will be more than happy to make arrangements for you to visit your infant any time. If the Center is not convenient to your workplace for nursing visits, please feel free to supply us with expressed milk to feed your baby. We can store a frozen supply up to three months, or you may provide milk daily. For safety reasons, bottles and baby food will never be warmed in a microwave oven.

We ask parents to please provide diaper cream (with physician signed form, labeled with your child's name), diapers and diaper wipes. The center will provide a crib sheet. Two complete changes of weather appropriate clothing should be provided. Those should be labeled and can be stored on your child's hook. It will be communicated to parents whenever it is necessary for items to be restocked.

Infants will sleep in cribs, assigned to them as they are enrolled in the room. To reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), infants up to 12 months old, unless otherwise ordered by a physician, are placed on their backs to sleep. For infants younger than eight months, a thin blanket can be used but will be tucked into the mattress and reach only as far as the infant's chest and no other stuffed animals or pillows will be in the crib.

Toddler Room - Children will be given opportunities to play and explore their world in a safe and loving environment. Music, toys, and activities will be developmentally appropriate for this age and self-help skills are encouraged. Toddlers need a world filled with responsive interactions and languages, many conversations with others, books, songs, and lots of listening and responding to their vocalizations and words.

They will be offered two nutritious snacks and a lunch that the Center provides or their own lunch brought from home (please label with child's name and date). Whole milk will be given to the children 1-2 years old and a nap on a mat will be a part of each child's day.

Two-Year-Old Rooms - Two-year-olds and three-year-olds learn best by experiencing their environment through their senses, physical activity, and social interactions with other children. Children develop feelings of competence and trust through positive interactions with adults and peers. They will be offered nutritious snacks and a lunch, unless a lunch is brought from home (labeled with name and date). A nap will also be a part of their day. A child who turns three after August 1<sup>st</sup> will be in the Two-Year-Old Room during that school year.

3's and 4's - The 3 and 4 year old classroom learning environments consist of well planned learning centers that

allow for child choice and self-directed play, small groups, and supportive teaching that prepare children for academic excellence. The development of language, mathematical reasoning, and scientific thought are emphasized throughout all the centers. Changes to the learning environment, activities, and projects reflect emerging interests and individual goals. Learning centers result in the guided experiences that encompass all the skills and understanding necessary for optimum development and success in school.

Class will be taught by a certified teacher and an assistant teacher. Children will be offered one or two nutritious snacks and a lunch, depending on their hours of attendance. You may bring in a lunch from home if desired (please label it with your child's name and date.)

Children must be three-years-old by August 1<sup>st</sup> to be enrolled in the 3-yr-old program and four-years-old by August 1<sup>st</sup> for a Pre-Kindergarten Program. All children enrolled in these programs must be using the restroom independently prior to the start of the school year.

## **Summer Program**

Each summer, St. Therese Early Education Center offers families a summer recreational program with added outdoor activities and off-site activities. We feel summer is a special time of year for children and an opportunity to engage in new and different experiences. By using the outdoors as an extension of the classroom, St. Therese provides opportunities for all children to learn and grow in new ways during the summer while maintaining the same quality care provided during the school year. Enrollment occurs in the Spring, with a separate form for the summer, and is offered on a first-come basis. No partial day arrangements are made. There will be an extra activity/transportation fee for children who go on off-site activities (children who are 4 by August 1<sup>st</sup>).

## **National Association for the Education of Young Children Accreditation**

St. Therese Early Education Center is accredited through N.A.E.Y.C., the nation's leading organization of early childhood professionals. In light of the crucial importance of early care and development in a child's lifetime learning process, N.A.E.Y.C. carries the torch for raising the quality of early childhood education, helping families and others identify high-quality childcare centers, preschools, kindergartens and other early childhood programs. The Accreditation process of the N.A.E.Y.C. examines all aspects of a program, including: teacher qualifications, professional development, teacher/child and teacher/family relationships, curriculum, physical environment, health, safety, leadership and management, teaching, assessment of child progress, and family and community relationships. We believe that everyone involved; the staff, the families that we serve, the Parish, the Diocesan School Office, and our community all contribute to upholding these standards. We know that we continue to learn and grow through our experiences with the families that we serve, and value that partnership with you.

## **Health & Safety**

St. Therese Early Education Center maintains stringent health and safety practices. Staff undergo a thorough screening and hiring process, including background reference checks. Staff members who are certified in CPR, First Aid, and Bloodborne Pathogens (infectious control) are present in the Center at all times. All staff members are trained with regard to proper hygiene practices, which include hand-washing procedures, general infection control, diapering and toileting procedures. We will ensure that certain equipment, items, and surfaces are sanitized using soap and water followed by a bleach solution on a regular schedule. The Center management conducts routine fire and emergency drills on a regular basis.

To ensure that families and children feel comfortable at all times, families of enrolled children are welcome under an open-door policy to visit at any time during the day. We provide our own security keypad system/secured access,

ensuring that access is available only to parents/guardians and authorized personnel. Families who enter the building on a regular basis for our full-time program will be given a code to enter the building. Families will be notified of any security code changes in writing, and it is important that only adults access the code on the security pad. All other families entering the building may push the white call button to gain access through these doors. To make certain that the Center is kept as secure as possible, we ask that you not allow unknown people to walk in with you or enter the Center upon your departure.

## Medical Records

In order to ensure and protect the health of all children, we need current medical information on each child prior to enrollment.

- A *Child's Medical Examination Report* signed by a physician or a nurse practitioner under the supervision of a licensed physician within six weeks of admission and not more than 12 months prior to enrollment. This must be updated every 2 years.
- A current immunization record which is updated accordingly following any immunization. If you have chosen for your child to be exempt from receiving any immunizations, a card from the health department must be completed and on file at the center. Your child may be excluded from the program for the duration that there is a communicable illness of an immunization that was not administered.
- A *Medical Emergency Form* is also completed to include information required for administering emergency treatment.
- A *Medication Consent Form for Prescription and Non-Prescription Medication* is required in order for a child to receive medication at the Center.

## Child Illness Policy

At St. Therese, we understand that it is difficult for a parent/guardian to leave or miss work or planned activities, therefore it is suggested that alternative arrangements be made for occasions when children must remain at home or be picked up due to illness. Exclusion from the Center is sometimes necessary to reduce the transmission of illness or because the Center is not able to adequately meet the needs of the child. If your child becomes ill while in attendance, you will be notified to come pick them up immediately. Until the designated person arrives, the child is kept comfortable in the care of an adult and is away from other children. We ask that ill children remain at home for their comfort and for the safety of other children. Reducing the contact between contagious children and non-contagious children decreases the chance of spreading infection around the Center. Children should be excluded from the school setting for the following reasons:

- Illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities
- Fever of 100 degrees or more
- Diarrhea - stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet
- Vomiting
- Extreme nasal or bronchial congestion - green mucus discharging from nose or throat
- Severe coughing - red or blue in the face or makes high-pitched crouping or whooping sounds after coughing
- Rash with fever or behavioral changes, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease
- Purulent conjunctivitis (defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge) until on antibiotics for 24 hours
- Impetigo until 24 hours after treatment
- Strep throat until 24 hours after treatment
- Head lice until after treatment and all nits are removed

- Scabies until 24 hours after treatment has begun
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted (usually 6 days)
- Pertussis (whooping cough) until 5 days of appropriate antibiotics
- Hand foot and mouth disease until fever gone and spots are no longer present (7-10 days)

The final decision whether to exclude a child from the program will be made by the Center administration.

Children need to remain home for 24 hours without symptoms before returning to the program and be able to fully participate in all Center activities, including outdoor time. In the case of a (suspected) contagious disease or continuing symptoms, a doctor's note may be required before returning.

Parents must immediately contact the Center if your child contracts a communicable disease. The Center notifies families in writing and verbally if their child has been exposed to a communicable disease.

## Medications

According to Diocesan Policy 460.4...

“Non-prescription medication is not dispensed by the Center except upon written authorization of a child's physician. Prescription medication is dispensed only if, it is not the first dose, medication is in a prescription container and written authorization from the parent is on file.”

We will administer medication to children with a signed form from the parent and child's physician. You may come to administer medication to your child during the day or, if possible, check with your child's physician to see if a dose schedule can be arranged that does not involve the hours your child is in the Center.

**Prescription medication** must be in the original container and must have the child's name and instructions regarding dosage, times to be administered, name and number of the physician, and expiration date, clearly marked.

**Non-prescription medication** includes Tylenol, Motrin (or their generics), cough medicine, lotions/ointments including diaper cream, teething medication, sunscreen, or any kind of over-the-counter medications that may need to be used. In order for these to be given to your child, a *Medication Consent Form for Prescription and Non-Prescription Medication* must be completed each school year and have physician and parent's signatures, a list of the non-prescription medications, the proper dosage according to the child's age/weight and the reason for why we might administer. All non-prescription medications must be in the original container and labeled with the child's complete name.

Please supply a medication utensil (for liquid medication) and have the child's name written on it.

The *Authorization of Medication Administration* form must also be signed by the parent each day medication is to be given while at the Center. Parents should drop medication off at the front desk and sign this form with complete information including date, name of medication, dosage, illness, and time(s) to be given. This form will remain with the child's records, and allows us to record the days, times, dosages and who administered the medication that your child received. Families may obtain an Authorization of Medication Administration form from the Center in order to complete at home to avoid the morning rush during arrival at the Center.

All medications are administered by a designated administrator. The Center stores medication in compliance with Accreditation criteria and unused medication will be returned to the parent. Medication will not be administered by the Center before 10:00 A.M. or after 4:00 P.M. Breathing treatments will be administered, however treatments

given at the Center should be in addition to treatments provided at home either in the morning or evening. If only one or two daily treatments are needed, please provide those treatments at home. In some situations, it may be necessary to sign your child up for a breathing treatment “as needed”. In this situation, please alert your child’s teacher to the symptoms that would require the treatment and complete an Authorization of Medication Administration form with the information as to what symptoms would require a breathing treatment.

## Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to notify the Center regarding children’s food or environmental allergies and health conditions. A list of children’s food allergies is posted in each classroom and the kitchen, after consent is given by the parent. Staff members familiarize themselves with the allergy list and consult the list as appropriate to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies. Because of the prevalence of peanut allergies, St. Therese Early Education Center is a “peanut-free zone,” however, we could serve some snacks that are prepared in peanut oil or in factories that also package peanut products. If your child has a severe allergy to peanuts or any other substance, please be sure to give complete details to administration who will pass this information on to appropriate staff members.

The *Special Needs/Medical Information Form* will be given to any family that has a child with any special developmental, health or nutritional needs. This is to be completed before the start of the school year and updated as needed. It is also signed by an administrator and the teacher before being kept on file.

## Toilet Learning/Diapering

Toilet Learning is a cooperative effort between the family and the child’s teachers. The most important factor in making this experience successful and as stress-free as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Most positive toilet learning will occur only after children show signs of physical control (or awareness) of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process.

Some signs of readiness include; showing an interest in sitting on the toilet, ability to take clothes and diaper off without help, ability to verbalize he/she needs to sit on the toilet, and remaining dry for long periods of time. During toilet learning, the following guidelines will be followed:

- Children will be supervised during toilet learning and will be praised for their efforts.
- Individual developmental abilities of each child shall be considered. Children shall not be punished emotionally or physically for soiling or wetting themselves.
- Families will provide sufficient extra clothing for their children. If an accident occurs, the child will be changed into clean clothes. Extra clothes that are worn home should be replaced the next day.
- Families will be advised on a regular basis of their child’s progress.

If in diapers, children will be checked and changed if necessary at least every two hours while awake.

## Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development, commonly seen in infants and toddlers, and two-year-olds. Biting is a behavior that is very disturbing to all involved. When it occurs, biting cannot be ignored. Children bite for different reasons. Some of these reasons may include them feeling frustrated or threatened, being unable to express their feelings or needs verbally, being excited or over-stimulated, exploring cause and effect relationships, teething, and being hungry or fatigued. When biting happens, we clearly label it as unacceptable and explain the reason in words the child can understand. This is done after first caring for the child who was bitten. Our focus will not be on

punishment for biting, but on effective techniques that address the specific reason for biting and that teach the child alternative acceptable behaviors. Delayed punishment at home will not be understood by the child. Incident reports will be written for the child who was bitten and also to the family of the child who bit. We will work together with the families of the biter and the bitten child to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change. We will make every effort to modify the behavior quickly and the names of the children involved will remain confidential.

## **Safety Measures**

Smoking, firearms, and any other significant hazards that pose risks to children and adults are prohibited at the Center.

Children and adults will be protected from air pollutants by limiting time outdoors on yellow and orange-alert days. No outdoor play is permitted on red-alert days.

## **General Policies**

### **Enrollment Procedures**

For enrollment in the Infant, Toddler or Two-Year-Old rooms, you may complete a wait list form at any time during the year, by indicating either your delivery due date or your child's date of birth. Enrollment in the Center is confirmed in the following order: current Center or Grade School families, registered St. Therese Parishioners (receiving tithing envelopes and attending Mass), then members of our community. We welcome you to visit our Center for a personal tour, which will provide an opportunity for you and your child to discuss our Center policies and tour the classrooms. The annual registration fee will be collected at the time of confirmation of enrollment in the Center.

For families currently enrolled, you will be asked to complete a registration form annually for upcoming summer and fall programs. Registration occurs annually, from late February (for current families) through March (for Parishioners and community) for the upcoming summer and fall programs, again allowing current Center and School families to enroll first, then registered St. Therese Parishioners and then the community. A per child registration fee will be due from all families at this time.

The Center recognizes the Missouri cut-off date of August 1<sup>st</sup>. A child who turns 3 by August 1<sup>st</sup> may attend either the 2 day or 5 day 3-year-old class. The following year, when the child is 4 by August 1<sup>st</sup>, they may enroll for the 3 Day or 5 Day Pre-Kindergarten class.

Those children with a birthday in May, June or July who are enrolled in a PreK class, may choose to enroll in another year of PreK before attending Kindergarten. A team of professionals, consisting of the child's teacher, administration, and school resource staff are available to assist with this decision.

Both staff and children in true ecumenical spirit will welcome all children into the Christian educational community of the Center. We admit children of any sex, race, color, nationality and/or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities accorded to children of the Center.

Our center is closed for 3 days in August to allow the teachers and staff to prepare for the beginning of the school year, including Open House. We encourage your family to attend the Open House the week before school starts. Parents are welcome to visit the classroom at anytime, however we ask that you give your child at least a month to adjust to their new schedule and environment. The first month is important to let your child make adjustments to a new experience.

The Center requires a written notice of withdrawal from the Center two-weeks in advance. You are responsible for your child's tuition during this two-week period even if you choose to not have your child attend during this time.

## Arrival and Departure Procedures

Parents of the full-time program should park their cars in the available parking spaces or circular drive located in the lower level of the Early Education Center. You can then proceed into the building, and sign your child in at the computer located at the desk. You will receive a front door code as well as a parent codes that will enable you to sign your child(ren) in/out. Please transport your child directly to the classroom or gathering space area.

Parents of children in our part-time program should drop-off and pick-up at the upper level – which is the front of the Education and Parish Center. For classes starting in the *morning at 8:00*, you may drop-off your child between 7:30-7:45 **ONLY** if you have another child in the Grade School. The sibling must walk the child into the building to the staff waiting inside the doors. There will be a single lane (closest to the building) for drop-off and pick-up, entering the “Enter Only” entrance, proceeding behind the church, and to the Education and Parish Center. We will be staffing 2 different doors – the main door entering the Parish and Education Center (located by the flag poles), and the door at the end of the building, closest to the exit drive, and located off the Kindergarten hallway. Since the Grade School students must be in their rooms by 7:45; at that time, the front door will be locked and we will take the children from the front door down to the Kindergarten Hallway. If your child does not have a sibling in the Grade School, you may drop off from 7:50-8:00 at the door closest to the exit drive. The teacher or staff member will come to your car door (be sure to display the NAME CARD in the driver side window). If your child needs care before 7:30 (with a grade school sibling) or 7:45 (without a grade school sibling), you will need to park in the lower level, walk your child in and check them into the computer. There will be a sign-up and fee if you choose to utilize this option. Pick-up for the morning class is 11:00, and will be at the upper level door by the Kindergarten Hallway. Please drive in a single lane, and the teacher will bring your child to your car.

The *PM classes* will drop off at the Kindergarten Hallway door, on the upper level from 11:50-12:00, and pick up again at that door at 3:00. All pick-ups for the PM & Full-Day classes must be by 3:05 and completed prior to the grade school being dismissed. If you arrive after 3:05, your child will be brought back down to the center and a late fee will be assessed. If your pm/full-day child has a sibling in the Grade School, please follow the pick-up procedures from the school by parking in a space, walk to the door to pick up your child and return to your car to await your other child/ren. If you are in a Full-Day or PM class and would like extended care after 3:00, your child will go to a full-time classroom at that time. There is a sign-up (to see if there are spaces available) and fee if you choose to utilize this option.

A *Data Sheet* is completed at enrollment and annually updated or earlier if changes occur. This form is extremely important, as it gives us accurate information concerning persons who are authorized to pick up your child (at least 2 must be listed). Families must update changes of address, employment, telephone numbers, or authorized pick up information as changes occur. Families must list the names of persons that are authorized to pick up their child(ren) and inform the Center if someone other than parents will pick up the child(ren). In order for someone other than the parent/guardian to depart with a child, the parent/guardian must call the Center or submit a signed letter notifying of who will be picking up. Please let that person know that photo identification will be requested.

Please call the Center if your child is going to be absent or arrive after 9:30 A.M. so we can have a correct lunch count and be able to wish your child well if they are ill. If you are planning a vacation or family trip, please notify the Center prior to the child's absence and inform your child's teacher.

## Ten Hour Policy

A child's attendance should be limited to no more than 10 hours per day. We feel that this is in the best interest of the children, and encourage families to consider different options for drop-off and pick-up that will provide your child with the least amount of time attending the Center on a consistent basis. The computer sign-in system will calculate the number of hours in a day that each child attends the Center and you will receive a reminder of this policy if your child is consistently attending in excess of 10 hours per day.

## Fees

There is a registration fee due for each child at the time of registration and annually thereafter.

All tuition is based on a monthly fee, specified at time of registration. No refunds are given for illness, vacations, holidays, or snow days and those days are not made up. Invoices will be given to all families the last week of each month, for the next month, through their child's cubbies or backpacks. All payments are due on or before the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) of each month. Those payments received after the fifteenth (15<sup>th</sup>) will be automatically charged a late fee of \$15.00 to their account.

All families will receive a statement/receipt every month after the 20<sup>th</sup>.

Payment Options: you may 1) put your check/money order payments in the box at the front desk 2) send your check/money order payments to school in a marked envelope with your child 3) mail your payments to the Early Education Center 4) pay by Master Card or Visa by calling Teri Jo Garitz at 741-5400 x106 EACH MONTH to authorize credit card payment. When calling in, please leave your personal code and amount to be processed. A current form must be on file and forms are available at the front desk for those who are interested. If paying by cash, prior arrangements must be made with the Coordinator or Assistant Coordinator.

If you have more than one child at the Center, one check per family is encouraged. For those families with more than one child at the Center, a 10% discount will be applied to the lowest tuition. If a discount is given in the early education center, no additional discount will be given to siblings attending extended care in the school.

If you should fall behind one month and have not communicated extenuating circumstances, your child's attendance in the program may be affected until payment has been received. You may discuss extenuating circumstances with the Education Administrator, Coordinator, the Parish Pastor or Business Manager. For billing questions, please contact 741-5400 x106.

Children not picked up by 6:05 P.M. will be charged \$2.00/minute until the parent arrives. The front desk clock shall be the official time instrument used in cases of overtime. Please be prepared to pay at the time of pick-up or the following morning. Even if you contact the Center of your delay, the late fee will be assessed. If Phase 1 of the Kansas City Snow Ordinance is officially in effect, a late fee will not be charged. Part-time children should be picked up no later than 11:05 for the morning sessions and 3:05 for the afternoon sessions. If not picked up by this time, the child will go to a classroom and charged for extended care accordingly.

When it is necessary for you to send miscellaneous payment with your child (for field trips, book orders, donations, etc.), please place it in a sealed envelope and clearly mark with your child's name, teacher's name, the amount being sent and what it is for on the outside of the envelope. The Center is not responsible for lost money prior to being turned into the appropriate person.

## Severe Weather/Emergency Closings

If St. Therese School is closed because of severe weather, all facilities will be closed. This includes the school, the early education center, the extended care program and any evening activities.

You may receive the information about emergency closings in the following ways:

You may receive a text message on your cell phone through Textcaster. You may sign up for this free service by going to [www.sttheresenorth.org](http://www.sttheresenorth.org), click on the “school” link and go to “textcaster sign up” on the left side of the page. It will walk you through the process.

Information will also be posted on the following:

St. Therese parish website - [www.sttheresenorth.org](http://www.sttheresenorth.org)

KSHP - TV

News Radio 980 KMBZ

Country 106.5

98.9 The Rock

98.1 KUDL

99.7 KY

610 Sports

Classical 1660 KXTR

We will be designated as St. Therese North on all these stations

## Children with Special Needs

All children who enter St. Therese Early Education Center are on a 2-month probationary period pending evaluation of the child's needs. St. Therese Early Education Center attempts to meet the educational needs of all children; however, for children with special needs, our center may only be equipped to provide an appropriate environment for those students with mild learning deficits. We are not equipped to care for children with certain special needs; therefore, any such care is conditional upon the consent of the center administration. Parents of children with special needs are required to be forthcoming and share all educational evaluation information, disabling conditions, prior specialized placements/identification, and familial issues, which may require special educational programming. The routine probationary period is still in-effect, as this will allow the administration and staff the time to determine the appropriateness of placement in our center. In all cases, the child must be able to participate and substantially benefit from our program without risk to himself/herself or to the other children. We make every attempt to work with children on an individual basis and it is important for us to know their strengths and weaknesses. If there is anything special we need to know about your child (i.e. hearing or speech difficulties, changes in family structure, history of any behavioral problems), please let your child's teacher know before school starts so she/he can meet with you. The more we know about your child, the better we will be able to meet his/her needs.

## Children's Records

The information in your child's record is considered confidential and will remain in a locked cabinet on-site at all times. Only those who are directly related to the care of your child, center administration, national accrediting agencies or the state health department, will have access to the record without your written permission. As a parent/guardian, you may have access to your child's record within 24 hours of the request to view the record.

## Communication

Communication between parents and staff of the St. Therese Early Education Center is essential in maintaining an effective program. This communication will take place through various methods:

- Daily verbal communication between parents and teachers or administrators of the Center
- Teacher newsletters will go home with the children from the teachers at certain times (to be determined by the teachers, but are either weekly or bi-weekly). These letters will inform as to what is happening in the classroom as far as the curriculum is concerned, as well as to notify of special events and activities coming up. Daily lesson plans and activities are also posted each day for the parents to read.
- Center Newsletters will be emailed or sent home once a month by the Center administration. These will include calendar or policy changes or reminders, special events, review or clarification of Center policies and guidelines, and general Center or Parish happenings
- Parent/Teacher conferences will be held twice a year, once in the fall and once in the spring.
- An annual survey allows you to rate and comment on all aspects of the program.

## Visitations and Volunteering

Parents/guardians are welcome to visit the Center at any time during the hours of operation. We encourage parents to participate in family involvement opportunities, some of which include, special events, the Early Education Center PTO, volunteering in the classroom and during special activities.

Parents are encouraged to offer their skills, talents, and resources to benefit our program and their children. Parents may call in advance or schedule a regular time for each week or month to volunteer. The teacher will assign tasks/duties where needed. These duties might include: helping cut out things for the classroom, reading to a child/children, helping at centers, helping at parties, volunteering for field trips, etc.

We are very appreciative of any donations made throughout the year. Our tuition and fees cover our operating budget and leaves little left for equipment purchase or replacement. The teachers will post a “wish list” at the beginning of every school year and are most appreciative of any donations from families. Each teacher will send out a “supply list” with items needed by each individual child in the class. We will participate in occasional fundraisers to raise money needed for those items that are not incorporated in our operating budget.

The Education Committee is comprised of representatives from the grade school and early education center. This group advises and supports the administration and pastor through general meetings and committee work. This committee makes recommendations concerning policy, school planning, finance selection, and appointment of administration, public relations, marketing, and evaluation.

## Clothing

The clothing your child wears to the center should be simple, washable, sturdy, and comfortable. Please avoid wearing or bringing items with a high sentimental or monetary value.

Outdoor play is an important part of each day's activities, so please provide appropriate clothing for the season. Please put your child's name on each article of OUTER clothing. All shoes should be fastened and have rubber soles. Boots should be large enough for the child to put on easily.

Children that are in an all day program must bring a complete change of clothes appropriate for the season,

including underwear and socks, marked with your child's name. If not used, these clothes will remain at the Center and then will be returned at the end of the year. If used, please clean and return to the Center the next day. (We will not borrow clothes. If your child has an accident and does not have extra clothes, you will be contacted, resulting in your coming to the Center to provide the necessary clothing).

Please remember to mark each possession with your child's name or initials, then there will be less confusion with misplaced articles, and we will be able to return them to the child's classroom or teacher. Lost and Found items are located near the front desk. Unclaimed items are donated to a local charity, if the items are not claimed within a reasonable amount of time.

## **Nutrition and Food Service**

The Center provides snacks for all age groups and lunch to those children that are here all day. There is an early morning snack of cereal and milk that is available from 6:30-7:30 A.M. Portions represent the basic food groups and the food is served family-style. A lunch/snack menu is provided monthly with the center newsletter, is available to pick up at the front desk and is posted in each classroom.

If a lunch or snack is brought from home, it should meet the USDA's food guidelines and be labeled with your child's full name and the date. If refrigeration is needed, please see your child's teacher. If you do bring in a lunch or snack for your child, please be sure to avoid peanuts or peanut products as we are a "no peanut zone" center.

Parents who wish to eat with their child at lunch time need to call or inform the Early Education Center by 9:00 A.M., so we can add the order to our lunch count. There will be a \$3.25 charge for lunches ordered by any visitors. You may contact your child's teacher to confirm the time of lunch.

A snack may be brought to the Center in celebration of a child's birthday. Food that comes from home for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits (no whole grapes for children under 4 please) or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers.

## **Supplies**

All teachers will provide parents with a classroom supply list at the beginning of the school year. On occasion, during the school year, the teacher may ask parents to bring items in from home. Children in part-time classes should bring a backpack with them to class, with your child's name on the BACK of the pack. Unless specifically requested by the teacher, all toys and valuables MUST be kept at home, as toys from home can be difficult to share and may become misplaced or broken.

Children that are here all day will have the opportunity to have a rest period or nap, consisting of a period of time in which they rest on a designated mat, that will be provided by the Center. These children should bring a child-sized blanket, and a small pillow if desired, marked with the child's name.

Infants, Toddlers, and any other child not using the toilet will need to have disposable diapers and wipes brought to the Center. A supply of disposable diapers may be kept at the Center and you will be notified when to replenish them. No cloth diapers will be used unless prescribed by a doctor. A refill package of unscented baby wipes should be brought in each month and will be shared with the whole group.

## **Classroom Celebrations**

Classroom celebrations, set aside for special holidays, are planned by the teachers and may vary according to the classroom. Your child's classroom teachers will communicate details of how they will plan celebrations, including how parents can help. If you visit the Center during a celebration, please make other arrangements for siblings.

## **Pets**

Our accreditation criteria have strict guidelines regarding pets and/or animals, which may come in contact with children and staff members. Animals must be in good health and must have documentation from a veterinarian or an animal shelter that show that the animals are fully immunized and that the animal is suitable for contact with children. Parents are asked to contact the EEC office before planning to bring any animals into the school environment.

## **Field Trips**

A field trip is a way to enhance the Center's curriculum and enrich the children's experience. Field trips during the school year will be scheduled for children in Pre-Kindergarten classes. At all times the teacher is to be in charge and will set the expectations for the children. A bus will be secured for the field trip and all information will be sent home for parents to read and sign. Parents may be asked to assist the class on field trips. Parents will be responsible for paying their own admission and/or parking fees.

This handbook is provided by St. Therese Early Education Center. The pastor and administration retains the right to amend the handbook for just cause. St. Therese parents will be given prompt notification if changes are made.

# St. Therese Early Education Center

I have received and read the St. Therese Early Education Center Family Handbook, and all information specific to Center policies, where applicable. I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to read and familiarize myself with the policies and procedures.

I understand it is my responsibility to go directly to Center management with any questions I may have regarding the policies and procedures and information contained in the St. Therese Early Education Center Family Handbook.

Information contained in this Handbook may be subject to change.

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach, and turn in to the front desk.

---

**Parent/Guardian Signature**

---

**Print Name**

---

**Date**