***Journey Preschool***

***Parent Handbook***

***2025-2026***

Jennifer Nicholls

703 717 2940

10402 Hutting Pl

Silver Spring, MD 20902

journeypreschoolmd@gmail.com

www.journypreschoolmd.com

Mission Statement

Journey Preschool is a mixed ages learning environment that focuses on social and emotional learning as well as curiosity and investigation. We believe in meeting a child where they are and joining them on their journey of learning

Core Values

1-to foster curiosity and independence

2-to focus on compassion and courtesy

3-to encourage creativity

4- to focus on the whole child

5- to grow community and sense of belonging

Before School Starts

Enrollment and emergency cards must be on file before the start of the school year. I need up-to-date work, home and reliable emergency phone numbers. In the event that someone other than the parents will be picking up your child, you must provide me with advance notice in writing or verbally.

School Hours

School begins at 9:00 am and ends at 3:30 pm. Before-care will begin at 8:00 and aftercare will be until 6 pm. There is an additional charge when using before and after care.

Phone Calls

Please call if you need to reach me. If it is an emergency, please leave a message and your call will be returned immediately. 703-717-2940

Tuition Payments

Tuition will be due monthly. Rates have been raised to meet the inflation demands of running the school. Full day is $950 a month. The Tuition agreement form must be turned into the school with first month’s tuition. Before and After care is $275 a month.

 There is a late fee of $10 for tuition received after the 5th of the month.

There is a yearly materials fee of $50 to cover consumables such as snacks, paper, colored pencils, paint, markers, etc.

Ways to Pay:

Brightwheel Billing Platform- Invitation Sent by email

Toilet Training

Please speak to me about your child’s toilet needs.

Clothing

Children will be taken outside whenever weather permits. Therefore, please dress your child in appropriate inner and outer clothing and shoes. They will need a raincoat, gloves, hat and boots. Please mark all removable clothing and other items with your child’s name.

All children need a change of clothes that includes socks, underwear, pants and shirt. The change of clothes should be brought in a labeled bag and left at the school in case of emergency.

Sick Policy

Please do not send your child to school when he/she has a cough, runny nose or fever. If your child has had a fever in the past 24 hours, please do not send your child to school. I will not administer medication of any kind and no medication should be sent with your child. (unless I have a medication administration form on hand that is signed by a doctor).

If your child becomes ill at school with vomiting, fever, headache or is showing any symptoms that I feel need attention, I expect the child to be picked up immediately.

Screen Policy

There is no use of screens at my preschool. We may use screens to watch books on youtube or to explain a project we are working on. This screen time is limited to the first 10 minutes of project time or investigations. Screens may also be used in music time, but for no more than half of the allotted time.

Discipline Policy

The classroom has 3 simple rules.

1- Be a Super Friend

2-Keep our classroom clean

3-Listen to teachers and each other

In the beginning of the school year, we have a class circle time on making rules for the year. The children give input on what they think a good rule is and why. We make a big poster together stating the above 3 rules and any other rules the children discussed and agreed on.

The children are in control of their choices within the daily schedule. The child knows what our daily routine looks like and also has the opportunity to go and look at the posted routine on the wall. The child is allowed choices in each part of the schedule. During shelf work, the child is shown to the work shelves. As the child chooses which activities to engage in off the shelves, their minds and hands are occupied. This kind of choice leaves little misbehavior problems since the child feels in control of their choices and space.

If a child does make a choice that is not appropriate, the guide will point out what choice the child just made. “You chose to throw the blocks, you are choosing not to use them.” Then the educator will redirect the child to a different shelf material of the child’s choosing. If redirection or positive statements do not help, the child will be asked to come do a reflection with the teacher. We will discuss feelings and what we could have done differently. We also have an emotion corner where the child may choose to go or the teacher may sit with the child. This emotion corner has tools and strategies that help the child with identifying emotions and self-regulation such as the disappointment dragon, sad fish, zones of regulation, punching monster. The emotion cards are clearly displayed so the children may learn to identify and then regulate these emotions.

The teacher will also use validating words to teach the children that feelings are ok to have and guide them to the correct display of those feelings.

The teacher will also teach and model how to problem solve. This includes how to diffuse anger and listen, how to collect information on what happened, come up with multiple solutions, and facilitate discussion between the children.

The teacher will also use Zones of Regulation to help children gain tools for controlling their emotions and energy.

We believe in the power of reflection. We use circle time lessons to reflect on positive behavior first, and discuss negative behavior if needed. The children have input on what they see and how they feel. We also like to use role- play as a way to reflect. The lead teacher and assistant teacher will also reflect at the end of the day on any discipline that was used and any situations that came up. We will discuss what we did well and what we can improve on next time.

Parent Observation

Parents are invited to observe in the classroom once a year. Observing your child not only allows you to participate and interact with your child in the classroom environment but also gives you the opportunity to acquaint yourself with the learning environment and the day to day classroom routine. Students enjoy showing their parents their work. These observations will occur in November and December.

Parent Conferences

There will be two conferences a year held with the teacher and parents. A schedule is sent out by email in the Fall for the first conference and in the Spring for the second teacher conference. First conference is held in November and the second conference in April. One conference is conducted in your home. It is very exciting for the child to show their teacher around their own environment. Please sign up when available. The second conference will either be virtual or in the preschool space.

Toys

Please leave toys, stuffed animals and small objects at home. Bringing in these toys tends to cause problems in the classroom.

I do allow a comfort item to be brought in the first two weeks if your child needs this. We will also have scheduled show and tell dates for the children to bring special items to show.

Daily Schedule

9:00 am Centers

 Centers are based on what we are investigating as a class. Also included is dramatic play, creativity, and imagination opportunities

10:00 am Circle Time

 Teacher will ring the bell to signify the end of outside time. The kids will help clean up what they were playing with and transition to getting a leaf for circle time. We will do investigation questions and books

10:15 Snack

 Each child will throw away his/her snack when they are finished. The children finished go to centers. The children not finished can continue to eat. They join the group when their snack has been disposed of.

10:30 Outside

11:30 Yoga/Gym Time/Music and Movement

 Teacher will ring the bell to signify end of centers. The children put away their toys and work and transition to a sticky number on the floor for yoga or music time

12:00 pm Lunch Time

12:30 Science

We will switch rooms to make sure the children get a variety of activities

1:00 Rest Time

1:45 Books and Bellies

2:30 Snack

 The teacher will read a second read-aloud with social and emotional learning

2:45 Art/Language Time

 Children will switch off with Language Activities or an art project

3:00 Outside Time

3:30 Dismissal Time

Health Policies

Fitness: We spend 60 minutes or more outside exploring and moving our bodies. Every day, we do a yoga enrichment class. The children use yoga mats and follow along with poses that match letters of the alphabet. We do music and movement every day as well. During music class, our bodies are dancing and moving and using music props to help keep the kids engaged. When the weather is appropriate, we go on nature walks when the season changes. The children love to see what in nature signifies the changing of the seasons.

 Nutrition: We believe a healthy body leads to more learning and more energy. Our policy is to provide two snacks a day to the children. These snacks consist of whole grains, and fresh fruits and veggies. Lunch is also provided. We will provide a protein choice, and fresh fruit or fresh veggie and milk. Please do not send candy to school with your child for lunch. Also, please let us know of any food allergies or sensitivities.

Safety Policy

 Journey Preschool conducts 2 fire drills per month. We prepare the children by role-playing what will happen when the fire drill goes off and where we will walk to to be safe. We also practice a disaster drill twice a year. Journey preschool has plans in place for natural disasters and these plans are posted in the preschool room. Parents may request these plans at any time and a copy will be provided. We will only administer medication if a medication administration form is on file from a doctor. Both the lead teacher and assistant teacher are certified in basic first aid and CPR. An emergency card is required to be on file for each child that lists emergency contact numbers and physician information.

Curriculum Policy

Journey Preschool is now using Creative Curriculum. More information may be found at this website: <https://teachingstrategies.com/solutions/teach/?utm_source=Google&utm_medium=PPC&utm_campaign=creative_curriculum&utm_content=General&gclid=CjwKCAjwr56IBhAvEiwA1fuqGk6KBOBI-jL33u1vq-uvxaSAN7uPPrbq85sIq8LN9kXpRuAKcyjeOBoCibUQAvD_BwE>

We align Creative Curriculum with the Montessori philosophy of whole child and child led learning.

Assessments will be conducted using several tools. The number one way to conduct assessments is through observation. We will have a notebook for each child that will be used for note taking on what the teacher observes in play and learning. The notebook is divided up by learning domains. The learning domains are Literacy, Math, Science, Social Studies, Fine Arts, Physical, and Social and Emotional Learning. These notes will then be taken and turned into a learning narrative. The learning narrative stories will be given to the parents in a binder so they can monitor progress as well. Narratives are given out on a monthly basis to parents. Developmental checklists are used as another tool for assessment. Creative Curriculum has their own checklists that we will use. We also may use ASQ-3 stages and ages assessment tools. All of these assessments help us track progress and identify areas of need early. Assessments are ongoing throughout the year. Assessments will be shared with parents at the two conferences held yearly. Parents may always request this information at any time.

Birthdays

If your child’s birthday is during the school year and you wish to celebrate it at school, please let me know the week before. There is a special way to celebrate birthdays. You are welcome to bring a special snack to share if you choose. Also, a picture from each year of your child’s life would help.

Holiday Celebrations

 We will have a Halloween celebration in October. Your child is free to dress in costume if he/she desires. We will also have a Valentine’s Day celebration in February. Your child is asked to bring a valentine for each child in the program.

Snow/Weather Policy

I will follow the Montgomery County School’s snow/weather policy for school closings. In addition:

* If MCPS opens two or more hours late, we will open two hours late.
* If MCPS is closed,we will be closed too.

-We are an all inclusive preschool that will not discriminate based on special needs. Please let me be aware of any IEP/IFSP plans that are currently on file or that may need to be written. Journey preschool will request current IEP/IFSP plans of children enrolled. We will work with all resources to make sure each child has their needs met.

Parent Handbook Agreement

I have read the Parent Handbook and agree to abide by its policies:

Signed:

Dated: