

# **Parent Handbook**

**2020-2021**

**About Our School**

School Colors: Red, Yellow, and Black

Office Hours: 7:30 AM – 4:00 PM

AM Session: 8:30 AM - 11:10 PM

PM Session: 12:25 PM - 3:05 PM

Phone: 720-652-7906

Fax: 720-652-6910

Website: http://sdpk.svvsd.org

Facebook: Spark Discovery Preschool of St Vrain

Twitter: @Sparkdps

Instagram: Spark! Discovery Preschool

Paige Gordon, Principal

**Table of Contents:**

Philosophy.………………………………...p. 2-3

Colorado Shines……………………………..p. 4

Quality Improvement Planning……………..p. 4

Annual survey………………………………..p. 4

Parent-Teacher Conferences………………p. 4

Parenting Classes………………………...…p. 4

Getting to Know Other Families……………p. 5

Opportunities to Benefit Children…………..p. 5

Continuity of Care……………………………p. 5

Transition Planning……………………...…..p. 6

Referral Processes…………………………..p. 7

Child Find at Spark…………………………..p. 7

Individualized Family Service Plans……….p. 7

Other Academic/Behavioral Assistance..…p. 8

Health Screenings…………………………...p. 8

Health…………………………………………p. 8

Snack Policy………………………………….p. 8

Community Resources…………………..….p. 8

Use of interpreters…………………….……..p. 9

Attendance……………………………………p. 9 Volunteers…………………………………….p. 9

Reports/Investigations - Social Services...p. 10

Lost Child Procedure…………………...….p. 11

**Because our school is solely based on early childhood, in addition to the SVVSD Preschool Handbook, we have a supplemental parent handbook specific to the needs of families at our location.**

**Mission** Statement: Spark! Discovery Preschool engages students in early learning experiences, in partnership with families and the community, that develop a strong foundation, enrich the whole child, and inspire lifelong learning.

**Vision Statement**

Our vision is to be an early childhood model of excellence which inspires and promotes…

…approaches to learning that invite exploration, play, and real-world learning.

…experiences which include integrated STEM approaches to problem solving throughout the learning environment.

…programming to meet the developmental needs of each unique child.

…social learning opportunities to develop self-control, confidence, cooperation, & appreciation of others.

…an engaged and connected community, families, and partners.

...a highly qualified staff who deliver quality instruction for all children.

**Our Staff Commitments**

**Our beliefs about approaches to learning that invite exploration, play, and real-world learning through:**

* the invitational use and rotation of materials.
* the use of problem-solving experiences and strategies.
* real world STEM connections and experiences to make learning meaningful and relevant.
* modeling adult enthusiasm for learning.

**Our beliefs about experiences which include integrated STEM approaches to problem solving through:**

* integration of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).
* a commitment to inquiry-based learning approaches.
* providing students with hands-on learning experiences and exploration.
* fostering a love of learning and a deeper understanding of self, community, and the world.

**Our beliefs about programming to meet the developmental needs of each unique child through:**

* our commitment to the education of the whole child.
* honoring student and family diversity.
* incorporating different learning styles to support all students.
* utilizing assessment data to differentiate instruction.
* offering universal and health screenings, as well as more in-depth assessments.
* specialized services to support students and families.

**Our beliefs about social learning opportunities through:**

* instruction which develops self-control, confidence, and cooperation.
* modeling, teaching, practicing, and reinforcing positive behaviors.
* providing positive, school wide behavior intervention and supports.
* fostering an environment for children to develop and maintain friendships, solve social problems, and appreciate diversity.

**Our beliefs about engaging and connecting families and community partners through:**

* providing learning activities for the home and in the community
* engaging families in ways that are truly reciprocal and mutually beneficial
* engaging families in two-way communication
* inviting families to participate in decision making and goal setting for their child
* inviting families to participate in school-level decisions and advocacy

**Our beliefs about highly qualified staff who deliver quality instruction who are committed to:**

* the school’s shared mission, vision, commitments, and align their work with school goals.
* continuous professional development opportunities.
* collaborating to develop methods for delivering research-based instruction, assessments, and applying content knowledge.
* creating learner-centered environments.
* developing plans for quality improvement in the classroom and school and embracing teacher leadership.
* purposeful use of new technologies and innovative approaches

**Colorado Shines**

Colorado Shines is a quality rating and improvement system (on a scaled of 1 to 5) used to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education programs. This system assigns a quality rating to licensed early care and education programs, similar to rating systems for other service-related industries like hotels and restaurants. Colorado Shines, Colorado’s quality rating and improvement system, is require for licensed childcare and preschool providers supporting children prior to entering kindergarten and helps early learning programs offer high-quality care and preschool. It supports and offers resources to preschools so they may support each child’s learning and development. Research shows this kind of assistance helps providers improve the quality of their programs, and when more young children are ready for school, we all benefit. Here are a few facts:

* At level 1, licensed childcare programs must meet Colorado’s licensing requirements for health and safety.
* Programs with higher ratings have strong classroom instruction, training for staff, and family engagement to support children’s success.
* Participants who are working on or who have been rated Level 2 are recognized as “Participating in Quality Improvement.” This is our current rating, as we started this process in January 2016.
* Childcare programs rated at Levels 3, 4, or 5 are recognized as having achieved “High Quality.”
* We will be reevaluated this school year and will be receiving a rating based on the following criteria:
	+ Workforce Qualifications and Professional Development
	+ Leadership, Management, and Administration
	+ Learning Environment
	+ Family Partnerships
	+ Child Health

**Quality Improvement Plan**

Each year the school engages in Quality Improvement processes in the following areas, and will be shared with parents:

* Workforce Qualifications and Professional Development:
* Leadership, Management, and Administration
* Learning Environments
* Family Partnerships
* Child Health

**Annual Survey**

Our school conducts an annual family survey, with a goal of more than 75% of surveys being completed, and the family surveys are used to inform the quality improvement plan. The school will pursue one or more changes made as a result of the annual family survey.

**Parent Education Sessions:**

The school offers annual educational information sessions on child development and learning aligned with the Early Learning and Development Guidelines. These dates, times, and topics are shared in Thursday/Friday folders.

**Parent-Teacher Conferences:**

The school offers parent-teacher conferences twice a year. We pursue 100% completion of both conferences, as it is vitally important for parents and teachers to partner together.

**Parenting Classes:**

The school offers a series of **FREE** parenting classes, offered by the school, which include family goal setting and action planning. These dates, times, and topics are shared in Thursday/Friday folders. Childcare and dinner are both provided for **FREE**, sponsored by the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO).

**Getting to Know Other Families:**

Along with our Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), we collaboratively host events such as:

* Summer playground meet-up sessions
* Ice Cream social
* Orientation
* Boo-Hoo Breakfasts
* Parenting classes
* Classes in child development
* Trick-or-Treat Street
* Winter celebration
* Valentine's Day celebration
* End of Year celebration
* Carnival

**Opportunities for All Families to Work Together to Benefit Children in our School:** Along with our Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), we collaboratively host events such as:

* PTO meetings
* Miner’s Day parade
* Class and individual pictures
* Fundraisers
* Book fair
* Read Across America Event
* Toy Drive
* Food Drive
* Spring campus clean up
* …and more!

**Continuity of Care:** Continuity of care is the practice of keeping a group of young children and their teaching team together over the duration of enrollment at a school. This best practice promotes the formation of trusting relationships, secure attachments, and long-lasting bonds between our staff, children, and their families. According to the Colorado Department of Education, “Continuity of care… is critical to enhancing relationships in early childhood settings. Teachers have more time to build relationships with children and their families, resulting in enhanced early learning experiences and better supports for the bond between parents and children. These early connections fuel important neurological processes that help children explore and learn to regulate their emotions, forming the roots of school readiness (CDE, 2012).”

Spark! Discovery Preschool provides an opportunity to preschool families for continuity of care. When enrolling efforts are made to keep children with the same preschool teacher throughout the course of multiple years of preschool. All preschool classes, except for Tues/Thurs AM, offer mixed age groups of 3-5-year-old children for the purpose of developing this continuity. During a child’s second year of preschool, the child can become a leader in the class -- academically and behaviorally. Also, as the child grows and develops over the course of years, the teaching staff in the classroom are better able to differentiate for their academic, social, and behavioral needs because they know the child so well. If parents request certain schedules, at times continuity of care can be disrupted, as teachers have varied schedules from 2, 3, and 4 half-day programs.

Along with providing each child with continuity of care in preschool, children enrolled in childcare are given a primary caregiver to increase bonding and family connections with a trusted adult while in our care at school. These are staff in which enrolled children and parents will most commonly interact.

**Transition Planning:** We support a variety of transition needs for preschoolers.

**Transitioning from the home setting to preschool**

Transition opportunities are held during the summer, with informal playground meet-ups in June - August for play at our school’s main playground. This gives preschoolers a chance to play with other children and have a positive experience at the school. Before school starts, in August, there is an ice cream social held in the cafeteria. This is an informal time for children to be in the school environment and have parents and staff members meet the children. Before school there are two Parent Orientation Days, with multiple sessions so families can meet in smaller groups. Parent Orientation provides information and handouts about the school and school policies, provides for a time for children to come to school and interact with their parent for a short time, gives parents a chance to ask questions or address concerns they may have.

There are families and preschoolers who transition after the school year has started. For families transitioning at this time, the teacher will offer the opportunity to meet, tour, and/or discuss the child and their needs prior to starting, when possible. The teacher will also share the orientation packet they have created, including school forms. They will also provide a copy of the school’s orientation power-point. Finally, school tours are held frequently for new parents throughout the school year during and after school hours.

For children with special needs, additional transition planning and opportunities are conducted with our Special Education Team. This team includes the parents of the transitioning child, the child’s teacher, any specialists, the School Special Education Facilitator, and staff from Child Find. This team will define goals, strategies, and an action plan for transitioning into the school setting.

Parent/Guardians are welcome to attend the classroom at any time. If you have questions or concerns about your child’s transition to preschool, please feel free to contact the teacher or administration at any time.

 **Transitioning from preschool class to preschool class**

In the event there is a change in placement from one preschool class to another preschool class, transition activities should include an opportunity for parents and the teacher to meet and/or discuss the child and their needs prior to starting. The teacher will also share the orientation packet and information they have created, with specifics about their classroom.

**Transitioning from preschool to kindergarten to local elementary schools**

Families of children who turn age 5 on or before October 1 of each year should enroll their children in kindergarten the following year. The four public elementary schools in our area include Centennial Elementary, Legacy Elementary, Prairie Ridge Elementary, and Thunder Valley K-8.

In October and February Parent/Teacher conferences, teachers will distribute information and discuss transitions with parents. School wide information about transitioning to kindergarten is sent home to all parents, in English and Spanish, in November as well. This same information is also posted on our website year-round. In November we host a kindergarten informational night at Spark, with each of the feeder schools being represented (Prairie Ridge, Thunder Valley, Centennial, and Legacy Elementary Schools) in early fall to initiate information about various programming and discussion about the process of transitioning. In the spring, each of these elementary schools also host events at their individual sites.

Families with children with special needs who are moving onto kindergarten are supported in several ways. Children in our Significant Support Needs class have individualized transition meetings to plan for a successful transition to kindergarten. Also, staff members from the new school have the opportunity to meet with our special education team to confidentially discuss all children transitioning to their schools. Staff members from the new schools may observe the child while still attending Spark! Discovery Preschool, if they feel it would be beneficial.

**Referral Processes:** If families would like to make a referral to a specialist, please discuss this with the School Special Education Facilitator. We host a Child Find satellite office at Spark! Discovery Preschool, to handle questions or concerns about child development, behavior, or mental health. If you have questions about your child’s health, you should call our health clerk. She will answer your questions or forward you to a SVVSD nurse.

**Child Find at Spark! Discovery Preschool:** For children ages birth to five (who are not attending a district preschool already), developmental screenings and evaluations are provided by a District Child Find Assessment Team at Spark! Discovery Preschool (555 8th St., Frederick). This Child Find Assessment Team may be comprised of School Psychologists, Speech and Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, a School Nurse, and Early Childhood Special Education Teachers. Autism and Culturally/Linguistically Diverse Specialists consult as needed.

**Birth through Three (Part C):Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP)**

The Spark! Discovery Preschool Child Find Assessment Team works collaboratively with Envision in Weld County and others to determine eligibility and assist in the development of Individualized Family Service Plans, IFSP’s, for children birth to 3-year-old children. Home-based services are provided for children who are eligible. Part C Gives rights to eligible infants and toddlers and their families from birth until the child’s third birthday; services are developed by a team and written into an IFSP. Services are delivered in a natural environment for the child and family. Please call the Child Find Office at (720-652-7906) to begin the process.

# **Preschoolers with Special Needs (Three through Five - Part B)**

# The Spark! Discovery Preschool Child Find Assessment Team completes screenings and evaluations. If the child is determined eligible for Special Education following an evaluation at Child Find, an Individualized Education Plan is developed. The eligible student is placed in a district preschool where Special Education services are provided in an integrated preschool setting. Please call the Child Find office at Spark! Discovery Preschool at 720-652-7906.

The District is required to provide Special Education to eligible children when a child reaches their 3rd birthday. The District must provide a Free Appropriate Public Education that meets the individualized needs of the child and sometimes this means attending an appropriate preschool outside of the attendance area. The District has a limited number of preschool programs therefore, the attendance/residency area program may be full when the child is identified for special education. In this case, another program would be recommended. To attend preschool, a child must be 3 years of age. There are 2, 3 or 4 half-day programs available. No charge to parents for eligible programs and services.

**Individual Learning Plans**: Senate Bill 08-212, Colorado’s Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K), passed in 2008. CAP4K included specific provisions for school readiness including a required assessment for all Preschool students and development of a school readiness plan beginning fall of 2013.

In response to these regulations, we utilize the state school readiness assessment, Teaching Strategies GOLD, to measure your child’s growth and development. This is an authentic, ongoing assessment used to determine your child’s growth in the following developmental and academic content areas: Cognitive, Language, Social/Emotional, Physical, Literacy, Math, Science, Social Studies, and The Arts. Information collected through the assessments provides teachers with targeted instruction opportunities for individual students and small groups of students, thereby strengthening the learning environment for students.

With a strong, early start preschoolers in SVVSD will be more likely to continually succeed in school. School Readiness supports teachers’ ability to create responsive learning environments that ensure academic and developmental growth for students. This includes promoting awareness of developmentally appropriate practices that support hands-on learning experiences and challenges students’ thinking.

This assessment information will inform your child’s school readiness plan and will be shared with you throughout the school year. Your child’s teacher will provide each parent with a copy of your child’s School Readiness Plan, which also meets the requirements for the Individualized Learning Plan (ILP). Review the plan and include any additional strengths and goals to support your child’s learning. It is required that you sign and return one copy for our records.

**Other Plans for Academic or Behavioral Assistance**: A Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a systemic, continuous improvement framework in which data-based problem-solving and decision making is practiced across all levels of the educational system for supporting students. A Multi-Tiered System of Supports helps our school to organize resources through alignment of academic standards and behavioral expectations, implemented with fidelity and sustained over time, in order to accelerate the performance of every student to achieve and/or exceed proficiency.

**Health Screenings:** The school provides annual hearing and vision screenings for 3 and 4-year-old children to make sure these are issues not impacting a child’s learning. If you want your child excluded from this screening families must contact your preschool teacher.

Our school also partners with the Longmont Sunshine Club to provide a free dental screenings. The Sunshine Club, Longmont’s longest-running philanthropic organization, has hosted dental clinics in St. Vrain Valley Schools for elementary students since the 1950s. This screening is meant for preschoolers without dental insurance or who are on Medicaid, who have not seen a dentist. To take advantage of this screening, families must opt-in, using the form, which will come in your Thursday/Friday folder.

**Health Appraisal Form:** A “Health Appraisal Form” from a doctor stating that your child is healthy enough to attend preschool is due 30 days after the start of school. We do not want obtaining this to prevent a child from attending preschool. If a family without access to health care is struggling to complete the required Health Appraisal, call the school’s health clerk who can coordinate a nurse practitioner to conduct a general checkup, with the parent present, at school in the health office.

**Snack Policy**

**Daily Snacks:** Our district will provide healthy nutritious snacks daily for preschool students. Please inform your teacher of any specific dietary needs of your student. The district requires the completion of the Free and Reduced Lunch application regardless of income. The application will be provided by your teacher.

**BIRTHDAY treats**: Because we must follow USDA guidelines for what is served for snacks, if a child is celebrating a birthday the family could either:

* Bring in a healthy snack (i.e. it doesn’t have Trans-fats, high sugar content, etc.). This means no cookies, cupcakes, cake, etc. Even a healthy snack cannot be homemade due to regulations. Consult with your child’s teacher for snack ideas, as there are often nutrition restrictions in the classroom.
* Bring a party favor – some small trinket that can’t be swallowed by young children (pencil, small bottle of bubbles) that families might find at the dollar store.

**Community Resources:** We also have information to connect families with local agencies regarding mental health, child nutrition, physical fitness, food bank, child find, medical and dental resources, in three locations:

1) In a notebook in the front office,

2) In our parent flyer stand at the front entrance

3) On our school website at <http://sdpk.svvsd.org/community-resources>.

4) The black table at the front of the school also has activity packets for parents to take in English and Spanish (when possible)

**Use of Interpreters for Families Speaking a language other than English**

Spark! Discovery Preschool takes reasonable steps to ensure families with limited English proficiency have meaningful access and an equal opportunity to participate in their child’s education, activities, and programs. Our district uses district-approved language translation services for translation of written communications, such as newsletters, Individual Education Plans, and so on.

Interpreters at Spark! Discovery Preschool will provide support for parents who may need this. An interpreter is available daily in our school’s front office. Additional interpreters are available for:

* Ice Cream Social
* Child Development parent classes (when requested)
* Parenting classes (when requested)
* Special Education meetings
* Child-Find Meetings
* Parent-Teacher Conferences

**Attendance:** We strive for a 96% attendance rate each day. Consistent daily attendance is expected of your student to achieve optimal educational benefits of the early childhood learning experience. Missing school sets students back in their learning, and children learn best with consistency. Parents are expected to make all efforts to have their students at school each day with the exception of illness or a family emergency. Attendance is tracked and monitored for student’s continuation in the school.

**Volunteers:** The purpose of the volunteer program shall be to:

1. Assist employees in providing more individualization and enrichment of instruction.

2. Build an understanding of school programs among interested citizens, thus stimulating widespread involvement in a total education process.

3. Strengthen school/community relations through positive participation.

A volunteer is a person who works on an occasional or regular basis at school sites or other educational facilities to support the efforts of professional personnel. Such a volunteer worker shall serve in that capacity normally without compensation. Through the Colorado School Districts Self-Insurance Pool (CSDSIP), the District shall provide limited liability insurance coverage for all volunteers acting within the scope of voluntary duties under the direction of the school principal.

Volunteers shall be under the general supervision of a licensed staff member. The responsible school personnel shall identify appropriate tasks for volunteers and may plan in-service activities for them so they may become skilled in performing those tasks. Volunteers shall not teach but may reinforce skills taught by the professional staff. Tasks may involve services in the library, classroom, athletics, music, school play, pre-kindergarten programs or assisting on field trips and similar activities.

An effort shall be made to use the services of all volunteers, but the decision to use a volunteer shall rest with the principal and classroom teacher or staff member with whom the volunteer would be working.

Volunteers may offer their services to a building or department or they may be recruited by a school principal or designee. In either case all volunteers must have a written application, including emergency contact information, on file at the building where services shall be performed before they begin volunteering. They must also attend mandatory volunteer training, be oriented prior to beginning volunteer tasks.

From time to time complaints and/or grievances may arise in the course of a volunteer performing designated duties. The Board believes that such matters are best handled and resolved as close to their origin as possible. Therefore, the proper channeling of complaints shall be: 1) Teacher, 2) Principal/supervisor, 3) Appropriate director or assistant superintendent, 4) Superintendent, and 5) Board of Education.

**Reports and Investigations by Social Services**

It is the policy of the St. Vrain Valley School Board that the District complies with the Colorado Children’s Code. To that end, any school official or employee who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect or who has observed the child being subjected to circumstances or conditions which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, as defined by statute, shall immediately report or cause a report to be made to the appropriate county department of social services or local law enforcement agency.

School employees and officials shall not contact the child's family or any other persons to determine the cause of the suspected abuse or neglect. It is not the responsibility of the school official or employee to prove that the child has been abused or neglected.

Failure to report promptly may result in civil and/or criminal liability. A person who reports child abuse or neglect in good faith is immune from civil or criminal liability. Reports of child abuse or neglect, the name and address of the child, family or informant or any other identifying information in the report shall be confidential and shall not be public information.

After the report is made to the agency, District and school staff members will cooperate with social services and law enforcement in the investigation of alleged abuse or neglect. The school will report any further incidents of abuse to the agency's representative.

As the case is being investigated, the school will provide support services for the child. Once a report of child abuse is given to the agency, the responsibility for investigation and follow-up lies with the agency. It is not the responsibility of the school staff to investigate the case.

Authorized school and District personnel may make available to agency personnel assigned to investigate instances of child abuse the health or other records of a student for such investigative purposes.

In an emergency situation requiring retention of the child at the school building due to fear that if released the child’s health or welfare might be in danger, it should be observed that only law enforcement officials have the legal authority to hold a child at school. Otherwise, a court order must be obtained to legally withhold a child from their parent/guardian.

Spark! Discovery Preschool staff members are trained annually on signs of child abuse in accordance with School Board Policy and Licensing regulations.

**Missing Child Procedures:** Children are actively supervised during preschool. Staff members are trained to be aware of children at all times. During transitions, staff routinely count children and check attendance. However, in the unlikely event a child is missing, the following emergency plan is put into effect:

* Staff shall notify the principal and office staff.
* A thorough search of the school’s interior and exterior is conducted.
* The Frederick Police Department will be contacted.
* The child’s parent/guardian will be notified.
* Once the situation is resolved an internal investigation will be conducted.
* The school will submit a written report to Department of Human Services regarding any child who has been lost from the school and for whom the local authorities were contacted.