

Pre-K Parent Handbook

- A. Welcome!
- B. Parent & Teacher Communication
- C. Independence
- D. Academics
- E. Health, Safety, & Nutrition
- F. What to Bring



Please see our ISW Parent Handbook for all general information, policies and procedures

A. Welcome to the Pre-K Room

We are very excited to be given the opportunity to be a part of you and your child's life. Within this classroom we will have children ranging from the age of almost 4 to 5 years old. As pre-k children, the classroom will be full of opportunities for exploration and growth. Each child is an individual and will have their own unique learning style. We will strive to provide the greatest learning environment. We will do this by, providing opportunities that promote their skills in language, reading, writing, science, motor development, art, math, social studies, social/emotional skills, and appropriate behaviors.

Teacher Bio's

Adaska Turner: Lead Teacher- Hello, My name is Mrs. Adaska. I've been with Its a Small World for Ten amazing years! I've had the privilege of working with many exceptional children & have become close with many families. Teaching young children & watching them grow into their own person has been most rewarding! I received my certification from Thompsons in Early Childhood Development & look to further my education. The thing I love the most about working with children is when get to witness a child develop true understanding. In 2015 I took a small break from Its a Small World to have a daughter of my own and shortly after I knew that I wanted to return to I.S.W. and bring along my new addition! My hobbies include kayaking, football, building things and exploring nature with my daughter. I am a proud native American from the Ojibwa tribe.

Nuri Flowers: Assistant Teacher- Hola! Bonjour! Marhaba! Konichiwa! My name is Mr. Nuri Flowers. I am an Assistant Teacher for Pre-K group for ISW. I was born at the U of M Children's Hospital in Ann Arbor, and raised in Ypsilanti Township. I currently live in Romulus with my beautiful wife of 4 years, Tamra Pearline Flowers! I graduated from Lincoln High School in Ypsilanti in 2009, and went on to college to Central State University in Wilberforce, OH, where I received a bachelor's degree in Communications on my birthday, May 4th 2013! I am the 4th child of seven, I am left-handed and carry a 2nd degree black belt in Tae-Kwon Do. I can speak Spanish sub-fluently, and I also know some French and I am currently learning to speak Japanese as well! Favorite hobbies include bike riding, spending time with family, youth ministry, working out at the gym, reading books, writing poetry and occasionally playing board

games, card games and video games, whenever I'm in the mood. FYI, I am an avid spades player and I love to play cards.

B. Parent & Teacher Communication

Family communication/ Parent Board/ Kaymbu:

We believe that a strong parent-teacher partnership is important in helping in your child's success here at ISW. We primarily use email and brightwheel as our means of communication. In brightwheel we can receive messages and track attendance. We also use Highscope COR Advantage to record anecdotal notes that are shared with families at our parent teacher conferences. Kaymbu, which is the parent app tied to COR Advantage High Scope, allows parents to receive pictures and videos in real time of what their children are doing in the classroom.

Here are some of the other ways we will also communicate information to you:

- Papers in child's mailbox
- Easel in hallway
- The Parent Board will have important information and a weekly lesson plan
- Each month a parent newsletter to email and on the parent board
- Parents are encouraged to contact us whenever questions or concerns arise. We have an open classroom policy and you are welcome to visit at any time.

Labeling:

Please label your child's things! It is so important that everything is labeled that you send to the center. We want to make sure all of your child's belongings are returned to you and having your items labeled is the best way to ensure this. You could label with a permanent marker or stickers (Mabel's Labels, Stuck on You, or Inchbug) are great options to label your child's items. When labeling please think about bedding, water bottles, shoes, slippers, extra clothes, winter apparel, and any bags that will be brought to school

Cubbies/ Mailbox:

Each child will have their own cubby, hook, and mailbox in the classroom. Please use the ISW provided tote bag to keep all your child's belongings in. If you misplace your bag or would like a new one, please contact the office to purchase a bag. This is also a great place to store extra clothes, bedding, coats. The children will also have a mailbox for art projects and papers.

C. Independence and Self-Help

As the children grow older, we expect more of them in terms of independence and self-help, which they thrive on. The pre-k children will work on cleaning up after themselves and putting things where they belong. During snack time, there will be a snack station available for the children to serve themselves their own eating utensils and drinks. During lunch time, they get

their own lunch bag, pick out a seat, and unpack their lunch. After eating lunch, they pack up their containers and put their lunch bag away. They also get their own bedding and practice putting their bedding items on their cot at rest time. In addition, we encourage the children to put on their own shoes and socks, pull up their own pants and underwear in the bathroom, and wipe their own noses and faces. Of course, we are always there to help them help them if needed.

Bathroom Time:

We also continue to work with the children on toilet independence, if needed. We encourage you to communicate any preferred methods with us in order to provide the consistency needed for your child to succeed in this area. We work together as a team to help your child succeed in toilet training. Our goal is to have your child be able to independently use the restroom. This means your child will be able to dress/undress themselves, wipe, flush the toilet and wash their hands independently. Multiple times a day, as a group we go to the bathrooms. Many children may insist that they do not need to go to the bathroom. We try and explain to the children that our bodies at times trick us and that we might have to go and we don't even know it. At that point, we ask them to at least try and if they don't have to go, then they may go wash their hands.

Messy Reminder:

While at school, the children will engage in many different hands on activities. Sometimes the children end up with more of the materials on them than on the paper. Please keep this in mind when dressing your child. Children need to explore and have fun, both indoors and outside. We want the children to feel free to explore with a variety of materials and have fun being messy.

Snack Time:

To promote independence and self-help, the children will be serving themselves their snack. We will be having snack set out with the proper utensils for the children and for them to pour their own water.

D. Academics

Circle Time, Small Groups, Story, Music and Movement:

On a daily basis we will have the above stated group times. We will be doing one in the morning, before lunch, and one in the afternoon. Circle Time will consist of a discussion about the color, shape, letter, and theme of the week. Small group will be a time for the children to talk with us about something to do with the theme. Story time will provide a time to read a book about that week's theme. Music and Movement give the children a wonderful opportunity to move their body and learn new songs. We also will be doing show in tell every Thursday and Friday. Each show and tell item should go with the theme of the week.

How Young Children Learn

Young children learn by doing. The work of Piaget (1950, 1972), Montessori (1964) and other child development theorists and researchers has demonstrated that learning is a complex process that results from the interaction of the children's own thinking and their experiences in the external world. Knowledge is not something that is given to children as though they were empty vessels to be filled. Children acquire knowledge about the physical and social worlds in which they live through playful interaction with materials and people. Children do not need to be forced to learn; they are motivated by their own desire to make sense of their work

How to teach young children

By preparing the environment so that it provides stimulating, challenging materials and activities for the children. Teachers closely observe to see what children understand and place additional challenges to encourage further thinking. It is possible to drill children until they can correctly recite pieces of information such as alphabet or numbers 1 to 20. However, children's responses to rote tasks do not reflect real understanding of the information. For children to understand fully and remember what they have learned; the information must be meaningful to the child in context to the child's learning experience and development. The important task for the teacher is stimulating motivation in children. Observation is a big part of assessing each child's individual needs.

Our goal this school year is to give each of your children a positive learning experience. How? By preparing the environment for the children to learn through active exploration; interaction with other children, the teacher and materials. Interactions and activities are designed to develop the children's self-esteem and positive feeling towards learning. Children choose their own activities and manipulate the work based on their interest. When needed, we will redirect a child if they are not able to choose on their own. We add new materials and have the expectation of children to handle materials in a respectful manner.

A day in the Pre-K room will provide opportunities for choice time, teacher driven lessons, circle time, snack and lunch time, outdoor play, rest time, and field trips. Within the classroom there will be different areas for learning. These will include reading nook/relaxation nook, block area, dramatic play, art station, sensory table, small motor manipulation, and writing table.

Areas of Curriculum and Development

It's A Small World's philosophy of learning is based upon the child learning through a curriculum rooted in an understanding of their play and development abilities, with a focus on the process of learning rather than the product. Lessons will be based on several different developmental areas that will be implemented throughout the day.

Language Arts and Reading:

Listening to and reading stories and poems, dictating stories, seeing classroom charts, and other print in use; talking informally with other children, experimenting with writing by drawing, copying, and inventing their own spelling.

Introduction of upper and lower case letters, vowels and sounds. Journal writing, drawing, and signing in at the beginning of the day.

Music:

Listen and participate during songs, rhythm instruments and movement to music

Science:

Five Senses	Living/Non-living
Body Parts/Dental	Field Trips
Healthy Food Choices/Cooking	Four Seasons
Observing Weather Changes	Collecting Nature

Motor Development:

Outdoor play in back and front play areas, parks and walks.

Exercise movement during group activities, object manipulation, and small and large motor activities.

Art:

Opportunities to explore and manipulate art materials. Child directed and teacher directed activities will be provided daily

Math:

Games, reading numerals 1-20, comparing lengths, measuring, counting 0-100, counting backwards 10-1, money, graphs, patterns, sorting, and grouping.

Social Studies:

Looking at the world and where we live?

Social/Emotional Skills:

The children are provided many opportunities to develop social skills (cooperating, helping, negotiating and talking to another child to solve interpersonal problems). What is an appropriate choice? What is an inappropriate choice? Helping children understand the difference is our goal. Talking and teaching about emotions through experiences.

Plan Do, and Recall: In the plan-do recall process, children make plans, carry them out, and

reflect on what they have done. In doing so, children learn to take initiative, solve problems, work with others, and accomplish their goals — their play becomes more purposeful and focused.

Outdoor Play:

The children will play outdoors every day, twice a day, weather permitting. Outdoor play gives children fresh air, nature to explore and room to move. We play outside in all seasons, so please be sure to send weather appropriate clothing, including sun hats and sunblock in the summer, if needed. We are required to stay inside when the wind chill is below 28 degrees Fahrenheit or the heat index is above 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

Behavior Guidance:

Our job is to help your child recognize their emotions and help them work through social interactions with other children and adults. Because at this age the children are still learning, it is most appropriate that our primary form of discipline is redirection and talking through their emotions. (e.g. If a child throws a block, we would talk about the things they can do with blocks and remind them of the things they can throw.). If there is a conflict between two children, our goal is to help your child communicate and work through the problem. We will talk about feelings and using our words with each other. In the beginning we will be feeding the children the words to use, e.g. "I don't like it when you hit me" or "Please give that toy back". If certain situations keep occurring, we then have a resting spot for your child to take space to think and calm their body down. A teacher will talk with your child about what happened and what they could do differently next time. In a last case scenario, our option would be having your child go to the office and talk with Ms. Danielle. Sometimes having a change of scenery helps a child calm down and gives them a chance to talk through what happened in a quiet and more private area. Our goal is to help your child have a fun and successful day at school!

E. Nutrition, Health, and Safety

Lunch Time:

Children are to bring a labeled lunch box with the child's first and last name a date. We recommend a lunch tag that can have a washable marker used on it to write the date every day. Please send an ice pack to handle food that you want to keep cold. We keep our lunches in a large plastic bin. When sending containers, please make sure they are ones that your child can work towards opening all by themselves. All containers should be labeled. **If you have glass containers, please be sure to send sturdy cookware; Pyrex etc.** The children will be responsible for getting their own lunch boxes, pulling out their lunch items, asking us to warm items up that they want warmed, and cleaning up after they are done eating. When it comes to your children choosing which items to eat in their lunch, please reference our food philosophy:

It's a Small World encourages a healthy relationship with the food we serve young children. We feel that empowering children with choices at mealtimes helps encourage a healthy attitude towards food. The items you pack your children for lunch are pertinent in providing the nutrition their bodies need to grow and the stamina to make it through a busy day! It is our philosophy to serve children well balanced snacks and meals and encourage parents to do

the same. Because we empower children to make choices during meals and snack times, we want them to have the opportunity to make the best choices possible. This is when help from parents is key! Please keep in mind when packing your child's lunch that they will be free to choose what they want to eat. This may mean limiting the amount of sweet treats and items of little nutritional value. If the contents of your child's lunch box are well balanced and high in nutritive value, they will begin to learn to make healthy choices on their own!

Also, please remember to provide food exactly the way you expect it to be served. For example, please cut foods that could pose a choking hazard into small bite sized pieces prior to sending it to school. According to the New York Department of Health, choking is the fourth leading cause of accidental death in children under 5. There is great information out there on which foods to avoid or how to serve them differently to prevent choking. Your child's caregiver should also be able to simply heat (if necessary) and serve the food as it is. This makes assisting and supervising young children at lunch much easier!

Because we also want you to be aware of how much your child ate during lunch each day we will be sending home any portions your child has not eaten with a sticker on the package marking that it has been eaten from. We are not able to serve these items at a later point during the day, but rather than discard the food we feel sending it home allows parents to see how well their child ate during the day. The stickers help to ensure your child's caregivers don't mistakenly serve food that was previously given earlier that day. It is safe to assume that if there is no sticker on a package or container your child never chose to eat that item that day.

When it comes to allergies, dietary restrictions and food preferences we want to support all families in their nutritional needs and choices. Please reference our policy on allergies and dietary restrictions for additional information on how we help accommodate these unique situations.

ISW recognizes that parents and adults play a key role in shaping habits and lifestyles for young children and nutrition is certainly a vital one. We know that children of course prefer things that are processed and have large amounts of sugar. We also know that these foods do not fuel their bodies for the demands that their highly energetic and constantly developing physical and mental selves demand.

Those of us that spend our careers working with children every day can unanimously attest that children with behavioral challenges are often those that do not have the healthiest eating habits. Our goals are for each child to have success while growing to their potential in their environment

Rest Time:

After gross motor time, all the children will have the chance to use the restroom and then will be asked to get out their bedding for rest time. At 2:00pm the children who are awake will be able to do quiet tabletop activities for remaining part of rest time. At the end of each week their bedding should go home and be laundered.

Medication:

For all medication brought to ISW, including sunscreen and other topical creams, a medical form must be filled out and on file with us. Please notify us any changes need to be made for medication given or time. Parents will be asked to complete this form again to update changes.

F. What To Bring!

- Extra clothing
- Lunch box, containers, and cooler pack (if needed)
- Water bottle
- Blanket and (optional) Loose fitted crib sheet 24x48 for sleeping mat
- Optional- Small stuffed animal
- Reusable bag or backpack for transporting and storing bedding
- Family Picture for classroom