

Ritenour School for Early Childhood Education



Family and Staff Handbook 2022-2023



3580 Woodson Rd.
St. Louis, MO 63114
(314) 493-6240

School Information

Ritenour School for Early Childhood Education (SECE)

3580 Woodson Road
St. Louis, MO 63114
(314) 493-6240
Fax: (314) 429-3688

Principal

Dr. Jennifer Singleton

Secretary

Pam Doll

School Arrival and Dismissal Times

Full Day: 8 a.m. -4 p.m.

Students in full-day programs are considered tardy after 8:30 a.m. and are marked as absent for the remainder of the day if picked up before 3:30 p.m. Students need to be signed in at the office if arriving after 8:30 a.m. or leaving before 3:30 p.m.

Students in Full-Day programs have the option to participate in before- or after-care.

Before-Care: 6 - 8 a.m.

After-Care: 4 - 6 p.m.

Half Day a.m.: 8:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Half Day p.m.: 12:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Office Hours

8 a.m.-4 p.m. (Monday-Friday)

A lock box to turn items into the school is located outside the school entrance for your convenience.

Student Expectations

Parents, we want you to be aware of the rules and language we use for student expectations. We would like to partner with families to help us reinforce our guidelines.

	Be Safe	Be Kind	Be Responsible
Hallway	Use walking feet.	Use a quiet voice.	Keep hands and feet to yourself.
Playground	Empty hands	Take turns. Let everyone play.	Follow playground rules.
Gross Motor	Safe bodies	Take turns. Let everyone play.	Follow station rules.
Lunch	Use walking feet; Stay seated.	Use table manners.	Follow teacher requests.
All Setting/ Classroom	Keep hands and feet to yourself.	Use a quiet voice. Use nice words.	Use good listening ears.

Parent Expectations

	Be Safe	Be Kind	Be Responsible
Parking Lot	Hold hands. Use walking feet; age appropriate car seating	Drive slowly. Follow arrows.	Stay together. Park in designated spots.
Hallway	Use walking feet; stay with your child.	Use appropriate language. Use appropriate volume/voice.	Remind students to keep hands and feet to themselves.
Classroom	Sign In/ Sign Out. Have ID available.	No cell phones. Respect teacher time.	Be on time. Read posted information. Keep updated phone numbers/pick up info on file. Allow your child independence by having them hang up their belongings
All Setting	Stay with your child. Be Attentive.	Interact with your child on their level. Use appropriate language.	Be a positive role model.
Home	Read notes. Keep backpack in special place. Wear appropriate clothing/shoes. Bring required items(nap, lunch, backpack, etc.)	Use a quiet voice. Use nice words.	Use good listening ears.

Vision

The Ritenour School for Early Childhood Education, together with families and the community, provides a safe, supportive environment in which young children are empowered to become productive citizens and life-long learners.

Mission

We are committed to promoting the growth and development of the whole child by nurturing and encouraging natural curiosity and positive self-awareness by developing the communication, academic, motor and social skills necessary to achieve life-long goals.

We believe that we need to:

- Know students as capable unique learners
- Respond to social and cultural contexts in which students live
- Ensure equal access to learning by meeting students where they are and enabling them to reach challenging goals
- Engage policymakers in understanding the importance of early childhood education
- View early childhood education as the shared responsibility of the school, family and community
- Give cognitive, social and emotional learning equal weight
- Provide collaborative structures that facilitate understanding different perspectives, creativity and shared decision-making

Tuition

Resident Families	
Full-Day Tuition 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.	<i>No Cost</i>
Morning Half-Day Tuition 8:30 - 11:30 a.m.	<i>No Cost</i>
Afternoon Half-Day Tuition 12:30 – 3:30 p.m.	<i>No Cost</i>
Before- and After-Care Tuition	<i>\$56/per week</i>
Morning Care OR After-Care Tuition	<i>\$41/per week</i>

Non-Resident Families	
Full-Day Tuition 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.	<i>\$175/per week</i>
Morning Half-Day Tuition 8:30 - 11:30 a.m.	<i>\$93/per week</i>
Afternoon Half-Day Tuition 12:30 – 3:30 p.m.	<i>\$93/per week</i>
Before- and After-Care Tuition	<i>\$74/per week</i>
Morning Care OR After-Care Tuition	<i>\$58/per week</i>

Non-Resident Tuition Procedures

- Tuition statements are issued weekly and are sent home with your child.
- Tuition payments are to be paid one week in advance.
- Regular delinquent tuition payments will be assessed a \$25 late fee after the first week, with an additional fee of \$1 per day until all payments are paid in full.
- Tuition payments that are two weeks late will result in a warning letter and may result in your child being excluded from the program until fees are paid.
- Regular weekly tuition payments are to be paid each week (Monday through Friday). You can put a check with the student's name on it in our lock box at any time. You may also call and pay by credit card over the phone between the hours of **10 to 11 a.m.** or **2-3 p.m.** If these hours do not work, please use the online payment option for a small fee and use these directions:
 - Check out as a guest.
 - Go to this link:
<https://www.myschoolbucks.com/ver2/stores/getstoremain?clientKey=ZZGUQXLGSD09ZLQ>

Please be sure to enter your child's name so we know which student tuition the payment goes toward. If you are viewing it on your phone you may need to scroll all the way to the bottom or minimize the screen with your fingers to follow the steps and make a payment.

- **Tuition payments can be made by:**
 - Check (If any time a check is returned for insufficient funds, you will not be allowed to write checks for tuition in the future.)
 - Money Order
 - Cashier's Check
 - Master Card, Visa or Discover credit cards
- There is no free vacation week.
- If your child is out sick for a few days, you are still required to pay tuition for those days.
- Families receiving assistance from the Division of Family Services (DFS) must bring a letter stating your sliding fee. (Please note that DFS does not pay 100 percent on any program. Funding is based on your sliding fee and the program where your child is registered. The difference is the responsibility of the parent.)
- Families planning to use other forms of tuition assistance (foster care, adoptive child, college/university child care assistance or a pre-approved school grant) must contact the SEC office in advance of the first day of attendance. Please refer all tuition questions to Pam Doll, SEC secretary at (314) 493-6240.

Curriculum Philosophy

The Ritenour School for Early Childhood Education is nationally accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). We are committed to meeting the highest standards in early childhood education. The program is designed to help children grow socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually through developmentally appropriate activities in preparation for kindergarten.

We believe children are capable and unique learners who each deserve equal access to a high quality early childhood education. Early childhood education is the responsibility of the school, family and community and we are passionate advocates for children and families. Learning is a developmental process that happens as children make sense of their environments and lives.

At the Ritenour School for Early Childhood Education, the growth and development of the children we serve is at the forefront of everything we do. We view our classrooms as mini-societies, diverse communities of learners engaged in hands-on activities, meaningful discussion, and reflection. All of our teachers are college graduates and certified to teach early childhood education. Our educators understand child development and guide young students through enriching activities and discussions that help them learn and grow. We believe learning happens through communication, collaboration and reflection with peers and teachers.

Our teaching practices are based on evidence and research, meaningful and relevant content related to state preschool standards, objectives and goals, collaboration with families, and a social approach that honors the cultures and languages of the families we serve. We are influenced by a Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education. These elements are all approached within the context of play-based learning and embedded within functional routines.

Play-based learning can often involve “messy” play and we encourage our students to dress appropriately for indoor and outdoor play that can include a multitude of experiences (mud, paint, clay, snow, etc.).

Project Construct

Project Construct, a state-approved curriculum, is an approach to learning rooted in the belief that children learn through physical and social play and interaction with the environment. Learning is inquiry based, guided by student interest, and developed

through skilled questioning.

Our teachers guide children to build relationships of mutual trust and respect; consider the perspective of others; be curious, confident and creative; use language for a variety of reasons; know personal information; negotiate and apply rules; represent ideas and feelings through pretend play, movement, music, art and construction; develop motor skills; and develop healthy living practices.

Our curriculum emphasizes early reading skills, math readiness, social skills and artistic expression. We emphasize hands-on learning to encourage exploration and problem solving. Children experience learning by interacting in groups of peers and through individual instruction. Teachers provide opportunities for purposeful play; they encourage children to ask questions and experiment and plan activities to nurture budding critical-thinking skills.

Some of the curriculum resources utilized by our teachers include Animated Literacy by Stone, Phonemic Awareness by Heggerty, Already Ready: Nurturing Writers by Ray and Glover, and Preschool Math by Williams.

Daily Activities

Classroom routines may vary based on scheduling needs, but the following components are part of every child's daily schedule and routine:

- Quiet and active times
- Free choice play opportunities
- Planned group activities
- Total of one hour of outdoor play
- Developmentally appropriate play activities
- Regular snack and meal times
- Supervised nap times
- Toileting and handwashing times

Important School Information

Attendance

If your child is not going to be in school, please call the attendance line. Call (314) 493-6240 and speak to the school secretary or leave a message that your child will be out.

School Snack/Breakfast/Lunch/Treats

- Nutritious snacks will be provided to full and half-day students.
- Full-day students will be provided a nutritious breakfast and lunch.
- Please inform your child's teacher and the administration if your child has any food allergies.
- No outside food is allowed due to possible food allergies.
- Special diets or special restrictions require a doctor's order.
- Religious restrictions will need to be discussed with the principal.

School safety expectations

- Sign your child in and out.
- Use walking feet in the hallways.
- Use "inside" voices.
- Arrive at school on time (your child could miss a meaningful learning activity if they are late).
- Always make sure that anyone picking up your child has a valid ID.
- Classroom doors will remain locked during school hours.
- Do not leave doors propped open.

Safety

The safety of our students is a priority in every Ritenour school. For this reason, we conduct regular drills that allow staff and students to prepare for emergencies such as: fire, tornado, earthquakes or intruders. During these drills, you may not be able to enter the building at the time you arrive or you may be asked to participate in the drills if you are already in the building.

If we are made aware that a potential danger is in the area, we may go on lockdown. Lock down means that no one can enter or leave the building until we know that the area is safe. During these times, there will be a sign on the main entrance door or you may receive an alert call or text message. You should wait in your car or return home until you are notified.

Dress Code

Ritenour students are expected to come to school and any school activity dressed in clothes appropriate for the weather and according to district policies. Please remember Early Childhood students may get messy learning through experience and play.

Early Childhood parents must ensure that early childhood students are dressed in clothing and shoes that will not impair their learning, safety and welfare.

Here are the suggested clothing and shoes for young children attending school:

- Closed-toe sandals and shoes
- Child friendly slogans and characters on T-shirts
- Dresses, skirts, and shorts that cover the child's undergarments
- During cool and colder weather, jackets, coats, hats and gloves are necessary for outdoor play.

For example, these types of clothing and shoes may cause learning and safety risks during school:

- Flip flops
- Open-toed sandals
- Shoes without shoe strings
- Dresses and skirts without shorts or leggings underneath
- Over-sized jewelry or small jewelry that may cause a choking hazard for small young children.
- T-shirts that have inappropriate or offensive slogans and pictures.

These types of clothing can cause safety issues and distractions while learning. The School for Early Childhood Education is licensed through the state of Missouri; we are required to have outdoor play during colder temperature days. All Early Childhood students must be dressed appropriately for those days.

We do not go outside if the heat index is above 100 degrees or below 10 degrees with windchill.

Licensing Rules for Outside Play	
<u>Temperature</u> (factoring in heat index and windchill)	<u>Time Outside</u>
Above 100 degrees	Stay inside for gross motor play
90-100 degrees	5-10 minutes
32-90 degrees	Outside play without restrictions
20-32 degrees	10-15 minutes

Health of Children

Medication at school

Parents are strongly encouraged to give medication to children at home if at all possible. However, if medication is required during school hours, the office **MUST** have the medication authorization form filled out by the parent. All medication must be in the original prescription bottle, properly labeled by a registered pharmacist as prescribed by law.

Long-term medication (Longer than 5 consecutive school days) may be given by Ritenour School District personnel provided that the prescribing physician completes the district medication permission request form.

Over the counter medication can be administered if the school is provided a medication authorization form. Medication must be delivered to and from school by the parent. Medications are stored in the office.

Immunizations:

Missouri laws require all children to have up to date immunizations prior to the first day of school. Students enrolling in the School for Early Childhood Education must be in the process of being immunized to meet the requirements* outlined by the St. Louis County Health Department. Proof of immunizations or reason why a child may not receive immunizations is required under the Rules and Regulations of the Department of Health and Welfare.

Illness:

Children should not come to school if they have any of the following:

- 100 degree or higher fever in the previous 24 hours
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Chronic cough
- Swollen glands
- Unidentified skin rashes
- Strep throat
- Conjunctivitis – an eye infection commonly called “Pink Eye”
- Impetigo – a rash that looks like pimples
- Severe cold with fever, sneezing and nose drainage
- Contagious diseases – measles, chicken pox, mumps, roseola

If a child becomes ill or is injured during school hours, the child is seen by staff members trained in first aid and CPR. If a child is too ill to remain at school, parents are contacted immediately for the student to be picked up. In the event a parent cannot be reached the office will use emergency contact information to pick up the student. **Please make sure your contact information is updated regularly in case of illness or another emergency when the school needs to contact you.**

Hand Washing

Hands should be washed or sanitized using provided sanitizer before eating, after eating, before and after group activities. Proper hand hygiene information should be shared with students of all ages.

Additional hand sanitizer stations have been installed in the buildings and portable stations are available in general areas, with a focus on areas where students pass upon return from recess.

Behavior Expectations



PBIS School Pledge

I am safe, kind and responsible!
I keep my hands and feet to myself.
I use a quiet voice and good listening ears.
I am a High 5 Superstar!



High 5!

Be Safe, Be Kind, Be Responsible

this means...

- Keep hands and feet to myself
- Use a quiet voice
- Use good listening ears

How can families get involved?

Your support, feedback, and involvement is a critical part of your child's success and a valued part of our school community. Here is a list of ways you can be involved and help your child (ren) do their absolute best at school each day!

- Check email at least twice daily to ensure you are talking with your child(ren) about the learning going on in his class and so that you know important dates/information our school is sharing.
- Participate in lessons and complete assigned tasks.
- Complete surveys to provide feedback and to help in the school decision making process.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences and work with your child's teacher to set goals and track progress.
- Share your cultural/family beliefs to increase staff/student awareness.
- Join and help with Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO).
- Set age-appropriate boundaries for your child at home.
- Use the classroom teacher as a resource so school and home discipline can be consistent.
- Praise your child's good behavior and kind choices as often as you can.
- Read aloud with your child daily! We understand it is hard, but even if you just get one book in before bed, this will increase your child's success in reading and writing!
- Feed your child a healthy breakfast (low in sugar) before they come to school.
- Help your child to understand the importance of a good night's sleep by setting a bedtime and sticking to it.
- Help your child get 9 to 11 hours of sleep every day.
- Stay current with tuition payments so your child can remain in his/her class in our school (sometimes there is a waiting list so spots are often lost)
- Purchase the school supplies your child's classroom teacher has requested.
- Ask your child's teacher if there are donations you can make to help with learning experiences in the classroom or ways you can support development at home.

When needed, our early childhood experts can provide families with referrals to other community agencies and services.

We believe in collaborating with families. Parents are an important part of our community and are encouraged to talk with their child's teacher before and after school and during regularly scheduled conferences. Our teachers are committed to providing families with information about all aspects of their child's development. Thank you for your partnership!