

PARENT HANDBOOK

WELCOME TO SHANTI KIDS SCHOOL



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WELCOME LETTER

Dear Parents:

Welcome to Shanti Kids School. The staff at our center is interested in you and your child. We hope this handbook will help you understand the policies & procedures of the center. If you have any questions, please talk to any of our staff members or me for clarification. We are here as a support to you and your family.

Our formal way of sharing information with parents is through this handbook, memos and newsletter, however, you can always talk with us. Someone will always be available to respond to your questions, concerns and comments. It is important to us that you always feel welcome to Shanti Kids School.

Sincerely,

Andres Rico

Director

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Shanti Kids School focuses on the individual needs of every child. Our learning centers are geared to encourage the child's growth through developmentally appropriate practices. We provide an optimal environment by using appropriate materials and setting realistic goals for each child.

Our staff is made up of professional caregivers and teachers of young children. All employees have been screened by the state law enforcement. Employees have also obtained documented and certified hours of education in Early Childhood Development and Certificate for Elementary Education K-6.

The two most important goals for our School are to help children develop social competence and become enthusiastic learners, eager to explore and confident about their growing skills, not afraid to try out their own ideas and to think their own thoughts.

We aim to create a pleasant, fruitful relationship with our children, parents and staff.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our purpose is to provide high-quality childcare in a developmentally appropriate environment for each child. We offer a well-balanced program that promotes literacy, creativity, motor development, and cognitive skills. We respect each child's multi-cultural background in our community and educational system.

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

Shanti Kids School welcomes families of all faiths, creeds and ethnic origins to its programs. The programs of the Center arise from a common desire for excellence in meeting the needs of children and their families for nurturing, growth and development, relationships and understanding.

While Shanti Kids School operates programs, which are individualized in their goals and objectives, each program forms its specific aims within the context of these principles.

We Believe....

1. That home is the most important factor in a child's development. We will always strive to support and complement the family to promote the healthy development of children and parents.
2. That the dignity and worth of each child and family is important.
3. That loving, trusting and respecting each child makes the child capable of loving, trusting and respecting others.
4. That each child should be helped to have a positive self-image.
5. That it is important to meet each child's needs for physical, social, emotional and intellectual growth.
6. That the needs of children change as they grow; that programs must respond in content and structure by using the best techniques in human development.
7. That children deserve a nurturing, safe and happy environment, which promotes their natural curiosity and desire to learn.
8. Those children deserve to have teachers who are capable and caring and whose values enable them to be excellent role models.

Children will be accepted regardless of race, creed, national origin or sex.

CREATIVE CURRICULUM

Creative Curriculum for preschool is our guidelines for planning and implementing a developmentally appropriate curriculum program. Its implementation helps children acquire social competence and the skills they need to succeed as learners. Our curriculum is the result of many years of research and continuous improvement. We recognize how preschool children are like in terms of their social, emotional, physical, cognitive and language development, the characteristics and experiences that make each child unique. We present our goals and objectives for children by observing children's development and tracking their progress in relation to curriculum objectives.

The learning environment makes it possible for teachers to teach and children to learn. This includes how teachers set up the interest areas, establish schedules and routines, organize choice times and small and large group times. The interest areas include Blocks, Dramatic play, Toys and Games, Art, Library, Discovers, Sand and Water, Music and Movement, Cooking, Computers, and Outdoors. The materials in the interest areas meet the developmental needs of young children and enhance learning and teaching in each of these interest areas. We create a classroom community where children learn how to get along with others and solve problems peacefully.

The teacher's careful observations of children lead to a variety of instructional strategies to guide children's learning. Teachers interact with children in interesting areas and throughout the day. We partner with families to support children's optimal development and learning. This includes getting to know families, welcoming them, and communicating with them regularly.

Child development and learning theory is the foundation of the teaching approaches of the Creative Curriculum. We focus on the social and emotional skills children need to succeed in school and in life. Guidance on the teacher's role addresses content in literacy, math, science, social studies, the arts, and technology. A range of instructional strategies from child directed to teacher directed learning are used. Strategies for addressing the needs of all children, including those with special needs, or second language learners are also used.

FLORIDA B.E.S.T STANDARDS

As of the 2022-2023 school year, the State of Florida implemented updated education standards for math, reading, and writing goals and aims for Florida schools called B.E.S.T. Standards. The acronym B.E.S.T. stands for Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking.

They were created to focus on simple goals and benchmarks for students to reach during their K-12 education. These standards are designed to be easily understood by parents, students and families, and every year increase their academic rigor. Benchmarks, along with specific topics and subjects, are provided as

- Explicit and systematic phonics instruction
- Critical thinking skills
- Knowledge of and respect for the literature of another era.
- Development of knowledge through diverse texts of high content.

These benchmarks are goals that students are expected to achieve by the end of the school year. The B.E.S.T. Standards are designed to ensure that all students reach their highest potential.

For all levels of students, exists some periodic assessments of different subjects, especially after second grade. In our school our kids from kindergarten to 5th grade take Map Growth test 3 times in a year; and VPK takes a standardized test called FAST (Florida Assessment of Student Thinking) that is an ELA exam.

The Standards for English

ELA standards are one of the two focus areas of the Florida B.E.S.T standards and has specific goals to achieve in every grade. Their 4 strands of learning include Foundations, Reading, Communication and Vocabulary.

- **Foundations:** This first element requires acquiring basic reading skills and standards for bringing students to an appropriate reading level. Some of the benchmarks are understanding writing concepts, becoming fluent language users, phonics, and knowledge of phonology.
- **Reading:** This learning strand encompasses reading skills with prose, poetry, informational texts, and other genres. Students should understand arguments, figurative language, and comparing genres.
- **Communication:** The following strand requires students to build oral and written communication skills. Students will build skills in narrative, argumentative, and expository writing and have tasks that require giving presentations, using multimedia tools, and conducting research.
- **Vocabulary:** The final strand is on vocabulary and understanding the meaning of words. Students will build vocabulary used in an academic setting, build an understanding of morphology, and learn how to use context to find the meaning of words.

These four elements conform to the ELA material from kindergarten to 5th grade in our case as school, and students will be exposed to a different form of these components and in elementary will require students to build a handwriting skill.

The Standards for Math

The other subject focus area in the Florida School curriculum is math and the B.E.S.T standards subject areas include:

- Number Sense and Operations
- Fractions
- Algebraic Reasoning
- Functions
- Measurement
- Geometric Reasoning
- Data Analysis

At the elementary level, we use the HMH Curriculum to plan our English lessons, especially in the areas of Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. This material ensures that we are aligned with the Florida B.E.S.T Standards for instructional development, and that we are striving for excellence in our students.

This material is a system of research-based solutions where assessment drives instruction and learning can be personalized to meet student needs.

Students have access to physical books to work individually on the different activities but also have access to the digital platforms where they can explore more content that develops their analytical and reasoning skills in a second language like English; its teaching and learning system focuses on adapting instruction specifically in reading through three areas of reading: fluency, comprehension, and word work.

While teachers work in small groups with reading instructions, other students often work on choice boards, writing letters, reading, or doing word work.

Open Door Policy

Parents may visit the center at any time, either to observe or volunteer in classroom activities. Parents may request meetings with any staff member, including the center director, if they feel they have concerns about not being met.

Please remember that your visit can be disruptive to the other children in our care. During times like these the other children have a hard time listening and following our directions. We do ask parents who plan to visit their children frequently to follow the classroom routine, to avoid disturbing classroom schedules and activities. Parents are welcome any time to participate in different activities and field trips.

Hours of Operation

We are open all year Monday through Friday between 6:30 to 6:00pm. Shanti Kids School will be closed in observance of the following holidays.

New Year's Day

Martin Luther King Jr

President Day

Good Friday

Independence Day

Memorial Day

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day and the following day

Christmas Day

Statements for Absences and Vacation

We are prepared for each child every day, whether the child attends or not. There will be no credits or discounts for days absent. You may take vacations annually, but 25 % of the weekly payment is required to keep the space at the classroom.

Fee Policy

Tuition payments are to be made every Monday, weekly and always in advance. A return payment fee (please refer to the fee schedule) will be added to your account for any returned check, if this occurs twice, you will then be required to pay with cash or cashier's check.

Termination of Enrollment

When withdrawing your child from school, please give the office two weeks notice. All childcare fees must be paid in full prior to leaving. Letters showing your child's attendance and payment balance will be provided now, if needed. Please advise the office if you will need your child's immunization records to take with you.

Please decide with your child's teacher if you plan to have any special activity for your child's last day at school.

We reserve the right to unenroll a child for any reason. Some of the reasons may include refusal or inability to follow policies and procedures, a parent's or child's needs cannot be met, failure to meet payment schedules, among others.

Dress Code

Uniform is mandatory for all children 3-year-old and up. The uniform consists of a blue polo shirt with our logo on the left-hand side, khakis colored pants and tennis shoes. Please bring in an extra change of clothes in case the child needs it.

Meals and Nutrition Policy

At Shanti Kids School your child's meals will be prepared by a catering service. Breakfast, Lunch and a Snack will follow a nutritionally balanced diet, as recommended by the USDA Food Program Guidelines. If your child has a special diet due to religious or health reason, that eliminates any of the four food groups or alters the amount of food required to be served to meet one third of the recommended daily dietary allowances as required by USDA you will need to bring documentation from your doctor. The Food Program will accommodate those needs once the proper documentation is in place.

Our Center provides the meals during the day. In the morning, we provide Breakfast from 6:30am to 8:30am, lunch is served between 11:00 to 1:00 p.m. and the afternoon snack is served after naptime at 2:30 pm. Snacks are sometimes used as a part of the teaching learning experience. Our menu is posted on the bulletin board at our front office and in the kitchen area.

Children are to eat school meals unless there is a food restriction in which case the parent must substitute the food item that provides the same nutrition value. Meals can be supplemented and children may bring additional food items, but the original meal will be served to the child also. If you decide to bring a specific snack for your child, it must be securely packaged and labeled with the child's name and date it was brought.

Refrigerators and microwave ovens are in the kitchen, so snacks can be chilled or heated as needed.

We advise parents to avoid bringing unhealthy foods such as soda, chips, chocolate, candy bars, fast food, etc.

The following guidelines are to be followed when breakfast, lunch, snack and dinner are served:

- Children and staff must wash their hands before each meal.
- Each child will be served a complete meal.
- Each child will be given a napkin.

Allergies

Please be sure we are aware of any known food allergies of your child; we will work with our Center's staff, so your child won't be exposed to it. It will be noted in the main office and classroom to ensure we meet his needs.

Birthday / Holiday Celebrations

Birthday parties and Holiday celebrations are a wonderful experience for young children. A child's self-esteem is developed in celebrating a birthday. Our children are welcome to share their birthday with their classmates. Please speak to your child's teacher in planning this celebration. We appreciate you keeping this event simple, but meaningful to your child. When planning Holiday celebration parents are encouraged to participate and join the fun. Please keep in mind that the Dept. of Children and Families prohibits food cooked at home and brought into the classroom. All treats must be purchased commercially, either pre-packaged or from a bakery. Purchase receipts must be presented to the Center before giving them to the children.

Immunization and Health Examination

The department of Children and Families requires that all children enrolled in childcare centers maintain current immunization and health records. A copy of the immunization form and physical form must be kept in your child's file. Each time your child visits his/her pediatrician and receives an immunization please ask for an updated form for your child's file. It is the parent's responsibility to provide these documents on a timely manner otherwise the child will be suspended until immunizations are brought up to date.

Sick Child Attendance Policy

At Shanti Kids School, we understand that it may be difficult for a working parent to stay home with a sick child. However, to control the spread of illness in our center and in conjunction with the regulation of the State of Florida Department of Health, please do not send your child to school if

The child has any of the following diagnoses from a health provider:

1. Pink Eye (Infectious conjunctivitis) until after 24 hours of treatment.
2. Scabies or other infestations until the day after treatment
3. Impetigo until 24 hours after treatment is started.
4. Strep throat, scarlet fever, or other strep infection until the day after treatment is started.
5. Fever free for 24 hours without antipyretic medications.
6. Pertussis (whooping cough) may be returned on written note from physician.
7. Tuberculosis (TB) must remain out of center until the physician sends a written note to determine that it is safe for the child to return
8. Chicken Pox may return after six days after start of rash, or all sores have crusted over
9. Mumps require a note from the physician.
10. Hepatitis A, B, C, requires a note from the physician.
11. Measles (any form) requires a note from the physician.
12. Oral Herpes (if child is drooling or sores cannot be covered) until the lesions heal.
13. Shingles (if lesions cannot be covered) until the lesions dry

The child has any of the following symptoms (Unless a medical professional has given clearance to participate):

1. Temperature taken orally 100.0 F or greater
2. Temperature taken axilla (Armpit) 99.0 F or greater
3. Signs and symptoms of possibly severe illnesses (Persistent crying, extreme irritability, uncontrolled coughing, difficulty breathing, inspiratory and expiratory wheezing, lethargy).
4. Diarrhea
5. Vomiting more than once in the past 24 hours.
6. Mouth sores with drooling.
7. Untreated infected skin patches, unusual spots or rashes.
8. Redness of the eye or eyelid, thick and purulent (pus) discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching or eye pain.
9. Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool.
10. Stiff neck with an elevated temperature.
11. Evidence of untreated lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestations.
12. Sore throat or difficulty in swallowing.
13. Head lice until the day after treatment with note signed by parent that treatment has been administered.

14. Rash with a fever or behavior change

If a child becomes ill during the day and is found to have any of the above symptoms, we will separate the child while we notify the parents and until he/she is picked up. Parents are required to pick up their child as soon as possible. If a parent cannot be reached, the director will contact an authorized person from the emergency contact information in our records.

Readmission

Children will not be readmitted to the center until symptoms are not present for 24 hours. A doctor's note that your child is free of communicable disease is required.

Medication

If your child needs medication you must bring it from home in its original container with the child's name, dosage instruction and doctor's information. Medication will only be administered with a signed school consent form; this must be filled out daily. The fever medication will be administered only once in case of an emergency, but you must pick up your child as soon as possible. Nebulizers will be administered on a case-by-case basis.

Sign In & Out Sheets

All parents who enroll in their childcare center are required by law to sign their children in and out of the center each day. To ensure the safety of the children in our school, please sign the sign in / out sheet daily. Please sign legibly and tell anyone who is authorized to pick-up your child to sign legibly, so if we need to know who dropped off or picked up your child, we can read the signature. All children in our school and preschool must sign daily.

Releasing a Child from School

Your child will only be released to you or any person you list the enrollment application. Please make sure you update this information if any changes occur. If you send someone other than a person on the list, you must inform the office prior to that person picking up your child. No person shall pick up a child without a valid identification. Please do not send in an older child to pick up your child while you wait in the car, we will not release a child to another child. Families involved in child custody disputes must provide court documents stating parental rights, these papers will be kept in the child's file.

Release of Children to People who are Impaired

The safety of the children attending Shanti Kids School is the paramount concern of the staff members. If a person attempting to pick up a child appears to be impaired in his/her demeanor, such as slurring words, showing balance problems, or being aggressive, the following steps will be taken:

The staff member will ask the person if there is someone else that could call to come pick up the impaired person and the child. If the impaired person refuses, the staff member will not allow the person to take the child and will contact one of the emergencies contacts the parent previously had provided. If the person becomes aggressive, the staff will allow the child to leave with the person, but the police will be notified immediately of the situation.

Policy for Foster Parent or Guardian Pick-up

In families where one parent, a foster parent or a legal custody and states that the other parent(s) are not allowed to pick-up the child from school, a copy of the court documents stating who has primary guardianship / custody must be kept on file.

Children in these situations will be released to the person noted in the court documents or others that guardian or custodial parent's list the enrollment application. Any other person who comes in to pick up the child, even if it is a biological parent, will not be given access to the school.

Late Pick-ups

The center closes promptly at 6:00 pm. Like the rest of us our staff are anxious to go home to their families. Please schedule your pick-up by 6:00 pm. We understand that at times an emergency may arise and prevent you or someone from getting to school before 6:00 pm. In the event this occurs, there is an additional fee (please refer to the fee schedule) per every time unit after 6:00 pm, which should be paid directly to the staff member who needed to stay late.

Toys or other items from home

The classrooms are all well with sufficient toys for both indoor and outdoor play. Please keep your children's toys at home or in the car. Toys brought into school can easily be lost or broken. Toys brought from home cause unnecessary arguing and fighting between the children and disrupt the learning environment. Please refrain from bringing other items such as pacifiers, cups, baby bottles, etc. unless your child's teacher has requested the children to bring it in.

Special Needs Policy

We will not discriminate against children with special needs, we will make accommodations as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act to have them as our students. Close communication with the parents is essential to providing quality care. If his/her physician has

already evaluated the child, we will work with them to implement the IEP (Individualized Education Program) that they develop. Parents are required to submit to us their child's most recent IEP and keep us updated on progress. If we are not able to meet the child's needs within our current staffing patterns, we will give parents the time and assistance needed to find more appropriate care.

Confidentiality Policy

All information regarding children and their parents is confidential. This information shall only be used to facilitate childcare at Shanti Kids School. Our Center respects the privacy of the children, parents and staff. It is the policy of our Center to refrain from commenting matters pertaining to children, parents and staff with anyone other than the party concerned. The staff is expected to act in a professional matter when given any information considered private. Staff is not allowed to speak to parents about other children, nor speak about a child in front of another child, parent or staff

Non-Discrimination Policy

According to Florida Law, Shanti Kids School admits students of any race, color, sex and age, no disqualifying disability, religion, creed, or national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, program and activities generally accorded or made available to students at our school and does not discriminate in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies or any other school administered program.

Accident /Incident

Parents must complete an Accident-Incident form in case their child has suffered an accident at home. The teachers are also required to complete a form if an accident or incident occurs in the Center under their supervision. This form must be signed by the parents at pick up time, a copy will be provided if needed.

Students with External Therapist Policy

The welfare of our students in the development of their cognitive and motor skills, learning processes and appropriate social interaction according to their age of development has been and will continue to be a major concern for us as an educational center.

For this reason, Shanti Kids School has for several years allowed different therapists to come to our institution to help strengthen these processes, being aware that in some cases professional help is needed to see optimal results in the medium and long term with our children.

In order to guarantee the fulfillment of this common goal, it is necessary to clarify that our center does not receive any remuneration for this work that the therapists do with the children; however, it is important to remember that both parents and therapists must follow certain rules inside and outside our institution, which we mention below, in order to ensure the success and achievement of the proposed goals:

1. The schedule agreed upon between the parents and the therapist must be followed and respected by both parties. The school monitors the hours that the therapists provide to our students.
2. The family agrees to continue at home the exercises, activities, routines or tasks assigned by both the analyst and the therapist to ensure the proper development of the treatment.
3. The use of the telephone for personal calls is not allowed during the therapist's working hours.
4. The company that hires the therapist must send the Shanti Kids School a copy of the work program assigned to the child before the start of the therapies, describing the time and duration of the treatment. If this is not provided, this requirement will be enforced.
5. The company must provide the school with a quarterly written report of the process carried out with the student and, if necessary, a meeting with the Director/Academic Director to evaluate progress and progress and/or the establishment of a new work plan if the expected results are not met.
6. The work developed by the therapists with the children does not guarantee for Shanti Kids, the approval of a school year, therefore a constant communication between the analysts, parents and the center are necessary to evaluate the academic and behavioral conditions of a student.

It is necessary to remember that all cases of students who receive therapy services must be treated with strict confidentiality; likewise, if by evaluation and analysis of the Center it is concluded that a student needs external professional support, it is forbidden for a therapist working at the school to disclose or divulge this information to any colleague, because it will be considered a violation of the rule of privacy and confidentiality of information both in families and minors.

7. Shanti Kids does not accept under any circumstances that a behavioral therapist works with another student from the same center if their schedules are partially or completely crossed.
8. If a child under the guidance and care of a therapist becomes physically or emotionally unwell, the therapist must inform the school staff of the situation and only Shanti Kids may arrange with the parents for the removal of the child.
9. Shanti Kids School may at any time terminate the service provided in the Center's facilities if it is determined that the established standards are not being met either by the therapists and/or the parents or if, after a prudent period of evaluation, significant and positive progress is observed in the students.
10. Finally, it must be remembered that teachers, assistants or other persons who have worked in any capacity at Shanti Kids School may not work as therapists in our center until they have completed a minimum of four (4) years of continuous work with us, or after they have retired for a minimum of two (2) years.

Toilet Training

Toilet training requires a combined effort on the part of the parents and caregivers. Please talk with your child's teacher about your views on toilet training when your child is ready for that step. We would like to note here that until your child is fully trained and able to announce that he or she must use the bathroom, sleeps through naps without wetting or dirtying themselves that diapers, pull-up pants, or underwear with plastic liner would be used. We also ask that you ensure your child has an adequate supply of clean clothing to get through the daily training phase. This should consist of three complete outfits including socks.

Remember, children can walk and run, but the sensory in the leg region develops around 2 years. Bladder and bowel control come after control of the trunk and legs. As the child brain (cortex) begins to recognize the sensation of a full bladder and the sphincter muscle develops, (control bladder and bowel movement) children start using the toilet.

Photograph & Video Policy

During special events and Holiday seasons, we will take professional photos of your child, we will be asking you in advance if you want your child to participate. Occasionally we would be taking photos from the daily classroom activities, these photographs would only be used for classroom/academic purposes.

We have a camera system in our Center that gives us live feed images of all the classrooms and playground; these videos help us improve the Teacher- Student interactions and is a valuable tool to help us improve the daily activities, these images are only for the Center's Staff use

Television Policy

Children will watch TV only on certain days between 5:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. These days may be determined by adverse weather conditions, among others. We will only be showing educational videos. This is not a regular occurrence.

Guidance / Discipline Policy

Our program will ensure that age-appropriate, constructive disciplinary practices are used for your child. This care will allow the child time to look over his or her behavior. We will encourage children to choose alternatives to improper behavior. To ensure a safe and successful program, discipline is a must. We welcome the ideas of parents, so feel free to share them with us.

The following steps will be used for behavior modification:

1. Children will be corrected and asked to change their behavior

2. Children will be re-directed from situation
3. Children will be placed in "Time Out"
4. Parents will be contacted if behavior is not corrected.
5. Children shall not be subjected to discipline which is severe, humiliating or frightening
6. Discipline shall not be associated with food, rest or toileting
7. Spanking or any other form of physical punishment is prohibited

Unusual Behavior Policy and Procedures

We will make every effort to work with the parents of children having difficulties in childcare. We are here to serve and protect all our children, though.

Children displaying chronic disruptive behavior which has been determined to be upsetting the physical or emotional wellbeing of another child may require the following action:

1. Our teacher will observe and keep record of the child's behavior
2. Our teacher will write down and keep note of what interventions have been implemented.
3. The Director may require the parent (s) of any child who attends Shanti Kids School to meet for a conference. The problem will be defined on paper and the goals to be accomplished.
4. If the initial plan for helping the child fails, the parent (s) will again be required to meet with the Director. Another attempt will be made to identify the problem, outline new approaches to the problem, and discuss the consequences if progress is not apparent.
5. When the previous attempts have been followed and no progress has been made towards solving the problem, the child may be suspended from childcare indefinitely. The Director may immediately suspend child at any time he/she exhibit's a behavior, which is harmful to him/her or others.

A parent may be called from work at any time and the child exhibits uncontrollable behavior that cannot be modified by the childcare staff that parent may be asked to take the child home immediately. Suspension from the childcare program may vary from a few hours to an indefinite period.

Child Abuse Policy

If we suspect a child has been abused or mistreated, we are required to report it within 48 hours (about 2 days) to the Department of Children & Families and Protective Services and/or to a law enforcement agency.

Child abuse and neglect are against the law in Florida, and so is failure to report it. As childcare professionals we are mandatory reporters; it constitutes a criminal offense not to report. Shanti Kids Director's office must be notified immediately

Child Abuse Protection

The program must operate in a way to protect children from child abuse and neglect while they are in and out of the facility.

1. Children are always supervised
2. Children are not to be left alone under any circumstance
3. Volunteers, interns, students, and family members are supervised while interacting with children
4. Children are released only with authorized persons
5. Children are not released to sibling under 14 years old
6. All visitors are required to sign in and out and are accompanied while in the building
7. Parents are contacted when children do not arrive at the program when expected.

Referral Policy

If after our initial observation it is determined that your child would benefit from a more professional evaluation, a referral may be made to community agencies for speech/language, physical, occupational, behavioral, family and/mental health therapy. If applicable a referral may also be made to the following agencies:

Early Steps Program (birth to three)

FDLRS (three to twelve)

- Appointments will occur within 45 days (about 1 and a half months) of the referral.
- There is no cost for the child's initial evaluation. With the family's permission, the Early Steps Program will attempt to access Medicaid if applicable.

Parent Teacher Conferences

We believe that parents should be well informed on their child's time at school. For this reason, we encourage you to speak briefly daily with your child's teacher. However, to discuss specific topics that would require more time, we encourage you to schedule a meeting with the teacher or the Director at any time.

Program Evaluation

At the end of each year, all parents will be asked to complete a survey evaluating the center and its program. These are anonymous. We encourage you to be honest and offer objective criticisms on how we can improve the program and make Shanti Kids School an even enjoyable place for your child to learn and play.

Child Assessment

At Shanti Kids School, our goal is to help children reach their fullest potential emotionally, socially, and cognitively. As the school year progresses, the teachers will interact with your child constantly, providing opportunities to learn and grow. We believe that to get a true assessment of your child's abilities it is necessary to observe him or her in their natural play environment.

By taking notes on your child's daily activities, we record the context in which your child participates in key learning experiences. We will also keep samples of your child's work in a portfolio. Parents in preschool will receive progress reports in late November and again in April. However, the teacher will be able to verbally update you throughout the year. At our parent meetings, the key experiences that make up the assessment will be explained. In addition, we will discuss how our teachers' foster opportunities for your children to have key experiences in a fun and enjoyable way.

Children who are participating in the financially assisted programs are assessed by Child Development Services in addition to our own assessment, and children from 4 months through 5 years old will be assessed with ASQ.

After the evaluation, the results will be shared between Director and Staff first and then with the children's parents during a parent-staff meeting.

Also, the Director and teaching staff will talk about activity suggestions to support children identified with potential delays. After that parents will be provided with the activity suggestions to practice them at home.

VPK students and Elementary students will receive during the school year 4 reports cards at the end of each academic term.

Parent meetings are scheduled through the school calendar at specific and flexible times to allow for family participation. In these meetings, we discuss the progress made in each subject, where parents can talk with each teacher and clarify their concerns.

These meetings are mandatory because they are where we deliver the improvement plan for those children who need support for the weaknesses identified, achieving collaborative work with families.

Field Trips

We try to schedule as many fun and educational trips as possible well in advance, which will give you time to arrange to attend. Some additional trips may be added during the year, and we will give you as much notification as possible. Parents are a crucial element of field trips.

Children must have a permission slip, signed by the parent, on file in the office before they are allowed to participate in trips away from school.

Parent Involvement

Parents as volunteers

All parents and authorized family members are welcomed and encouraged to volunteer their time at Shanti Kids School. Parents may volunteer to read stories to the children, participate in class activities, attend field trips, and organize special events. If you are interested in volunteering, please fill out a volunteer form in the office or sign in at your child's classroom.

Volunteering:

Parents may contact the Director if they are able to help in any of the following ways:

Read or tell a story

Prepare materials for the class

Play games with children

Play a musical instrument

Sing and dance with the children

Take photographs/video

Assist in the playground

Bring a pet to share

Decorate classrooms and bulletin boards

Attend to special events

Sew dress up clothes

Repair toys, books and equipment

Attend to Fieldtrips

Be a speaker at the parents meeting

Bring information or resources to share with teachers, parents and children

The parent's role is to communicate and participate in the different activities of their child's daily routine, where family values and different cultures are respected.

You as parents must also read and respect our policies and philosophy, as well as our goals which are to better the relationship with the children and for the parents to become part of our family.

Risk Management

Medical

In the event of an emergency, parents or the designated contact person will be contacted immediately unless the injury/illness proves to be life threatening at which time first calls priority will be to 911.

Emergency Procedures

We have regular fire and disaster drills at school. We urge each family to plan what you will do if disaster strikes during the day when you are separated at work, school, etc. You will find helpful disaster planning information in your phone book. The children are taught to listen to the teachers' directions. We will assemble and count everyone and give aid and comfort as needed. We will stay with your children until you or someone of your choice can get here.

We stored flashlights, radio, first-aid supplies, food and water. All our teachers have first aid and CPR training.

Fire

At Shanti Kids School, we practice monthly fire drills. The children have been taught to evacuate the building immediately, proceed to the meeting points and wait there along with the teacher.

Inclement Weather/Tornado Warning

If severe storm warnings and/or tornado warnings are issued, we will proceed to the south-east corner of the center. In the event of a tornado warning children will sit where floors and walls meet

and place themselves in a protected position with their heads and faces covered by their hands and arms.

In case of a National Disaster and nearby public-school closing, we will be required to close also. Please Note: It is crucial for parents to notify the center if any emergency contact information has changed.

Flood Procedure

We will take children to a dry area in the Center and stay with them until parents pick them up.

Receipt of Parent Handbook and Discipline Policy

You received a link that holds the school's parent handbook and fee schedule with your student enrollment documents. If you would like to get a printed version, please ask our staff and we will be happy to assist you