



Immaculate Conception School

Preschool / Pre-Kindergarten

Mission – Community – Service
Since 1853

Parent Handbook
2023-2024

Pre-K / Pre-S Teaching Staff



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Welcome to your family's next exciting adventure. . . PRESCHOOL and PRE-K! Thank you in advance for choosing ICS. With many years experience working with kids our teachers bring passion and excitement for teaching to school every day. We can't wait to serve your family. Communication is KEY. . . so please never hesitate to contact any one of us anytime. We are looking forward to a great year! ☺

Schedule of Programs Offered

2023-2024

Monday through Friday	8:00 a.m. – 3:00p.m.	\$600/month
Three full days	8:00 a.m. – 3:00p.m.	\$410/month
Early Care –Latchkey	6:45 a.m. – 7:45 a.m.	\$6 first child, \$3 additional/day
After Care – Latchkey	3:00 p.m. – 5:45 p.m.	\$12 first child, \$6 additional/day

Tuition is due the first week of every month. There are no refunds for absences, withdrawals, vacations or snow days. Payments should be made through FACTS.

Early and After Care- We offer both Early Care and After Care Latchkey to help meet the needs of working parents. Our program ensures a safe, friendly and loving environment for your child. Pick up for Latchkey is no later than 5:45 p.m. Please notify the Latchkey director if you are running late and will not be able to pick up your child at the scheduled time. It is important that the staff is aware of any situation causing a delay so that they can help ease your child's anxiety. A late fee of \$10.00 will be assessed for every 15 minutes you are late. Anytime the parent is more than one hour late and we cannot locate the emergency contact, we will contact the police for guidance.

ICS Preschool and Pre-K follows the Immaculate Conception School calendar.

The “Fun” of Preschool

(daily schedule subject to change based on the needs of the students)



7:45 am-8:10 am Check-in & Table games

8:10 am-8:30 am Circle time in classroom

8:30 am-8:40 am Snack time

8:45 am- 9:05am Recess

9:05 am- 9:15 am Bathroom break

9:15 am-9:35 am Group Lesson

Wednesdays 9:30-10:00 P.E. with Mrs Sullivan

9:35 am -10:45 am Self- Select Centers

10:45 am-10:50 am Clean up

10:50 am-11:00 am Bathroom break/ wash for lunch

11:00 am-11:20 am Lunch

11:20 am-11:45 am Recess

11:45 am-11:55am Bathroom break

11:55 am-12:05 pm Story Time

12:05 pm-1:45 pm Rest time/Nap time

1:45 pm-2:00 pm Wake up/Bathroom break

2:00 pm-2:15 pm Snack time

2:15 pm-2:30 pm Recess

2:30 pm-2:45 pm Whole Group Lesson

2:45 pm-2:50 pm Ready for Dismissal

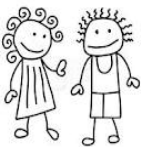
2:50 pm Dismissal



The “Fun” of Pre-K

(daily schedule subject to change based on the needs of the students)

7:45-8:00	Arrival
8:00-8:30	<i>Table Games</i> <i>(teacher takes attendance & lunch count)</i>
8:30-8:55	<i>Circle Time</i>
<i>(8:30-9:00)</i>	<i>*PE on Wednesday</i>
9:00-9:15	<i>Snack</i>
9:20-9:45	<i>Recess</i>
9:50-10:50	<i>Center Time</i>
11:00-11:20	<i>Lunch</i>
11:25-11:40	<i>Heggerty and Storytime</i>
11:40-12:00	<i>Recess</i>
12:10-1:50	<i>Naptime</i>
2:00-2:20	<i>Journaling/assessment</i>
2:20	<i>Snack brought in by children</i>
2:30-2:40	<i>Recess</i>
2:40-2:45	<i>Prepare for Pickup</i>
2:50	<i>Pre-K dismissal</i>



Philosophy, Goals and Objectives

Philosophy

Immaculate Conception's PreS/PreK program is devoted to the development of the whole child: physically, socially, emotionally, cognitively and spiritually. Our philosophy is based on the child development theories of the NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children). We offer a unique, individualized program which focuses on each child's developmental needs and promotes a positive, secure and accepting environment enabling each child to grow with a sense of joy and wonderment.

Goal

The goal of Immaculate Conception PreS/PreK is to create a loving atmosphere where children are excited about learning. The program is developmentally appropriate and students learn and explore through play and hands-on activities. When children complete our Pre-K/S program, they are not only ready to move on to kindergarten but will also have developed many lasting friendships, an eagerness to learn and a love for school!

Objective/Mission Statement

Recognizing that caring treatment of our children is the measurement of our fidelity to the Lord; our program serves to provide families in our parish and members of the surrounding community with a safe and developmentally appropriate early childhood setting for their children. We recognize that quality early childhood education enhances the lives of children, their families and our community. We, as a parish, hope to build a lasting relationship with your family and welcome you into our community.

Curriculum Overview

Our authentic curriculum and play-based approach to learning includes exposure to math, language, science, creative movement, games and storytelling while balancing active and quiet activities. We also offer music, cooking and drama experiences. The children can expend their energy on our playground or at special times in the school gym and indoor play areas. We meet your child's needs by:

1. Providing a dedicated staff trained and knowledgeable in child development.
2. Providing a safe and healthy environment.
3. Providing regular observation and assessment to help plan for each child's needs.
4. Educating parents on the importance of play in the cognitive development of children.
5. Providing staff that facilitate and model language and communication skills.
6. Recognizing that children construct knowledge through play and encouraging child-initiated learning.
7. Extending children's play through age appropriate activities in language, writing, listening, math, science, manipulatives, rhythm and movement, dramatic play, art and sensory experience.
8. Focusing on process, not product.
9. Recognizing that curriculum is everything that surrounds a child during their day.
10. Providing stimulating, safe and age appropriate materials for children.
11. Valuing each child as a unique and precious gift.
12. Modeling kindness, compassion and understanding to children.
13. Providing and enforcing health and safety policies.
14. Incorporating liturgical celebrations and traditions into our daily activities with daily prayers.
15. Referring families to parish activities and programs that may assist and enrich their family lives.
16. Providing referral for more advanced screening, and working with professional intervention, when necessary.

Each child is an individual, growing and developing at his/her own rate. Development cannot be rushed without sacrifice in other areas. Young children can be taught anything, but ***until it is spontaneous, it has no meaning.*** As an example, after a lesson about numbers, counting and addition, the teacher knows the students have internalized the learning when they sit down to snack and say “four friends are at the picnic, we have room for two more, six all together.”

Overview of Learning Objectives

Learning Interaction with Other Children

Children get many opportunities each day to make friends and interact with other children in the class. There are many periods each day in which the children are free to express themselves through play any way they wish. Our classrooms are set up to give children many choices to either play with others or spend quiet time alone. Examples of areas set up for group play are: block areas, play dough table, water/sand table, housekeeping and dress-up area. If a child wishes to spend time quietly alone or perhaps with one friend, he/she may do puzzles, mazes, paint at the easels, read books or just rest on the bean bag chairs if he/she wishes. To keep up with the children's progressing skills, more art and craft items are readily available to students. There are also shelves filled with pre-kindergarten games and books more age-appropriate for the older child. There is also a puppet theater for dramatic play. There are many games to encourage self-help and develop fine motor skills.

Our expectations for each child are first to be happy, and to explore many learning opportunities that will make him/her a fuller, richer student who feels good about themselves and their surroundings.

Learning Objectives by Area of Development

To provide experiences that stimulate all areas of development of the young child:

A. Cognitive

1. To stimulate curiosity, initiative and creativity
2. To develop language and communication skills
3. To encourage the development of concepts needed for further learning

B. Affective

1. To develop a positive self-image
2. To develop an understanding of feelings and attitudes
3. To develop emotional control
4. To develop a positive attitude toward learning and the learning environment
5. To build individuality
6. To develop conscience

C. Psychomotor

1. To develop large muscle, small muscle and manipulative skills
2. To develop the ability to manage self care needs
3. To develop awareness of self in space

4. To develop perceptual abilities
5. To develop motor abilities

We feel our program is an important part of our children's lives and an asset to this community. The goal of our PreS/PreK programs is to develop imaginative, productive thought processes in each child. The children exercise their brains and bodies by experimenting, discovering, building, and creating. We want the children to continue throughout school with a desire to discover new things. Our PreS/PreK programs are a foundation for a lifetime of knowledge and wisdom.

Description of Curriculum

Complex, inventive play is evident as the children plan and work together toward a common goal. Written language is introduced with the curriculum, addressing readiness for elementary school. The classrooms are set up to provide the children with many materials and activities designed to help them learn through self-discovery (learning centers). Learning centers include: reading, math, manipulatives, dramatic play, art, and science. Games, books, puzzles, etc. vary in difficulty to meet the needs of different levels of ability. Music, science, math, language, art and social skills are learned through many experiences during the day. For example, the children sing when they work together to clean-up, quiet down for a story or gather for circle. They learn much about math as they measure and pour in the sand or water table. As they work together to make a classroom book, or individually work on their journals, they form a foundation for reading and writing. They learn cooperation skills as they help take care of their classroom and work and play together.



“The Business” of PreS/PreK

Program Guidelines, Policies and Fees

Non-discriminatory Policy

The Catholic elementary and secondary schools of the Diocese of Belleville, listed in the official Catholic School Directory published annually, admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. The Immaculate Conception Early Childhood Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, national and ethnic origin, disability or sex.

Enrollment Policy

In the event the number of applicants exceeds the number of spaces available, the Center will use the following priority list to fill spaces:

1. Families with students currently enrolled at Immaculate Conception School (ICS)
2. Immaculate Conception Parishioners
3. Open to the community

The Enrollment Policy does not create a right to enrollment and will be administered at the discretion of the pastor, principal and admissions committee. The admissions committee is made up of the pastor, principal and a member of the ICS School Board.

Registration

A \$200 registration fee is required for each child, due when the completed registration form is submitted. If a family has more than one child attending PreS/PreK at the same time, there is a \$200 Family Registration fee. Receipt of the registration form(s) and fee assures your child(ren) a place in our program. The registration fee is applied toward the first month's tuition. Registration fees are non-refundable. If there is no spot available, Immaculate Conception PreS/PreK will place your child on a waiting list or refund your registration fee. In the event we place your child on a waiting list, parents will be asked to sign a form as follows: "If I/we choose to have our child placed on a waiting list, I/we understand that the registration fee will no longer be refundable. If a spot is available, or when it becomes available, the registration fee will hold the spot for two weeks, unless other arrangements have been made with the Director.

Immunization

Parents are required to provide an immunization record form verifying that the child's immunizations are current. In addition, parents are required to complete the medical information and consent form.

Lunch

We eat at approximately 11:00 a.m. A healthy, hot lunch is included in tuition. Children may also bring a cold lunch from home if they prefer. Immaculate Conception School is a "nut free zone". The lunch menu is available on the Immaculate Conception School website, www.icscolumbia.org

Snack Times

There will be two snacks daily. A graham cracker/milk snack will be available during center time in the morning. If your child has any special dietary needs, please contact the director. In the afternoon, students take turns providing snacks for the class. For variety, a snack schedule will be sent home each month in which each family will be asked to send in a healthy snack for the class to enjoy.

Field Trips

We typically do not leave the Immaculate Conception premises for field trips. We do, however, arrange for many different people and with many different special activities to come and visit the classrooms. If, however, there would be some special opportunity for us to go on a field trip, a permission slip will be required and must be signed and returned to the teacher. No student is allowed on a field trip without a signed permission slip. Destination and method of transportation will be indicated on the permission form. We would also need adequate adult supervision, so all parents are invited to chaperone, as long as they are Child Protection Policy (CPP) compliant.

Volunteers and Child Protection Policy

Parent and parishioner volunteers play a big role in making our Pre-K/S a success! All visitors must sign in upon entering the building. If you wish to volunteer, please schedule the time with the Director. *Please allow your child time to adjust to the classroom routine **before** scheduling time in the classroom.* The Diocese of Belleville requires that all volunteers must have attended the Diocesan Child Protection Policy Training and have completed the Diocesan Volunteer Application and the Sexual Misconduct Questionnaire Form which is available at the parish rectory. Please visit the Diocese's website, www.diobelle.org, for times and

locations of classes.

Calendar and Newsletters

Each week you will receive a newsletter sharing about your child's week at school. Mr. Gregson will also be sending home weekly emailed newsletters providing school information, as well as the occasional automated phone calls.

School Fundraisers

We ask that all parents actively participate in our fundraisers. There are many opportunities throughout the year to give back to the school and community. The monies raised through fundraising is very important to our continued success.

Accommodating Children with Special Needs

Illinois Special Education offers services including speech therapy, mental health and physical and occupational therapists. Information about a child's progress is shared with service providers upon written request of a parent or guardian. ICS PreS/PreK fosters open communication between staff and providers and the family will be notified concerning dates for screenings and testing. The staff will meet with specialized service providers and families as needed. Staff members will participate in IEP/IFSP meetings if invited by parents and will follow the recommendations of individual plans. Special services will be delivered to our program on-site whenever possible.

Conferences

We will do an assessment of your child's progress and development in October, January, and April. A copy of each evaluation will be given to you. Preschool and Kindergarten Readiness conferences will be held in April. If you ever have any questions concerning your child's progress or needs, please be assured that we will make time for you. If you would like to set up a conference to discuss your child's progress at any time, we will make an appointment at a time convenient for you other than before school or during regular school hours. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher anytime.

Drop Off and Pick Up Procedure

Arrival – Drop-off will be between 7:45–8:00 a.m. Please be watching for

more information to come about drop-off procedures. Any children arriving prior to 7:45 will need to report to the gym.

Dismissal – Dismissal will be at 2:50 in the front of the school.

School Closings

When it is necessary to close or have a late start for PreS/PreK due to bad weather or other emergencies, we follow the decision of the Superintendent of Columbia Unit #4 District. A school-wide automated call will be made in order to inform you of any closings.

Clothing

We ask that you send your child(ren) in play clothes and tennis shoes with convenient fastenings to encourage self-help. No sandals or flip-flops please. We encourage children to experiment with all sorts of art media, water and sand and do not want the children to feel hesitant about working with these materials or playing outdoors. There will be special days for dressing in good clothes. **Also, all children are required to have a change of clothing at school, including underpants, socks, shirt and pants/skirt or dress.** Please send these with your child the first week of school in a marked bag to be placed in your child's cubby. Please mark all coats, jackets, sweaters, hats and boots with your child's name.

Party Days and Birthdays

A child's birthday is a special occasion that we celebrate at school. Parents are encouraged to send in treats on their child's birthday (or half birthday– for those that fall during the summer months) if they wish. Your child will be scheduled for the daily snack near their birthday. Some students are sensitive to allergies. Please do not send in any treats containing nuts. We will keep you informed of all holiday and other party days.

For birthday parties held outside of Immaculate Conception's PreS/PreK, our policy is that invitations given out at school must include ALL the children in the class. The exception to this policy is that if the party is gender specific (e.g. all boys or all girls) then ALL the boys or ALL the girls in the class should be invited. Please do not leave out any member of the class.

Process for Families and Staff Members to Negotiate Differences

In the event a PreS/PreK family encounters a problem which they feel needs to be addressed; they are asked to use the following "chain of command":

1. Talk to the child's teacher.
2. If the problem is not resolved, the family members, Director/teacher will meet to discuss the problem and work out a resolution.
3. If the problem persists, the principal will be contacted. Together we will make a decision on what action should be taken to resolve the problem.

Reporting of Child Abuse

It is the clear responsibility of school personnel to report any situations that raise reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect. Everyone is a mandated reporter. Cases will be handled through the school office.

Behavior Management and Discipline

Discipline and guidance is an ongoing process. The arrangement of the classroom is designed to encourage constructive play and social interaction. Appropriate classroom behavior is fostered through three different approaches to behavior management: constructive, preventative

and remedial.

1. Constructive discipline stems from positive reinforcement and nurturing the child's self-esteem.
2. Preventative discipline anticipates the behavior and changes the situation.
3. Remedial discipline does not involve punishment, but removes the child from the conflict, giving the child the extra time and space needed to restore his/her place in the group.

Policies Regarding Sick Children

Illness

The health of the school depends on the health of the children. Please do not send your child to school if he/she has symptoms of illness such as sore throat, earache, fever, rash, swollen glands, diarrhea or vomiting. Please inform us if your child has a communicable disease so that other parents may be notified. If your child becomes sick at school, you will be notified immediately and asked to make arrangements to pick up your child as soon as possible. Should you be unavailable, the emergency contact will be notified. The sick child will be isolated from the other children and allowed to rest in the office until someone arrives.

Under circumstances such as these, your child would want to be with you and go home. Please come as soon as possible after we have contacted you. **Also, be sure to call the office for any days your child will be absent.**

Communicable Diseases

- A communicable disease may be suspected when a combination of any two or more of the following symptoms are present: headache, watery and inflamed eyes and nose, cough, elevated temperature, skin rash, sore throat, or vomiting. A child with these symptoms should not be in school. If teachers note a child with these symptoms, a parent or guardian will be contacted to come to the school and take the child home.
- A child who is absent due to a high fever should not be sent back to school until **24 hours after the fever has ceased.**
- Children who have vomited the night before or in the morning should stay home that day.
- If your child becomes ill at school, you will be notified immediately so that arrangements can be made to pick the child up as quickly as possible.
- Parents are asked to notify the school if their child contracts a communicable disease. This includes, but is not limited to, chicken pox, head lice, ringworm and conjunctivitis.

Head Lice

If you discover that your child has contracted a case of head lice, please notify the school immediately and call your doctor for treatment instructions. Head lice are spread when children play in close contact with each other or through exchange of clothing, hats, brushes, combs, pillows and other personal articles. Parents should be on the lookout for the most common symptoms such as intense itching on the back of the

neck and head. If head lice are discovered on a student at school, he/she will be sent home immediately. Students may return to school one day after treatment.

Medications

The taking of medications during school hours is to be discouraged. However, if it is necessary, the medication must be taken to the school office. As required by state law, students may not carry medication – either prescription or over-the-counter – on their person. Chapstick and cough drop medications must be turned over to the classroom teacher. Staff members have been trained to dispense medications. Proper documentation is kept on every dose administered and medication is kept in a locked cabinet.

Any student who is required to take prescribed medication or over-the-counter medication during regular center hours must comply with the following regulations:

- Prescription medication must be in a prescription container. Non-prescription medication must be in the original container.
- Written instructions from a physician must include student name, medication name, dosage, time interval and diagnosis or reason for medication.
- The parent/guardian must sign a medication form, available in the office.
- Cough drop medications must be accompanied by a parent note only.

If there is a change in the dosage or timing of the medications, the physician must submit this change in writing. A note may be faxed, emailed or sent to the office. A parent may not give permission to administer medication differently than the physician's order.

Medications that will be given for the entire school year will need a new prescription container each school year. The school may request from the parent the right to contact the physician directly to clarify a medication order. School personnel will not administer the first dosage of medication. If all regulations are not followed, the medication will not be administered. These regulations apply to both topical and oral medications.

Injury Accident Guidelines – Step by Step Procedure

If your child is injured at school, he/she will be sent to the office. If the injury is serious, the office staff will attempt to contact the parents. If they

cannot be reached, the persons listed on your emergency contact form will be called. An injury/accident report will be prepared. This report will contain all pertinent information concerning the injury, you will be given a copy for your records.

If the child needs immediate medical attention, 911 Emergency will be called. Every attempt will be made to have the child transported to the hospital emergency room listed by parents on the emergency contact form. In cases which appear to be of a minor nature, First Aid will be administered on the premises. If the home does not supply adequate emergency instructions or if the instructions given cannot be followed at the time of an emergency, the program staff will act according to their best judgment for the welfare of the child.

Playground Rules and Regulations

When we go outside for recess, a walk or special activity, children will be well supervised and close boundaries will be maintained at all times. The following rules will apply:

- Children should listen to their teacher at all times.
- Children may not leave the designated play area without a teacher's permission.
- Children will not run UP the slides. Each child must wait at the bottom of the "ladder" before going up, one at a time. No pushing, shoving, or going backwards down the slide.
- No balls or other toys on the playground equipment at any time.
- No throwing sand, wood chips or pebbles, etc.

Emergency Plans

- The Immaculate Conception School building is locked down during school hours when the children are present. The teachers /secretary have access through a security system. Parents and any guests will need to “buzz in” at the main entrances.
- In cooperation with the Columbia Police Department and the Columbia Volunteer Fire Department, Immaculate Conception Pre-K/S has developed plans for all types of emergencies. Teachers and students discuss and practice emergency procedures throughout the school year. Plans and supplies are updated each year. The classroom has an emergency pack and first aid kit.
- If an unknown person is spotted on campus, the office will be notified immediately. The staff will keep the classroom locked down until such time the building is secured and deemed safe. Police will be notified if necessary.

ICS Preschool & Pre-K Potty Training Policy

The ICS Preschool and PreK Program is a faith-based early childhood program. While our unique program focus is on both religious and academic education, it is important for parents to understand the need for all children to be fully potty trained. Your adherence to this policy helps ensure a positive first school experience for your child and the other children in their class.

**You must agree to the following for your child to attend class at ICS Preschool and Pre-K.*

Your potty trained child ...

- Will tell the teacher he/she needs to go to the bathroom.*
- Is able to go to the bathroom (either urinating or a bowel movement) on his/her own. This includes being able to remove clothing, sitting on the toilet, wiping himself/herself (without using an enormous amount of toilet paper), putting clothing back on, flushing the toilet, and washing and drying his/her hands.*
- Is aware of the need to use the toilet without reminders from the teachers (although, teachers do make requests of children at various times of the day, for example, before or after meals, and before going out to the playground, etc.).*
- Will be in regular underwear without the need of diapers or pull-ups. Our focus is on academic development and playful learning. We do not potty train our students. If a teacher is spending their time with potty training or accidents, they are not able to do their work.*

Our staff is aware that accidents happen. That is why we ask you to keep a change of seasonally appropriate clothing at school. However, if your child has accidents every day or several days a week while they are in school, we do not consider them to be potty trained and they might need to stay home a week or more for training.

If your child is ill and has diarrhea, they should be kept home until they have been episode-free for 24 hours (see Parent Handbook under Health and Nutrition - "Illnesses").

I (we) have read and understand the policy of ICS Preschool and Pre-K on potty training and will comply with those requirements.

.....

Student Name

Date

Parent Printed Name(s)

Parent Signature(s)

Acknowledgement of Policies and Procedures

I/we have read the Immaculate Conception PreS/PreK Parent Handbook and acknowledge and understand the policies and procedures set forth and carried out by Immaculate Conception PreS/PreK.

Please return this page to school.

parent/guardian signature

date

parent/guardian signature

date