

AROMAS/SAN JUAN USD

**Tom Connolly
“Mi Escuelita” Preschool**

PARENT HANDBOOK

2018-2019

ADMISSION POLICIES

Tom Connolly “Mi Escuelita” Preschool is a bilingual, developmentally appropriate preschool, located on the campuses of San Juan and Aromas Schools, and administered by the Aromas/San Juan Unified School District. Mi Escuelita’s State Preschool program is funded through a contract from the Child Development Division of the California State Department of Education. Preschool services are open to children, ages three to five, in accordance with California State Preschool Program eligibility rules. Program fees are based on family size and income in accordance with the Family Fee Schedule established by the California Dept. of Education, Child Development Division. Mi Escuelita Preschool welcomes the enrollment of children with exceptional needs. The highest priority is given to children who have been referred by a child protective service agency. The program family fee schedule does not apply to these families. The next priority is given to eligible children who will have their fourth birthday on or before September 1st of the fiscal year in which they are enrolled. After all of the children in this group have been served, eligible three-year-old children may be enrolled. Within the groups of four and three year olds, the highest priority will be given to the families with the lowest per capita income. If the family incomes are the same for the same family size, the program will give priority to children identified as English learners (EL), then children with exceptional needs, who have an individualized education program (IEP) that identifies the preschool program as the most appropriate placement. Although children may be tentatively pre-registered, eligibility will be determined and certified within a 120-day period prior to the start of class. State preschool services are free to eligible families.

Mi Escuelita Preschool practices and “Open Door” policy and our program promotes inclusion and does not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability, in determining which children are served. No religion instruction or worship will be offered.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Mi Escuelita Preschool provides children a safe, nurturing and positive learning environment and emphasizes language development in English and Spanish. We believe that providing children with choices and a variety of fun, exciting, and age-appropriate activities allow children to learn and develop at the own pace. Our goal at Mi Escuelita Preschool is to ensure that our children are healthy and ready for kindergarten.

PROGRAM

Tom Connolly “Mi Escuelita” Preschool, offers a daily 3 hour program of preschool services, Monday through Friday, on the regular Aromas/San Juan Unified School District calendar.

In accordance with California State law, a teacher to child ratio of 1 to 8 is maintained at all times. All staff is bilingual in English and Spanish and the teachers hold a Children’s Center Teaching Permit or working towards one.

One primary purpose of our preschool program is to provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum with a strong emphasis on social-emotional development to children in their home language. The native language provides the foundation for literacy, learning, problem solving and the strengthening of existing skills in English. We

believe that in this early stage of development, when a child is acquiring language and forming concepts, it is important that communication be in the language the child understands best.

A developmentally appropriate curriculum gives children power over their own learning. Children are provided with a wide variety of open-ended materials for everyday use. Some of our on-going curriculum includes practices from the California Department of Education Preschool Learning Foundations, Listos-English letter recognition, outdoor activities, easel painting, dry-pouring, sand and water play, wooden blocks, and manipulative materials, art, books, music and movement. By freely choosing their activities from among a variety of learning centers, children work at their own pace to foster their intellectual, social, and physical development. Through positive interactions with staff and other children, each child develops an increased sense of self-esteem, cooperation and respect for the people and materials that make up the learning environment.

We believe that parent involvement is key to the success of children and always maintain an open door policy. Parents are always welcome on a drop-in or scheduled basis.

SIGN –IN/SIGN-OUT SHEET

Children must be signed in upon arrival and out upon leaving the center. Complete signatures and the correct time are required for each entry. Prior authorization is necessary for any person other than the parent (or those persons listed on the emergency card) to pick up the child. Only persons over the age of 18 years are allowed to sign a child in or out.

EMERGENCY CARD

It is very important to keep the Emergency Card that is filled out for each child enrolled in the center current. That card lets the staff know quickly how to reach the parent(s) or an authorized person of the children, should they need to be notified of sickness, accident or any other emergency.

IMMUNIZATIONS/MEDICAL ASSESSMENT

California law requires that all children in a preschool program be immunized against certain communicable diseases. These diseases are: polio, diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, measles, mumps, rubella, Hepatitis B, HIB Meningitis, and Varicella (chickenpox). Each child should have a physical examination and a record of infectious diseases within thirty (30) days of being accepted into the program. Free exams through the Child Health and Disability Prevention Programs are available.

ABSENCES

When your child will not be attending school, a reason is required for our records. Please call our office before 8:00 a.m. to avoid having to contact you that day. You may let us know by phone or provide us a written excuse when your child returns. We also ask that you write the reason and initial the absence directly on the sign in sheet of the date of absence.

Some absences are excused and some are not excused. Excessive unexcused absences can jeopardize our program funding.

The following are considered excused absences:

- Illness of the child or parent
- Quarantine
- Court Ordered Appearances
- Family emergency (An absence of up to five (5) consecutive days for reason of a family emergency will be considered an excused absence. A family emergency may consist of the illness or death of a member of the immediate family, separation of the parents, eviction, or any other situation that places the family under severe emotional stress.

Best Interest

- A total of ten (10) best interest days per school year are permitted if it is in the child's best interest.

Unexcused Absences

- A total of three (3) unexcused absences per school year are permitted. Any excess unexcused absences will result in the termination of services.
- All absences other than those listed are considered unexcused absences.

FAMILY EMERGENCIES

An absence of up to five (5) consecutive days for reason of a family emergency will be considered an excused absence. A family emergency may consist of the illness or death of a member of the immediate family, separation of the parents, eviction, or any other situation that places the family under severe emotional stress.

LIMITED TERM LEAVE

Parents may request a limited leave, not exceeding four (4) consecutive weeks, during which time their child will not be disenrolled from the center. This will guarantee the family that their child's place in the center will be reserved for them. Since the center will not report the child as enrolled, and therefore will receive no funds for the vacant opening, such a leave will only be granted on a per individual basis and upon the program director's discretion.

FOOD PROGRAM

Mi Escuelita Preschool receives meals from the San Juan Elementary School Cafeteria which is sponsored by the California Department of Education Food & Nutrition Program, and as such, it is our program policy that children are to participate in our meal program. Parents are required to complete an Application for Free and Reduced-Price Meals. Parents must provide us with a Physician's note should a child have any type of food allergy.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

We are committed to providing quality child care and access to comprehensive social services to children and families. You will be provided a Parent Interest Survey to fill out for any resources and referrals you or your family may need. Once we receive it, we will follow up with a referral/response.

TRANSPORTATION

Limited transportation services are available on the regular District bus routes. Please see the transportation department for further details. A child will only be released from the bus to a parent or person authorized by the parent to pick up the child.

CELL PHONE USAGE

We respectfully ask that you not use your cell phone during drop off and pick up times. This time is best to focus on transitioning your child into and out of school each day.

If you are in the classroom, please set your phone to vibrate and take your conversation outside in order to minimize distractions.

VIDEO/PHOTOS

Please be aware that not all staff and parents are comfortable with photos or videos taken. Please limit these to your child.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parents are invited and encouraged to participate in the classroom as often as possible. Your role is key to your child's success and area vital component to our program.

Parents can participate in the following ways:

- ✓ Assisting in the classroom by participating in daily activities, assisting staff with supervision
- ✓ Helping the teacher with projects
- ✓ Helping to set up activities
- ✓ Supporting staff with circle time
- ✓ Attending parent advisory committee meeting and attending parent education workshops
- ✓ Assisting with field trips when scheduled
- ✓ Assisting with beautification projects for the preschool
- ✓ Assisting with school projects at home as they become available
- ✓ Participating with fund-raising events as they occur.

Mi Escuelita Preschool also depends upon parent support for workdays and fundraising events. Our program relies upon the cooperation of all parents as the basis for a quality child development program.

The Parent Advisory Committee is made up of interested parents and center staff. They meet to review the program's quality using an established evaluation system, ECERS, discuss policies and curriculum, parent surveys, parent needs and organize fundraising, workdays, and other program support activities.

TERMINATION OF SERVICES

If a child is absent from the center for three consecutive days and preschool staff do not hear from the parents to find out why the child has not come to school, he or she will be considered withdrawn. Upon request the child may be put back on the waiting list. If a

total of three (3) unexcused absences during the course of the school year are exceeded, this will be considered grounds for termination of services. In all cases of termination of services, a two-week notice will be given to the parents. If you plan to withdraw your child from the center, we also would appreciate a two-week notice.

If your child is not picked up from the center **within 15 minutes from** the end of the class, the first time you will receive a verbal reminder. The second time you will be given a written notice explaining the center's policy with respect to late pick-ups. The third time the situation occurs, after having received the prior warnings, preschool services will be terminated. Emergency situations are taken into account.

RULES OF DISCIPLINE

An important part of a child's learning in a preschool classroom comes from the give and take required of the group setting. Teaching staff helps children express their feelings by listening actively to them, helping them to find the words to express themselves appropriately. Children who are confronted with the effects their actions have upon their peers, develop self-control in their drive to become accepted members of the group. Teachers facilitate problem solving in conflict situations, allowing children to arrive at solutions for themselves to the greatest possible extent. At times it may become necessary to remove a child from the group for a brief period of time (two to five minutes) if his or her behavior threatens their safety or the safety of other children. One on one time will be spent with the child until the child is ready to return to the group setting. Another method occasionally used when the above-mentioned protocol does not work is contacting the parent by telephone to either speak to the child or, in as a last choice effort, to pick the child up from school for the day. Under no circumstances will corporal punishment be allowed in the center.

If a child's behavior leads center staff to believe that the child poses a health or safety risk to themselves or others, a minimum of two parent conferences will be scheduled to develop a plan of action to find a way to meet the needs of all. Such a plan may include family counseling, parenting classes, or a referral to an alternative program. If, after two conferences the Site Supervisor determines that the family did not comply with written agreements, he or she will be given a two-week notice of termination of services.

SICKNESS AT SCHOOL

As children arrive in the morning, teachers will observe and assess the general health condition of the child. If a child exhibits symptoms of an illness, the child will not be admitted to school that day.

A child who had a fever the previous day, or who showed symptoms of an illness, will not be admitted to school until 24 hours after the fever and/or symptoms have disappeared or until a doctor certifies that the child is well enough to be in school and is no longer contagious.

It often happens, particularly in the morning, the previous day's symptoms seem to disappear. The child may appear well and want to go to school. However, unless a child has had the opportunity to fully recover, the same symptoms may reoccur later in the day.

If a child is already in school when it becomes apparent that she/he is sick and needs individual care, we will call the parent(s), or the person designated by the parents, to pick up and care for the child. Until the child is picked up, she/he will remain in an isolated supervised area and made to be as comfortable as possible.

MEDICATION

No medication will be administered by Mi Escuelita staff. The only exception will be those medications for emergency uses and will be discussed on a case-by-case basis.

ACCIDENTS AT SCHOOL

Our staff is keenly aware of the importance of a well-supervised and safe environment. If a minor accident occurs, the staff will provide the necessary first aid. An accident report form will be filled out recording the accident. One copy will be given to the parent and the other copy filed in the child's health record.

For more serious injuries, the child will be taken to the hospital in Hollister. Of course, all efforts will be made to contact the parent immediately and a staff member will remain with the child until a parent or other authorized person arrives.

CONFERENCES

The parent or the child's teacher or Site Supervisor may request a conference at any time to discuss the child progress and/or any concerns. In the course of the school year however, our staff will schedule at least two parent conferences. These may be very short, or lengthy, depending upon the situation. Conferences are meant to convey the child's progress in the areas of physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development. We appreciate the concerns and questions you might have and will try to create a program that can respond to your child's individual needs. Through open communication we can support you in your goals for your child.

PROCEDURE FOR THE TERMINATION OF SERVICES

Appeal information: If you do not agree with the Agency's action as stated in the Notice of Action issued to you, you may appeal the intended action. To protect your appeal rights, you must follow the instructions described in each step listed on the back side of the form. If you do not respond by the required due dates or fail to submit the required appeal information with your appeal request, your appeal may be considered abandoned.

If you disagree with the written decision of the agency, you have 14 days from the date of the written decision to file an appeal with the California Department of Education (CDE). Your appeal to CDE must include the following documents and information:

(a) a written statement specifying the reasons you believe the agency's decision was incorrect (b) a copy of the agency's decision letter, and (c) a copy of both sides of the Notice of Action form. Mail your appeal to the following address:

California Department of Education
Child Development Division
1430 N Street, Suite 3410
Sacramento, CA 95814
Attn: Appeals Coordinator

COMMUNITY CARE LICENSING

Community Care Licensing (CCL), a Division of the California Department of Social Services, is the agency which grants our program its operating license. CCL Staff has the right to interview children, or staff, and to inspect and audit child or facility records without prior consent. CCL has the authority to observe the physical condition of the child (ren) including conditions which indicate abuse, neglect, or inappropriate placement, and to have a licensed medical professional physically examine the child(ren).

If you have any concerns or complaints about the program and feel that you have not been given a satisfactory response by the Director, you may contact Community Care Licensing by calling 408-324-2148.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Disclosure of any information pertaining to the child or the family of the child will be restricted to purposes related to the administration of the program.

The center will permit review of the child's file by the child's parent(s) who enrolled the child or the parent's authorized representative upon request at reasonable times.

The Board of Trustees of the Aromas-San Juan Unified School District is committed to maintaining an educational environment that is free from harassment. Please refer to your copy of the ASJUSD Annual Notification Booklet. Any complaints of this nature will be directed to the Superintendent at (831) 623-4500

If you believe your civil rights have been violated, please contact:

Appeals Coordinator
California Department of Education
Child Development Division
1430 N Street, Suite 6308
Sacramento, CA 95814