

# 2017-2018 Handbook for Families



## Smackover Preschool

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# Welcome!

We welcome you to the Smackover Preschool and to the partnership we will share during these early school years.

The need for good quality early education is great, and Smackover Preschool strives to meet that need by providing nurturing educational experiences. As an Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) program, Smackover Preschool has chosen to meet quality standards that are substantially higher than the minimum requirements. Our goal is to help your child explore and begin to understand the world around us and to lay the foundation for future academic pursuits.

This handbook includes program policies and important information you will need as we share this year. We hope you will read the handbook carefully. If you have questions, please call us.

Please talk to us often. Thank you for choosing Smackover Preschool. We're glad you are here!

Warmly,

Marta Jinks, Preschool Director  
(870) 725-3651  
[marta.jinks@smackover.net](mailto:marta.jinks@smackover.net)



**better beginnings**

EVERY CHILD DESERVES OUR BEST

# What You Need to Know Before Your First Day

## ABC Program Hours

The Smackover Preschool ABC program is open from 7:45 am to 3:15 pm.

Before-school care and after-school care are also available. Please see the Preschool Director for rates.

## What to Wear

Your child needs a complete change of clothes at the center (shirt, shorts, pants/skirt, socks, and underwear). Be sure to write your child's name on each piece of clothing. Give the clothes to one of the teachers in your child's classroom.

**PLEASE, no flip flops.** Tennis shoes are a much better and safer option for the majority of the outside and even indoor activities in which the children will participate.

## Arrival and Departure

**Plan to arrive between 7:45 and 8:00 am.** PLEASE hold your child's hand until you are safely in the building. Take your child to the restroom prior to entering the classroom. Walk with your child to the preschool classroom.

Be sure to sign your child in each morning and sign out in the afternoon.

Because bonding time with your child is important, the use of cell phones is **NOT** allowed in the preschool building while dropping off and picking up your child.

## Release of Children

No child will be released to persons not authorized by a parent or guardian.

## Communication Center

Mailboxes are provided outside each classroom. Please check your child's mailbox daily.

# What You Need to Know the First Week

## Attendance Policy

Children are expected to attend every day beginning at 7:45 am. Children who arrive after 8:15 am will be considered tardy. Children must be picked up promptly at 3:00 pm and no later than 3:15 pm. Please call the preschool if your child will be absent.

## Meals and Snacks

The ABC program serves breakfast, morning snack, lunch, and an afternoon snack for all children. Monthly menus are posted in each classroom and will be sent home. By ABC Rules and Regulations meals and snacks must meet USDA nutritional requirements. For this reason we ask that you not send a lunch with your child. However, if you choose to send a lunch with your child please be advised that if the lunch does not meet USDA nutritional standards we will provide your child with a lunch that does meet nutritional standards.

Breakfast is served at 8:00 am.

## Behavior Guidance

Our program uses a variety of positive guidance techniques to help children learn appropriate behaviors and develop self-control, such as Conscious Discipline. Physical punishments and threats are not used by our staff.

## Toys from Home

Children are encouraged to leave their toys at home.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What if my child is sick?

If your child is ill, please keep your child at home. Be sure to call to let us know why he/she will be absent. If your child becomes ill during the day, we will call you. (Please see “Illness” page 9)

## What school supplies does my child need?

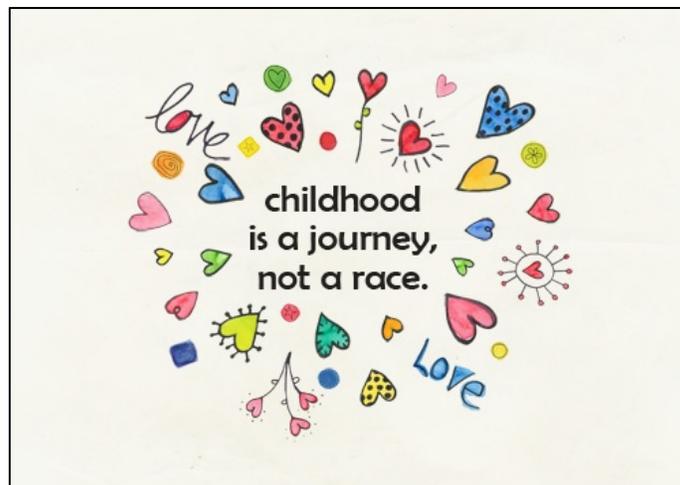
All supplies are provided by Smackover Preschool for the ABC Program.

## Do you teach the children anything?

Preschool children learn in unique ways, so our activities may not look like “school”. Our teachers plan activities that help children increase their thinking and creativity skills. Children’s experiences will strengthen their literacy skills and encourage them to investigate the world around them. In other words, we’re teaching early reading, math, science, social studies, health, music, art, and more!

## What if there’s a tornado?

Your child’s safety is our first concern. We practice emergency drills as required so that children and staff know what to do. Emergency drill procedures are posted in each classroom.



# About Our Program

## Purpose

The purpose of the Smackover Preschool ABC Program is to provide a safe and caring environment in which each child can play, learn, and grow.

## Our Philosophy

We believe that...

- Children learn by using their senses and moving.
- Each child learns and develops at his/her own pace.
- Children learn through language and rapidly developing their language skills.
- Preschool children need hands-on experiences with a wide variety of materials.
- Families and program staff are partners in supporting the child's development and learning.

## Attendance

### Hours

Our program is open from 7:45 am to 3:00 pm. Your child is expected to attend for the full day. Chronic absences from preschool will result in action by staff. (See ABSENCES page 7)

### Late Pick Up

We expect children to be picked up promptly at 3:00 pm. (Children who are enrolled in After Care will be transitioned into the After Care program at 3:15 pm.)

Two things happen when you are late picking up your child. First, your child becomes anxious about why you are late. Second, staff (have responsibilities after children depart, and have lives outside of the preschool) may have to stay at preschool past their time and are late for their afternoon or evening commitments.

If children are picked up after 3:15 pm by the school clock, a \$5 late fee will be charged per child for every 5 minutes late. If your child is not picked up within a reasonable amount of time, appropriate authorities will be called to take custody of the child after attempts to contact the parent/guardian have proven unsuccessful.

### Before and After Care

For your convenience, child care is offered before 7:45 am and after 3:15 pm. Your child must be enrolled in before and/or after care before we can provide this service. Contact the preschool director for details about hours and fees.

### Absences

If your child must be absent from preschool, please call to let us know. Illness and family emergencies arise from time to time. However, more than 10 absences during any semester of the school year is considered chronic. A parent conference with the Preschool Director will be required. Continued absences may result in discharge from the program and/or referral to the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education for intervention.

### Tardiness

The ABC program day starts at 8:00 am when breakfast is served. If your child arrives after 8:15 am by the school clock, he/she will be counted tardy for the day. After the third tardy, a parent conference with the director will be required.

## **Staff**

Lead teachers hold a Bachelor's Degree or an Associate Degree. All other classroom teachers are required to have or obtain, at a minimum, their Child Development Associate credentials. Several of our staff members have advanced degrees beyond the CDA.

All staff members are required to participate in on-going training in child development and early childhood education.

Our staffing maintains, at a minimum, a ratio of 1 adult to 10 children in the ABC program, 1 adult to 8 children in the toddler room, and 1 adult to 5 children in the infant room.

The Preschool Director initiates a background check on every new employee, as required by current licensing requirements. In addition, references from previous employers are required.

## **Curriculum**

Our activities are planned around your child's individual needs, abilities, and interests. Because children learn through their senses and by moving, it may not look like school to you! Teachers use play experiences to help children learn skills and concepts. Activities encourage exploration, creativity, and problem solving. The staff works with children to enhance their learning and development in all areas: social-emotional, physical, language/literacy, and intellectual.

The Smackover Preschool ABC program has chosen to use Creative Curriculum and Adventures in Learning to guide their planning.

## Field Trips

Preschool may take field trips throughout the year. Parents must sign a field trip permission form for each trip. If your place of employment would make an interesting trip for the class, please talk with your child’s teacher. All field trips and special activities will be provided at no cost to families.

## Calendar

Smackover Preschool students attend school for 178 days. Our program follows the Smackover-Norphlet School District Calendar.

<b>2017-2018 Smackover Preschool Calendar</b>	
First Day of School.....	August 14, 2017 (Monday)
Labor Day Holiday.....	September 4, 2017 (Monday)
Preschool Parent-Teacher Conferences.....	October, 19, 2017 (Thursday)
No School.....	October 16, 2017 (Monday)
Thanksgiving Holidays.....	November 20-24, 2017 (Mon. – Fri.)
Christmas/New Year Holidays.....	December 21, 2017 – January 3, 2018
MLK Holiday.....	January 15, 2018 (Monday)
Presidents’ Day Holiday.....	February 19, 2018 (Monday)
Preschool Parent-Teacher Conferences.....	February, 22, 2018 (Thursday)
Spring Break.....	March 19 – 23, 2018 (Mon. – Fri.)
No School .....	April 30, 2018 (Monday)
Last Day of School.....	May 23, 2018 (Wednesday)
Make-Up Snow Days (if needed).....	May 24, 25, 29, 30 & 31, 2018

# Health

## Illness

For the good of all children and the staff, please keep your child at home if he/she is ill. Children should be free of fever for a 24 hour period without medication before returning to school. If symptoms appear during the day, we will call you to pick up your child immediately.

If your child is exposed to a contagious illness, we will send a notice home with your child or contact you by phone or e-mail. Please let us know if your child has been exposed to a disease away from school so that we can watch for symptoms.

State health regulations require that children with the following symptoms be excluded from child care:

- **Fever** over 101° taken orally
- **Diarrhea** (3 or more watery stools in a 24 hour period)
- **Vomiting** (2 or more occasions within the past 24 hours)
- **Rash** that is not obviously associated with diapering, heat, or allergic reactions to medications
- **Sore throat** if associated with fever or swollen glands in the neck
- **Severe coughing** leading to gagging, vomiting, or difficulty breathing
- **Pink eye**
- **Untreated scabies, head lice, or the presence of nits**
- **Multiple sores in the mouth** with drooling
- **Ringworm**
- **Impetigo**

## Immunizations

Every child enrolled in Smackover Preschool must be fully immunized. A photocopy of the child's current immunization record is required at the time of enrollment. Please remember to provide a new copy if your child receives additional immunizations during the school year. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in termination of your child's enrollment.

## Medication

Our program staff does not administer medication to children that is not given four (4) or more times a day. Medications given four (4) or more times a day will only be given if in the original container. Parents who are not working are strongly encouraged to come to the preschool and administer the appropriate dosage themselves.

## Injuries

**Minor injuries** will be treated with appropriate first aid and you will be informed about them on an accident report. Accident reports are placed on the sign-in desk for parents to sign. A copy will be provided upon request.

You will be called to the center immediately if your child sustains a more **serious injury**. In cases that we perceive to be potentially life threatening, we will call an ambulance to transport your child to a medical facility and will direct you to meet the ambulance. All costs for the ambulance and medical fees are the responsibility of the child's family.

## Nutrition

Smackover Preschool serves two meals and two snacks per day. Menus are posted in each classroom. There is no charge for these meals. Milk and/or juice are also provided daily. Do not send other drinks for children to have with their lunch. By ABC Rules and Regulations, meals and snacks must meet USDA nutritional requirements. For this reason we ask that you not send a lunch with your child. However, if you choose to send a lunch with your child please be advised that if the lunch does not meet USDA nutritional standards we will provide your child with a lunch that does meet nutritional standards.

**If your child will not be eating the breakfast that is served, please have your child eat at home. Please do not send your child to preschool with breakfast items.**

Please do not send food items to school which need to be microwaved.

Meal and snack times are as follows:

- Breakfast – 8:00 am
- Morning Snack – 10:00 am
- Lunch – 12:00 pm
- Afternoon Snack – 2:30 pm

### **Food Allergies**

Please notify your child's teacher if your child has food allergies. You will need to bring a statement from your child's doctor confirming the food allergy and including any special instructions or emergency procedures. Menu items with equivalent value will be substituted for allergy-causing foods.

## Rest

Children are offered an opportunity to rest after lunch. Children have sleeping mats or cots labeled with their names. Clean sheets are provided weekly or more often if needed. Children are not required to go to sleep. Non-sleepers may rest quietly with a book while lying on their cots/mats.

## Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is not just recess, but is an extension of our indoor learning opportunities.

All children will play outdoors every day, weather permitting. The length of outdoor play times is adjusted according to the weather. Factors such as humidity and wind are considered in determining whether children will be able to play outdoors and how long they will stay out.

- If children are healthy enough to be at preschool, they are healthy enough to go outdoors.
- Please dress your child for the weather, especially cool mornings in fall and spring.
- Sneakers with socks, or other similar shoes, are best for running, climbing, and enjoying the outdoors.



# Safety and Emergencies

## Release of Children

No child will be released to persons not authorized by the parent and/or guardian. We must have written authorization of changes in transportation or a phone call to the preschool director or child's teacher. **If we have any doubts that the person picking up your child has not been authorized by a parent or guardian, we will not release the child until we contact you.**

## Emergency Procedures

Evacuation procedures for fire and other emergencies are practiced as required. Severe weather drills are also conducted as required.

When severe weather is in the area, the director monitors weather reports and alerts staff to be prepared to quickly move children to safety. Emergency procedures are posted in each classroom. The staff knows and periodically reviews procedures for other emergencies, such as an intruder or a shelter-in place alert.

## Weather-Related Closings

When Smackover School District closes due to severe weather, Smackover Preschool will be closed. Closing will be announced on local radio stations, Alert Now phone messages, and The Buckaroo Blog. If the closing is announced in the middle of the day, please pick up your child immediately.

## Abuse Reporting

Our teachers are required by state law to report suspected child abuse/maltreatment. This includes non-accidental injuries such as welts, bruises, cuts, burns, scratches, and broken bones. Suspected sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect are also reported. Child neglect is defined as abandonment; lack of food, utilities, shelter; or lack of supervision.

Teachers are trained to recognize indicators of possible abuse. If they fail to report suspect abuse/maltreatment, teachers can be charged with a Class C misdemeanor. Reports are confidential and are considered allegations until an investigation is complete. The phone number for the Child Abuse Hotline is posted on the parent bulletin board near the sign-in sheet.

## Interviews by DHS and Other Agencies

Any staff member or children in attendance may be interviewed by Child Care Licensing, by the Division of Child and Family Services, and/or by law enforcement officers for the purpose of investigations or to determine compliance with licensing requirement. Child interviews do not require parental notice or consent.

# Children's Needs

## Clothing

Children in our program are active and creative. So that your child can fully participate in all the activities, please follow these guidelines when dressing your child for school:

- Children can **easily manage clothing for toileting**; fasten and unfasten buttons, zippers, snaps, and buckles.
- Clothing is **washable and durable** enough to permit vigorous play.
- Clothing is **inexpensive** so that soiling, damage, or loss will not cause great concern.
- Flip flops, sandals, open toed shoes, and dress shoes can be hazardous and are not allowed.
- Clothing is **appropriate to the weather conditions**. Children will spend time outdoors every day. Be sure to send jackets, sweaters, coats, gloves, and hats as needed.
- ALL clothing is **labeled** with the child's name. Smackover Preschool is not responsible for lost clothing items.

**Please keep a change of clothes at school.** Every child must have a complete change of clothes at school (socks, underwear, shirt, shorts/pants/skirt.) Please check periodically to see if your child's change of clothes needs replacing. If a change of clothes becomes necessary during the day, the soiled clothes will be placed in a bag with your child's name on it.

## Cubbies

Children are provided with cubbies as a means of keeping their belonging together. Please check your child's cubby each day for soiled clothes and other items that need to go home.

## Toys

We have many materials for the children to explore. **Children are not permitted to bring toys to school.** It is often difficult to share a toy with a group and the toy may get broken. For reasons of safety, **no latex balloons are allowed in the center.**

## Birthdays

Your child's birthday is a special occasion to share with friends. If you would like to provide a simple snack for the group, please plan the date in advance with your child's teacher.

## Behavior Guidance

Our goal is to help children learn acceptable behavior and develop self-control. Our program is designed to promote positive and enjoyable learning experiences and to build trusting, respectful relationships. A well-planned schedule, classroom arrangement, and curriculum, along with a well-trained staff,

significantly reduce instances of inappropriate behavior. However, when children do make mistakes in behavior, we use the following guidance techniques:

- Tell the child what he/she CAN do.
- Give choices whenever possible, but only when the child really has a choice.
- Support children in learning to solve their own problems and work out conflicts.
- Re-direct a child to another activity.
- Help children learn how to play with friends.

Physical punishment and threats are never used by our staff.

#### Limits of Behavior

- You may not hurt others.
- You may not hurt yourself.
- You may not hurt toys and equipment.

#### Guidance and Discipline Policy

Parents are expected to take an active role in the disciplinary process.

Discipline consists primarily of reinforcement for appropriate behavior.

Extinction, verbal reprimands, and a time-out station will be used to decrease inappropriate behaviors. Time-out shall not be used for children under two years of age. The amount of time a child may be assigned to time-out is one minute per year of age.

No corporal punishment (spanking) is administered.

#### Patterns of Inappropriate Behavior

When a pattern of inappropriate behavior emerges, parents are required to meet with our staff. The goal will be to work together to find a solution to the problem behavior and resolve the difficulty. If outside professional consultation or evaluation is necessary, the Preschool Director will invite an appropriate consultant to join the parent-staff partnership.

## **Children with Special Needs**

Smackover Preschool accepts all children. No child is denied enrollment due to special medical, health, or developmental needs. We will work with special service providers to ensure that your child has the supports needed to foster development.

## **Transitioning**

As children grow, they may move to a different group within the center. We will work with you to make the transition a positive experience. We will plan activities for the children and provide suggestions that will help your child bridge from preschool to kindergarten.

# Family-Staff Partnerships

## Confidentiality

All information about children and families is considered confidential. Staff members and volunteers will maintain the confidentiality of each family and of each child's educational records.

## Orientation

All families are expected to attend our fall open house. During this time, we will explain policies and procedures and answer your questions. If a child enrolls during the year, the family will be asked to participate in an orientation conference with the Preschool Director.

## Parent-Teacher Conferences

Conferences are scheduled twice a year at a time that you will be able to attend. We look forward to those special opportunities to talk about your child's progress. Parents or teachers may wish to request additional conferences as needed.

## Communication

We use a number of methods to communicate between Smackover Preschool and your family:

- Talk to your child's teacher at drop-off and pick-up time.
- Read posted daily schedule.
- Read special event notices posted near the sign-in sheet.
- Enjoy the photos, children's work, and other documentation of children's activities. These are posted in your child's room and throughout the center.
- Check your child's mailbox for notices.
- Talk with your child's teacher in a parent-teacher conference.
- Visit the center! You are welcome to drop by any time.
- Follow The Buckaroo Blog.

### What is The Buckaroo Blog?

The Buckaroo Blog was created to provide parents, students, faculty, and members of our community with the most current information about the Smackover School District. You can visit The Buckaroo Blog at <http://thebuckaroblog.wordpress.com/>

If you enter your email address in the section entitled Follow Blog via Email, you will receive notification when a new post is created. You are welcome and encouraged to share this blog with parents, students, and community members.

## **Daily Arrivals and Departures**

A parent or authorized adult must accompany children into and out of the center at all times, and must sign children in and out. Arrival and departure times are very busy; for safety, please hold your child's hand in the parking lot.

Drop-off and pick-up times are opportunities to exchange information with our staff. As staff members are greeting children, parents often have lots of information to give us. Please help us do a good job by not using your cell phones in the building at drop off or pick up times. If it's important for us to know, write it down and hand it to your child's teacher or the Preschool Director.

## **Meetings and Special Events**

Family events will be planned throughout the year. We encourage your family to participate in these special activities. Notice of these events will be posted on the parent bulletin board.

## **Photographs and Video**

Teachers use digital cameras and digital videos to record children's activities. Documentation of children's activities is used for families to see what their children are doing in the preschool and also for children to recall what they have been doing. You will see photographs throughout the preschool. Videos may be used occasionally during meetings or special events.

Photographs and videos may also be submitted occasionally to the El Dorado News Times and The Buckaroo Blog to inform the community about our program. Our staff may also share photographs and videos with other teachers in professional meetings, classes, and workshops. Photographs are also used as part of the Work Sampling assessments.

During the enrollment process, parents will sign a release for their children to be included in photographs and videos.

## **Separation of Church and State**

Pursuant to rules and regulation of the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, Smackover Preschool is in compliance with the First Amendment in matters regarding the separation of church and state.

- ABC funds must be used exclusively to support allowable ABC program costs incurred to provide non-religious instruction and activities during the ABC day; and
- No religious activity may occur during any ABC day regardless of the source of funds used to support the activity.

# Enrollment

## Eligibility

We accept all eligible applicants until our maximum enrollment is reached. To review eligibility requirements, contact the Preschool Director.

## Enrollment

As part of the enrollment process, parents will attend open house. At that time parents/guardians will complete all of the necessary forms.

An enrollment form, copy of birth certificate, copy of social security card, a record of up-to-date immunizations, and a signature on a contract agreement must be on file for admission application.

## Withdrawal

If your child will be withdrawing from our program before the end of the year, please inform us as soon as possible. This allows us to help your child prepare for a new experience. Also, we can notify another family who may be waiting for a place in our program.

## Discharge Policy

Children may be discharged from Smackover Preschool in the following circumstances:

- Payment for the child's care is not made.
- A child becomes uncontrollable or interferes with the learning of other students and a consultation with parent/guardian has yielded no results. (Approval for dismissal/expulsion of an ABC child in the program will require final approval from the DCCECE.)
- Chronic absences and/or tardies from the program.
- Any other reason deemed necessary by the administration.

## Transportation

Transportation is the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

# ARKids First

The information below comes from the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS).

You can access the DHS website directly at  
<http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/Pages/default.aspx>.

You can access information regarding ARKids First directly at  
<http://www.arkidsfirst.com/home.htm>

ARKids First health insurance provides two coverage options for more than 70,000 Arkansas children who otherwise might have gone without.

- ARKids A is Medicaid for children and offers low-income families a comprehensive package of benefits.
- ARKids B provides coverage for families with higher incomes.

DHS has streamlined the application process for both packages, allowing you to apply for either package on the same form. Here are some other important highlights:

- You can now [apply for ARKids First online](#). (This link will open in a new window. To return to this website, close the window.)
- You can get an ARKids First application by calling their toll-free hotline, 1-888-474-8275, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. You do not have to visit a DHS office.
- DHS will give you complete information for the ARKids A benefit package and the ARKids B benefit package.
- You can print an application from our website using your home computer. Or you can go to your local library for assistance.
- None of the benefits have changed for either benefit package.

Your children's health is DHS's main concern. If you have questions, call the ARKids First toll-free hotline or visit your local DHS office or public library.

# Verification of Receipt of Handbook

Please sign this form to indicate that you received the 2017-2018 Smackover Preschool Handbook for Families. Your signature does not mean that you agree or disagree with the handbook; it just acknowledges receipt of the handbook.

Return this form to your child's teacher as soon as possible.

I have received a copy of the **2017-2018 Smackover Preschool Handbook for Families**.

My child's name is \_\_\_\_\_.

Parent/Guardian's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**We welcome you to the Smackover Preschool Family!**

