**FAMILY + PRESCHOOL = SCHOOL SUCCESS**

***La Escuelita Bilingual Preschool*** is delighted to welcome your child and family this year! We want to partner with you so your child learns, grows, and gets ready for kindergarten success. Young children can learn two languages (or more) with enthusiastic help from their families and teachers…so we are excited about working together! We will share ideas for learning through monthly workshops, weekly tips, and parent-teacher conferences. So please tell us about topics that are important to you, and your ideas for making our program better.

Our Family Coordinator will be happy to talk with you about our program and your ideas/ concerns. We will send a calendar of activities and ask you to volunteer and participate throughout the year. ***So let’s work together and celebrate your children’s learning and growth this year!***

**CLASS POLICIES**

1. The three-year-old class will maintain a ratio of 12 children to 2 teachers. The four-year-old class will maintain a ratio of 14 children to 2 teachers. Classroom numbers are maintained at the discretion of the board.
2. In compliance with North Carolina law, students must be the correct class age on or before August 31st to be considered for enrollment. Admission will be reviewed by the board when appropriate.

**SCHOOL SCHEDULE**

1. Our preschool program meets on Monday through Friday mornings from 9-12. Please see the calendar for holidays and teacher workdays when children will not come to school.
2. School begins promptly at **9:00 a.m.** When a child is late, it is awkward for the child and for teachers who have already begun teaching activities.
3. We will be ready to receive the children by **8:55 a.m.** Before that time, our teachers are getting ready for the school day. Please honor this teacher work time and do not bring your child early.
4. Dismissal time is **12:00 p.m.** Please pick up your child promptly, and call if you have an emergency that will make you late **(WhatsApp link or 704.641.3814**).

**ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE**

1. **Arrival**: please park your car and walk your child to the classroom. Please say goodbye to your child with a hug, tell her you will be back soon. If necessary, let the teacher hold a crying child and help him go to class. Your child will feel secure knowing that school is a comfortable place without mom or dad, and that saying goodbye is part of the process.
2. **Departure**: please park your car and come to the classroom to pick up your child.
3. Please be sure to sign your child into school and out of school, using the daily log. Note any updates in contact information for emergencies, and any changes in the person who will pick up your child. Anyone picking up your child (other than you) will be asked to show identification.

**ATTENDANCE**

1. Your children’s **daily attendance is very important**! Our teachers offer excellent lessons every day, so your children will be missing important learning opportunities if they don’t come to school. Excessive absenteeism will result in school discharge.
2. Please text the director on WhatsApp if your child will be absent (for illness or other reasons) or late. If your child is absent often, La Escuelita’s family coordinator will contact you.

**WEATHER**

Please listen to the radio or tune in to the local TV stations for school closings due to bad weather.  Anytime Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools are closed, La Escuelita will also be closed.  If Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools have a one-hour delayed start, La Escuelita will also have a delayed start. If CMS delays school by two hours, La Escuelita will cancel classes for the day.Canceled days will **not** be rescheduled or made up.

**TUITION**

1. The tuition is determined on a sliding scale from $75 to $350 per month depending on your financial status which is determined by the Aid Application. This should be paid within the first 5 days of the month by cash, check, VENMO, or through our website. There is a $10 charge for returned checks.
2. Please talk with the Director if your family needs financial assistance.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

La Escuelita teachers do not share child or family information with anyone but designated La Escuelita board members for planning family activities and oversight of our preschool.

**HEALTH POLICIES**

1. A medical form, including a record that your child has received all the immunizations as required by state law for his/her age, signed by your child’s physician, is required for every child and **MUST** be in their file by the time school begins. We do not accept exemptions.
2. For the safety of all our children, please keep your child at home if he/she shows any of these symptoms **within the past 24 hours**:
* A temperature of 100 degrees or higher.
* Diarrhea or vomiting
* A rash
* Eye, ear, or nasal discharge, other than clear
* Sore throat
1. Your child should remain at home until he/she has been **free of symptoms for 24 hours.** This is for your child’s protection since his/her resistance is low and he/she is more susceptible to other infections.
2. If your child is going to be absent or contracts a contagious disease (chicken pox, conjunctivitis, lice, etc.), please notify the teacher.
3. If your child is unable to go outdoors, please keep him/her home since we go outside every day the weather permits.
4. If your child becomes sick at school, we will contact you or your emergency contact to immediately pick up your child. Please keep these numbers up to date. After your child has been sent home, he/she must remain symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school.
5. During hot and sunny weather, it is a good idea for you to apply sunscreen to the exposed areas of your child’s skin before you bring them to school.
6. It is the policy of La Escuelita Bilingual Preschool that all children entering our program must be potty trained.They should not need to be changed at school except for the occasional accident. We will call you to change a bowel movement.
7. Teachers are not allowed to give medication at school. If you have any concerns about medication for your child, please talk with the Teacher or Director.

**DAILY ITEMS**

1. Everything your child brings to school comes in the **provided school bag**. Do not bring backpacks. Backpacks are difficult for children to use and are not good for bringing home preschool projects.
2. Please bring the provided school bag every day and check it daily for special announcements and schoolwork.
3. **We provide a change of clothes if your child has an accident. Please wash them and return the clothes to school.**
4. Every day your child should bring a water bottle and healthful **LUNCH** (cut in small portions to prevent choking) that does not require refrigeration or heating. It should be easy for your child to manage independently. PLEASE, no candy, chewing gum, or sweets of **any** kind. Just water to drink please.
5. **Do not bring these items to school:**
* Special toys or personal items (can be easily lost)
* Money or jewelry
* Weapon-like toys

**DRESS AT SCHOOL**

1. Please dress your child for active play… washable, play clothes and sturdy CLOSED-TOED SHOES – flip-flops, sandals and “crocs” may cause falls.
2. Please help your child by dressing her/him in clothes that can easily be handled in the bathroom.
3. Children go outside daily (unless it is raining, or the temperature falls below 40 degrees F.). Please dress your child for daily weather outdoors.

**MESSAGES**

1. Please send all messages in writing (note or email).
2. During school hours, the first responsibility of the teacher is to the children; therefore, it is difficult to have conversations during class hours except in cases of emergency. If you wish to have a conversation or conference with the teacher, please message the director on **WhatsApp** or call the school phone at **(704) 896-0471 ext. 144 and leave a message**.

**VISITS**

1. Parents are always welcome at La Escuelita Bilingual Preschool. Visits are best during snack, activity, or play time. Please tell your teacher before you come (she’ll tell you the best times) and wait until the third week of school for your first visit.
2. Family-school partnerships are important. Please work with the teachers or director or Family Coordinator about any problems or concerns you might have about your child. We are happy to talk with you.
3. Please talk to the teacher if you wish to celebrate your child’s **BIRTHDAY** at school. You are invited to come after 11:30 to read a story, have a tiny treat (like MINI cupcakes) and sing Happy Birthday with the class.

**SPECIAL NEEDS**

1. Food allergies: Please let us know about any food allergies so we can avoid exposure for your child.
2. Special learning and behavior needs: We will work with you and your family to support your child’s special needs. If we cannot not provide the best services, we will work with you to find another school or service that can help.

**TIPS FOR FAMILIES**

1. Take an interest in the school and the work your child brings home. Attend parent workshops and teacher conferences. Volunteer to help with projects. Read weekly newsletters and tips.
2. There will be family events and workshops that will take place throughout the year; it is the expectation of La Escuelita that you attend as many as possible.
3. Build in your child a wholesome, friendly attitude toward school.
4. Take time to listen to your child’s daily experiences, but don’t pressure. Some children will talk freely, others will not.
5. Spend time with your child individually, one-on-one. Plan quality time together.
6. READevery day…reading in Spanish or English helps your child learn ideas and vocabulary!
7. Report any upsetting experience that you think will help the teachers understand the child better. You may ask for a conference at any time.
8. Teach your child self-reliance by encouraging them to do things for themselves. Allow time for them to do these things.
9. Please let us know if you have any concerns about your child’s experiences at La Escuelita or suggestions for improvements.

**Guidance / Discipline**

Our teachers and volunteers are educated to always treat children in a respectful manner. All guidance/discipline is an opportunity to help children grow and learn to interact with their classmates in socially acceptable ways.

A. In an effort to prevent unacceptable behavior, our teachers will:

1. Provide a safe environment.
2. Prepare the environment with careful consideration given to the developmental characteristics and interests of children, and in a way that offers and promotes acceptable choices.
3. Set clear and reasonable limits according to the age of the child.
4. Model behaviors and language that are appropriate, giving children a choice of ways to handle different situations.
5. Help children recognize, understand, and label their feelings.
6. Praise and encourage children for making good choices.
7. Be active listeners as children express themselves.

B. In response to inappropriate behaviors, our teachers will:

1. Consistently enforce reasonable limits that have been established.
2. Listen to and talk children through situations that involve conflict, giving them explanations that they can understand / help children problem solve.
3. Ignore an inappropriate behavior if it does not involve a dangerous situation.
4. Redirect the child to a more appropriate activity.
5. Model for the child appropriate ways of dealing with the situation.
6. Make a change to the current activity to distract attention from the situation/behavior.
7. Allow children to experience the logical consequences of his/her choices or actions.
8. Evaluate and make changes to the physical environment if needed.
9. Use short periods of “redirection” time away from the group if necessary.
10. Talk with parents to try to better understand the situation, enlisting their help and support.
11. There will be TWO adults with the children at all times. Staff or volunteers are not allowed to humiliate, shun, use inappropriate physical contact, or withhold food or recess for discipline with any child. Any such behavior by staff/volunteers would result in immediate dismissal.

##  Electronic Communication, Social Media, and Photos

ALL communications should go through our WhatsApp groupings. Parents may communicate with the Director or through class groups which include the teachers. There should be no direct electronic communication between family members and teachers. It is distracting.

Program administrators have a public social media page for the school on FaceBook. This is solely an avenue for sharing photos and newsletters of the weekly curriculum theme. We keep photo release consent forms on file.

Any photos taken on-site at La Escuelita Bilingual Preschool are the sole property of the school and should be transferred to the “teacher” WhatsApp group for use by the director on FaceBook and class groupings on WhatsApp. All photos should be deleted from personal phones and never used outside the preschool program.

**CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

By North Carolina law, teachers and caregivers are required to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. If such cases arise, the staff member will report to La Escuelita board liaison and church clergy, who will notify the protective services unit of the Department of Social Services.

I have read the FAMILY HANDBOOK \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_