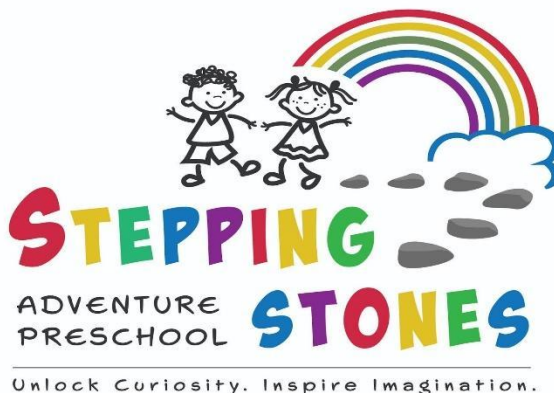


# Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool

Unlock Curiosity Inspire Imagination



## Parent Handbook 2026-2027

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Interpreter – Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool can provide a translator if a translator is needed.

About Our Program:

## **WELCOME TO STEPPING STONES ADVENTURE PRESCHOOL!**

### **Philosophy and Mission**

When your child enrolls at Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool, your whole family becomes a part of our community. We look forward to being a place where your child's growth and development is nurtured, where you make lasting relationships with our teachers and other families, and where you feel supported in your parenting journey. Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool is guided by the following mission statement: Our preschool provides a safe, nurturing, and creative environment where all children and families are an important part of our learning community. Our unique play-based program offers various activities that are specifically designed to encourage each child's growth. Through cooperative play and creative activities, children reach their intellectual, social, emotional and physical development naturally and with ease. We focus on the whole child, offering hands-on experiences that enrich and build each child's learning skills according to their age and ability.

### **Learning Through Play**

Play provides the foundation for children's development of skills and concepts and is essential to healthy brain development. Play allows children to use their creativity while developing their imagination, dexterity, physical, cognitive, and emotional strengths.

- Play expands problem-solving, social, language, and physical skills (fine and gross motor)
- Play allows children to expand on new ideas, and invent new games and rules.
- Play helps children figure out how things work and develop problem-solving skills.
- Children learn to cooperate, listen to, negotiate, and even compromise with others through play.
- Play helps children learn impulse control and self-regulation.
- Children build a sense of self-confidence by engaging in play. They attempt new activities and skills when comfortable and supported.

Our focus is to continuously stimulate the child through an enriched environment full of activities that promote experimentation at every developmental level. We are committed to the development of a child's self-esteem through self-directed, cooperative play. We believe that play is a child's work and that all learning is experiential with appropriate guidance from teachers.

**Core Values** The following core values shape our community:

**Inclusion:**

Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool is a nurturing community where all students are welcome. The children learn in a play-based environment focused on social-emotional development, valuing each individual's contribution, background, and circumstance. Children thrive with positive peer interactions and opportunities for authentic play. Children will be seen, known, and accepted for who they are.

**Parent Cooperative Partnership:**

Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool (SSAP) uses a team approach to educate students ages 2.5-6 years old. Teachers and parent volunteers work together to meet children at their developmental level. In addition to classroom learning, children have the opportunity to participate in groups, guided by a teacher or parent, to target a specific developmental domain. Whether it is fine motor development, social emotional communication, large motor development, or school readiness, teachers and parent volunteers support the whole child in preparation for life. Parents are at the cornerstone of the child's learning and Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool considers parents the child's first and best teacher. Teachers have regular communication with parents and value this partnership. SSAP has materials and resources available for parents including books to check out, preschool learning bags to check out, and a variety of resources including nutrition support, health and wellness support, challenging behavior support, etc. All materials and resources are located on our Parent Resource table at the top of the ramp through the double doors.

**Belonging:**

Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool strives to have every child and family experience a sense of belonging. When families enter the building, they will feel love, acceptance, inclusion, compassion and support for their family's life journey.

**Program Curriculum & Assessment**

At Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool, we offer a play based and developmentally appropriate curriculum that unlocks curiosity and inspires imagination. We offer a balance of child directed play and learning as well as teacher directed activities. We use many types of curriculums to meet the needs of each child and classroom. Our curriculum emphasizes an integration of all areas of learning including social/emotional, literacy and language, mathematics, science, physical health, gross and fine motor, safety, nutrition, and creative expression. Teachers are trained in Pyramid Plus Positive Behavior Development and Conscious Discipline and teach children how to express and understand emotions. All cognitive subjects (Language and Literacy, Math, Science, and Social Studies) are taught through play and small and whole group learning using a hands-on approach. We also supplement early literacy concepts using material from Handwriting Without Tears and Foundations. Large Motor instruction takes place every day through creative movement and music. Our assessments allow teachers to be present and engaged in the child's learning. We follow the Colorado Early Learning & Development Guidelines and assess all of the above domains, using the results to

guide our instruction and activities. Each child has a portfolio, which tracks their progress throughout the school year. These include various assessments and other work samples. Our preschool also conducts a developmental formal screening within the first 60 days of the school year and again in the Spring. This screening covers the Visual/Fine Motor/Adaptive, Language, Cognitive, Social/Emotional and Gross Motor domains. We communicate our findings to parents during Parent-Teacher conferences in the Fall and in the Spring or prior to these times if there is a concern.

### **Quality Rating**

Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool received a level 4 out of 5 from the Colorado Shines Rating in October of 2025. This is a quality rating and improvement system that monitors and supports early learning programs. It guides our program to develop and maintain our skills as professionals, with families and the community, through assessments, training, and developmentally appropriate practices for early childhood education. The rating measures: Workforce, Family Partnerships, Management & Administration, Learning Environment, and Child Health. Our program creates goals for each of these areas in our QIP (Quality Improvement Plan). These goals are continuously evaluated and updated. If you would like to view these goals, we have a copy available in the office and in our Family Resource Area. Please see the attached website to learn more about this. [Colorado Shines | Search](#)

### **Our Teachers**

We have highly qualified teachers who are passionate about early childhood education. Our teachers are consistent throughout the school year and stay with the same children for that year. We also have qualified substitute teachers who have been with our school for several years. Our Early Childhood Teachers, Assistant Teachers, Substitute Teachers, and Directors must pass CBI, FBI and Trails abuse and neglect background checks before working with students and every 5 years after their initial background checks. All staff members must meet the qualifications required by state licensing which may be found at [Qualifications | Colorado Department of Early Childhood](#). Director qualifications can be found on the same site. If there is a second dominant language in a classroom, our program will try to hire at least one bilingual teacher who is fluent in the dominant language to be a primary caregiver in that classroom. Prior to caring for children, all staff must complete a State Department-approved training in emergency and disaster preparedness: Evacuation, Shelter in Place, Lockdown, and Active Shooter on Premises Plans for Children in Care as well as fire safety and the use of available fire extinguishers and fire alarms. All staff must complete 15 hours of annual training in the following areas: Child Growth & Development, Healthy & Safe Environments, Developmentally Appropriate Practices, Guidance, Family Relationships, Cultural & Individual Diversity, Professionalism/Business Practices, Nutrition, Child Abuse Recognition & Reporting, or Social Emotional Development. In addition to the training, staff must be current on CPR, 1st Aid, and Standard Precautions and be certified in administering medication.

### **Family Partnerships/Transitions**

Before enrollment, families are invited to tour our facility to see the classrooms in action, meet the teachers, and get a feel for our preschool. During the tour, we share the daily schedule, classroom routines, and what developmental skills/areas will be taught and practiced. During the summer and before school starts for the year, we host two playground playdates/meet and greet, where families and their children can meet teachers, other classmates and families, and explore their new classroom and playground. Students who enroll after this are invited to set up another time to visit their new classroom and meet their teacher.

Starting preschool is a big step for any young child and we strive to make it as smooth as possible for the children and families. Details and information on the particular needs of the child will be collected before starting at Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool. We encourage parents to speak positively about starting school. We are happy for children to bring a favorite toy, or comfort item to help their transition into school.

We hold a Parent Orientation in September to share more about our program. During this meeting, we share the results of our Annual Family Survey and our yearly goals for the program. Our directors and teachers explain the developmental domains and how we use our curriculums to help children further their development in all areas. Parent/Teacher conferences are offered twice per school year in the Fall and Spring. We discuss the child's developmental progress, strengths, challenges, and interactions in the classroom. We also establish goals for the child at school and home.

Transitions, to kindergarten or another preschool classroom, take place during the Fall and Spring conferences. Teachers will discuss with parents where their child is developmentally and what schooling option for kindergarten would best meet their needs. If teachers feel a student would benefit from moving classrooms during the middle of the school year, they will first discuss this with parents. We believe that smooth transitions support the personal, social and emotional development, learning and future success of every child. We want children to feel safe, stimulated, and happy at Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool as well as comfortable and secure with our surroundings. We also want parents/ caregivers to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool. We strive to make preschool a welcoming place where each child settles quickly and easily because consideration has been given to the individual needs and circumstances of children and their families. Parents are welcome to set up additional meetings with their child's teachers or the director as needed. Additional information on developmental milestones and kindergarten can be found in the Parent Resource Center.

Our program offers community gatherings where families can get to know each other. We start with our playground playdates/meet and greet followed by our parent orientation night. We have gatherings at family friendly restaurants and play spaces. Our festivities for our preschool include Halloween, Christmas, and Valentine classroom parties, a Spring Art Show, and end of

year bike parade. Volunteers can sign up for various jobs/donations during these activities through Signupgenius.com. Other engagement opportunities include volunteering in the classrooms and on our playground, shoveling snow and helping teachers prepare projects. We regularly share articles and other information that may be of interest to families in our program, such as parenting classes/workshops and community resources. We host 2-3 FREE parent trainings a year at our school covering challenging behavior, nutrition, and fostering self-esteem. We are happy to research any information you may need.

Families and staff who are currently nursing are welcome to use any of the chairs located in the main gathering space located outside of the lower commons or inside of the upper commons, for privacy. These areas provide seating, privacy, and dim lighting.

### **Use of Interpreters**

If a family enrolled is in need of an interpreter for oral communication, written communication, or needs to have materials translated into their home language Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool will contract with Language Line Solutions at 1-800-752-6096 [www.language.com](http://www.language.com). Services include written translation and oral interpretation, pertaining to safety and security, health and medical and school registration requirements and student expectations, for all school staff to ensure that communication is clear between staff and families.

### **Trauma-Informed Approach**

Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool cares deeply about the well-being of our children, families, and staff. We want families to know that we are here to support them and that they can come to us for any needs. We will confidentially provide compassion and support. Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool shall ensure that all staff is trained/has ongoing training in trauma informed care. Staff should:

1. Understand what trauma is and the principles of trauma-informed care
2. Know the impact of trauma on a child's life
3. Know the strategies to mitigate the impact of the trauma for the children, families, coworkers, and themselves.
4. Understand re-traumatization and its impact

Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool will work with families to find appropriate resources/support for their specific needs. Staff and families will collaborate to create Individual care plans, as needed, to support a child in the classroom who has experienced or is experiencing trauma and/or adversity. Organizations, such as the Jefferson Center, may be called in to conduct individual observations or help staff develop a plan of action to support a child in their classroom. Judy House is another organization we work with for families experiencing trauma.

### **Parent Workshops**

Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool offers parent trainings throughout the school year in one or more of the following areas based on need or interest:

- Nutrition & Health – Provided by Nurse Michelle or a certified Dietician
- Social/Emotional – Behavioral Health through Jefferson Center for Mental Health or Brooke Brogle with the Adams County Early Childhood Council
- Body Safety Rules- Provided by Feather Berkower, LCSW with Parenting Safe Children

Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool offers a Parent Resource List, which is located on the last page of this Parent Handbook. If you need additional support, please contact Gina or Nicole (720-788-3948) and they will help you get connected with the proper support and resources. We also provide various resources in our Family Resource Center, which is located right outside of the lower commons. These include brochures for available services, handouts on how to support your child at home, and various guidance books.

### **Enrichment Programs**

Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool provides in-house enrichment programs. These include Music and Spanish each week and in house field trip visitors (Mail Carriers, Park Rangers, Firemen, Policemen, and Dentist).

### **Children with Special Needs**

SSAP (Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool) does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, or disability. SSAP is dedicated to supporting the Americans with Disabilities Act. Teachers will set up a meeting with the families of any children with special needs before starting in the classroom or shortly thereafter. They will discuss how to best support the child in the classroom and review any learning and development goals for the child. The child's progress will be reviewed with families during the Parent/Teacher Conferences and other additional meetings. Goals and classroom strategies will be updated as needed. If additional resources are needed, our program will connect families with the appropriate agencies, such as the Jefferson Center or Child Find. If your child may require special accommodations for participation, please call us at 720-788-3948.

### **Therapy Dog (Remi)**

Remi, our therapy dog, has been part of our preschool community since September 2024. Remi has gone through three good citizenship trainings and a school-based therapy program. There are many benefits associated with working with therapy animals, including:

- Animals provide a sense of security and emotional support. Dogs offer unconditional acceptance and positive regard.
- Animals can promote relaxation. Research has demonstrated that petting an animal can help lower blood pressure, heart rate, and increase oxytocin (a feel-good chemical in the brain).
- Animals can help children learn frustration tolerance and other anger management techniques.

- Animals can help in the areas of focus and attention.
- Animals can be instruments of learning, which can increase self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Animals offer humor and fun due to their playful nature.
- Animals in therapy ask for children to develop empathy, nurturance, and responsibility, and model other skills like forgiveness and patience.

Remi is—and will remain—current on all standard vaccinations, such as rabies. Any parent may request to review a list of Remi’s vaccination records. Nicole Furney, co-owner/director is Remi’s human teammate (handler).

### **What we offer:**

Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool is committed to an inclusive learning environment that adheres to a play-based approach. Through the collaboration of teachers, families and administrators, each child is nurtured in their development. Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool believes that equal opportunity is important for the continuous success of the organization and strives to comply with applicable local, state, and federal laws which preclude discrimination because of race, disability, color, creed, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, military status, or any other protected classification. This applies to all activities of Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool, including but not limited to employment, selection of volunteers, purchasing, and selecting vendors or consultants.

Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool is licensed as a child care center by the Colorado Office of Early Childhood, Department of Human Services, and the Colorado State Department of Licensing. Parents have the right to file a complaint with the State Licensing Department. If a concern is not resolved at school, contact Colorado Department of Human Services, Office of Early Childhood, 710 S Ash St. Denver, Co. 80246. Telephone (800) 799-5876

Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool offers learning opportunities for children 2.5 years old through 6 years old. Class sizes and ratios will vary from one year to the next depending on the needs of our community. We offer Full Day and Half Day Preschool. Full Day is from 8:30 am – 1:30 pm and Half Day is from 8:30 am – 11:30 am.

### **Ratios**

Our classroom ratios are as follows:

- 2.5 -3-year-olds 4 students to 1 teacher per classroom (no more than 8 students per class)
- 3- 3.5-year-olds 4 students to 1 teacher per classroom (no more than 8 students per class)
- 3.5-4-year-olds 4 students to 1 teacher per classroom (no more than 11 students per class)
- 4.5-6-year-olds 5 students to 1 teacher per classroom (no more than 15 students per class)

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) recommended staff to child ratios and state licensing requirements have student to teacher ratios at a higher number.

NAEYC recommended preschool ratios for 3-5 years of age is 1 teacher to 10 students. The State of Colorado recommended ratios are 2.5-3-year-olds 1:8, 3-4-year-olds 1:10, and 4-5-year-olds 1:12. We make sure that our classrooms are below ratio to improve the quality of care and individualized attention. All of our classrooms strive to prepare children academically and socially for a smooth and successful transition into kindergarten.

### **Eligibility for Participation**

Preschoolers must be 2.5 years old by September 1, to register in our program. All children must be potty-trained or a guardian needs to stay in the building during class time to change diapers and/or pull-ups as needed.

### **Classroom Selection**

Our program utilizes four classrooms based on age. All lead teachers practice primary caregiving and will remain with your child for the entire school year to help with the social/emotional aspects of trusting certain adults, developing a relationship, knowledge of developmental progress, and providing a safe and nurturing environment. We do our best to make the classroom selection fair, so requests for specific teachers and/or classrooms are discouraged. Every classroom uses the same curriculum and guidelines for developmentally appropriate practices.

### **Classroom Schedules**

(Schedules may change according to the classroom needs.)

The classroom/activity schedule varies from room to room. Here is an example of a classroom/activity schedule:

|               |                                                 |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 8:30am        | Drop off and Wash Hands                         |
| 8:35-9:35am   | Outside/Playground (large movement)             |
| 9:40-9:45am   | Wash Hands                                      |
| 9:45-10am     | Snack                                           |
| 10-10:05am    | Wash Hands                                      |
| 10:05-10:20am | Daily check in/Circle Time (Music and Literacy) |
| 10:20-11:45am | Free Choice (Interest areas and small groups)   |
| 11:45-11:55am | Clean up and wash hands                         |
| 11:55-12:25pm | Lunch                                           |
| 12:25-12:30pm | Wash Hands                                      |
| 12:30-12:40pm | Pack up and story                               |
| 12:40-1:25pm  | Outside/Playground                              |
| 1:30pm        | Dismiss                                         |

### **Hours of Operation and Holidays Observed**

Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool is open from 8:30 am to 1:30 pm, Monday through Friday. SSAP begins the school year the last Monday of August and finishes the third Thursday

in May. We are open from 8:30 am to 11:30 am for ½ day and 8:30 am to 1:30 pm for full day, Monday through Friday. We are closed on all federal holidays and most of Jefferson County School breaks, including Fall Break, the week of Thanksgiving, Winter Break, and Spring Break. We are also closed on Easter Monday and for 3-4 professional development days throughout the school year. All closures will be noted on the preschool calendar on our website, newsletter and google calendar invite.

### **Inclement Weather Procedures**

If Jefferson County Schools are closed due to the weather, our preschool will also be closed. If Jefferson County Schools are on a delayed start, we are CLOSED. If we lose electricity or heat, we will notify parents to pick up their child(ren). Please notify us if you're going to be late dropping off or picking up your child due to weather conditions. Fees may apply. Licensing requires that we have an allotted time for physical activity and large muscle movement. If the weather is not conducive for children, (i.e. extremely hot, cold, windy) we will use the indoor space in the Sunshine Room, Fellowship Hall in the church basement, or the large area in the upper commons. There are no refunds or make- up days for weather-related or unforeseen cancellations.

### **Outdoor Play/Physical Activity**

Outdoor play is part of developmentally appropriate practice, and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends children spend at least 60 minutes each day working their large muscles including running and moving vigorously, climbing on equipment, and navigating uneven terrain. It also includes boisterous large motor activities like tag and tumbling. We spend an average of 90 minutes outside a day unless there is inclement weather. If weather does not allow us to spend at least 60 minutes outside we use the space in the sunshine room or in the upper commons for large motor movement. Please make sure your child wears tennis shoes while in our care, allowing them to fully participate in outdoor play and large movement activities. Crocs, Natives, dress shoes, flip/flops, and sandals are NOT allowed on our playground.

### **Registration**

Children/siblings continuing in our program will register beginning at the end of December through the first week in January. The remaining spots are offered to waitlisted families the second and third weeks of January and then are open to the public after that time. There is no charge to be added or to remain on our waitlist. Registrations will be accepted until the program is full. When the program is full, the child will be put on the waitlist at no charge.

- A non-refundable registration fee of \$225.00 is due at registration time.
- Once enrolled, you are obligated to pay monthly tuition by the first of each month starting September 1<sup>st</sup>- May 1<sup>st</sup>, unless written cancellation is received one month prior to leaving our program.

- Monthly tuition can be set up for auto pay through our website [Home | Stepping Stones Adve](#) or by paying by check made out to Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool or via Venmo @steppingstonesapco-1. Payment is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month to avoid late charges. Late fees (\$25 per week) will apply if payment is not received by the first of each month.
- Registration paperwork including the Parent Handbook and school calendar will be sent out via email by August 1<sup>st</sup> and is due back prior to the first day of school.

If your child has an allergy or asthma, or another medical diagnosis, the appropriate forms (allergy and asthma care plan signed and dated by your child's pediatrician) MUST be submitted prior to the start of school.

### **Universal Preschool Program**

Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool participates in Universal Preschool. All children in Colorado can register for up to 15 hours of free, high-quality preschool in their **year before kindergarten** through Colorado's Universal Pre-K (UPK) Program. More information on registration and UPK can be found at [Universal Preschool Colorado | Colorado Department of Early Childhood](#).

### **Fee Schedule:**

Parents are expected to pay tuition by the 1st day of the month, after which a \$25 late fee will be applied each week. Payments for tuition may be made through debit card, credit card, cash, Venmo, and PayPal. Any processing fees are paid by the family if they choose to pay with a credit or debit card. **Make- up days are not provided for illness, absences, or school closures.**

### **2026-2027 Monthly Tuition**

|                             | 2 Days | 3 Days | 4 Days | Fridays |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| Half-Day<br>(8:30-11:30 am) | \$275  | \$375  | \$475  | \$90    |
| Full Day<br>(8:30-1:30pm)   | \$520  | \$620  | \$720  | \$180   |

\*Tuition rates will vary based on UPK supported hours\*

\*\$50 drop-in rate available for Fridays

**Scholarships:**

Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool works with families needing tuition support as the school is committed to offering ALL children the opportunity to learn and grow at our school. Families may request a scholarship form at any time.

**Summer Camp**

Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool offers summer camps beginning the first week of June-the end of July. Camps are not held the last week in June and the first week in July. Camps run Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursdays 9-1pm and are limited to 25 campers with 4 teachers and 1 director. Registration for individual camps is available on our website and more information can be found under the Summer Camp tab. [Home | Stepping Stones Adve](#)

Program policies and procedures:

**Confidentiality**

Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool is a community where parents and families, children, and staff work closely together. It is imperative that we respect each other's privacy. Please do not ask a staff member any questions of a personal nature about other children, families, or our staff. Our community's strength lies in our parents' involvement and trust.

**Children Who Become Ill/Accidents/Emergency**

Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool has a responsibility to create a safe and healthy environment for all children and staff members. The state of Colorado has strict licensing requirements on the frequency of handwashing, disinfecting, and sanitizing. Children, however, learn in close proximity to one another. Since young children have had less time for exposure to viruses, they tend to get sick more frequently as their bodies develop antibodies. Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool follows recommendations from The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment "How Sick is too Sick" [ChildCare How Sick Is Too Sick English.pdf - Google Drive](#) when students/staff should not attend school because of illness. Please DO NOT send your child to school if they have any illness symptoms. Please notify the school by email, text, or phone if your child will not be at school due to illness. SSAP does not provide make-up days for days missed due to illness.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Infectious Diseases in Child Care and School Settings will be used to determine exclusion for symptoms of illness not included in How Sick is Too Sick. If a child arrives at school with signs of illness that require exclusion, they will not be accepted and will be sent home. If a child develops symptoms of illness that require exclusion while at school, the parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up the child. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the Emergency Contacts will be called. The child will be provided with a place to rest which is separate from the other children until the parent/guardian arrives. The child may return to school based on the requirements in How Sick is Too Sick, the Infectious Disease Guide, or as directed by their health care provider or public health

professional. SSAP is a licensed child care facility and is required to keep an illness log noting symptoms and fevers. When your child is ill we will contact you for their temperature and symptoms that our school nurse reviews on a monthly basis.

When there is an illness that is required to be reported, the health department will be contacted immediately. Outbreaks of illness must also be reported to the health department when there is a larger number than normal of children or staff ill with the same symptoms. The health department will also be contacted when there are two or more people who do not live together who are ill with symptoms including vomiting, diarrhea, or jaundice.

If a child is injured while in our care, first aid will be administered and if necessary, 911 will be called. The guardian will be notified of the injury and staff will let them know if their child needs to be picked up or was transported by emergency vehicle to the hospital. In the case of minor scrapes and bumps, an accident/injury report form will be completed. The form reports: child's name, address, parent's name, date, time, the how, when, where of the accident, how the child was assisted, names (and signatures) of adults, witnesses on duty, and the time the parent was notified. The form will be signed by the parent/guardian at pick up and a copy of the report will be given to the family

### **Reporting Communicable Diseases/Illnesses**

Parents/guardians must report to the preschool director any exposure to communicable illnesses outside the center. Due to confidentiality, staff or volunteers are not to indicate what classroom this illness is in or divulge the name of the student. The child will be excluded from the center for the period of time prescribed by the child's physician or the local health department. Teachers have procedures for sanitizing/disinfecting their classrooms and documenting their cleaning. If you need more information about communicable disease, please see the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment and search for Infectious Diseases. Or you can go directly to [Communicable Disease Manual | Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment](#)

### **Medications**

If your child needs medication administered, prescription or over-the-counter, asthma inhalers and/or epi pens on-site during preschool hours we must have a health care plan from your child's doctor. These forms must be signed by the pediatrician, parent/ guardian, and our school nurse. At least one teacher in each classroom is Medication Administration certified. We will need the following if medication is required:

- Current health care plan signed by the physician and the parent
- Medication – measurements provided and matching the dosage on the prescription label
- Current prescriptions and prescription box with name (expired prescriptions will not be accepted)

- Epi-pens – if the action plan states that a second dose may need to be administered, please provide the preschool with 2 Epi-pens
- We will also need the guardian to sign the medication into our medication administration log and, at the end of the year, to sign the medication out.

Confidentiality will be maintained at all times. All medications are kept in first aid backpacks, out of reach of children or placed on the top of a cabinet in the classroom. All procedures for storing, delegation, and administering children's medicines are in compliance with Section 12-38-132, C.R.S., of the "Nurse Practice Act."

Teachers are not to put on topical creams or lip balm without a parent permission form. Medicated creams will need an action plan with a doctor's signature and will be kept out of reach of students.

### **School Nurse**

Our preschool nurse is contracted through Child Health Connection and comes to our school each month. Our school nurse does the following:

- Training for and delegation of medications that are on site and in our classrooms
- Reviews our health and safety practices
- Reviews health care plans and illness log
- Infection control practices and Colorado Immunization Information Systems (CIIS) updates
- Community resource links and provide resource information
- Health education and related topics for staff, parents, and students
- Assures our program follows the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment guidelines

Feel free to contact our nurse at any time via email at [michelle@childhealthconnection.com](mailto:michelle@childhealthconnection.com)

### **Immunizations**

While the state of Colorado does not require children to be immunized to attend childcare or school, Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool encourages all students to be fully immunized as this will help keep all students and staff healthy. However, our program has the right to accept unimmunized children. Our rating of immunized children is recorded through the Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS). If you would like to know our rating, please contact our directors.

### **Withdrawing from the Program**

A parent or guardian may withdraw their child from SSAP at any time. Families must provide the directors of Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool a 30-day written notice to avoid additional monthly charges prior to disenrolling from the school. The disenrollment form should be completed which will notify SSAP of the family's intent. Before the child's last day at SSAP,

families will pay any outstanding balances to SSAP. No refunds will be issued even if your child's spot is filled.

### **Drills and Safety Procedures**

Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool takes children's safety seriously and will teach children about keeping themselves safe in the case of natural disasters and human threats. All SSAP staff members are trained in the established safety procedures. There are full copies of the procedures in each classroom for your review. The following drills occur at the school each year:

**Fire Drill:** Practiced monthly

**Tornado Drill:** We refer to these as "weather drills." Practiced monthly from March-October

**Human or Other Environmental Threat Drill:** We refer to these as "safety drills" At least 3 times each year for the following:

**Lock Down:** Threat is inside the building or staff or outside persons identify a potential threat, active shooter on premises, a reverse 911 notification from Lakewood police is received. An announcement by the directors or staff members on the school radios or in person stating "LOCKDOWN – LOCKS, LIGHTS, OUT OF SITE"

Children will participate in the lock down drills that we refer to as "safety drills". Staff and students will practice Lock Down, "safety", drills quarterly.

**Shelter-In-Place:** Threat posed by atmospheric contamination, chemical, biological or radiological hazards, tornado or earthquake. Communicated through the tornado horn by the city of Lakewood.

**Lock Out:** Threat on the outside of the building such as staff or outside persons identify a potential threat, active shooter in the area, a reverse 911 notification from police is received. The perimeter will be secured. All doors will be locked and no one will be permitted to enter the building. An announcement from the directors or over the radios stating "LOCKOUT- SECURE THE PERIMETER"

Classrooms will continue as normal.

### **EVACUATION – Safety strategy to leave the building**

Evacuation procedures should take place when and/or if the following occurs and the locations to retreat to:

- Fire – back fence on our playground
- Structural Damage – back fence of our playground
- Flooding – Church Sanctuary located on the first level and north east side of the building.
- Any other threats and location of evacuation that would be announced over radios

- Any children with special abilities or special needs will be transported according to ADA standards. Please contact the preschool director at 720-778-3948 for further information.

Should evacuation be needed away from school grounds, children will walk with SSAP staff to Walgreens located at 12880 W Alameda Pkwy, Lakewood, CO 80228 and parents will be called. In the case of an evacuation in the immediate area, students will be transported to Wheat Ridge Presbyterian Church located at 9180 W. 38<sup>th</sup> Ave. Wheat Ridge, CO 80033.

If you would like to see the practice drills, feel free to volunteer at a time when we hold our drills. All drills will be posted in the weekly lesson plans and recorded in a safety logbook. If you would like to see the evacuation plans and policies, please feel free to ask the teachers or the directors. Plans are posted in each classroom. We follow the guidelines from the I Love You Guys Foundation; you can view it at [Home ♥ The "I Love U Guys" Foundation](#)

### **Transportation of Children/Field Trips**

Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool does NOT transport students for field trips or off of school grounds unless there is a necessary evacuation. Instead, we have a variety of in school field trips such as the Butterfly Museum, park rangers, community helpers, and magicians come to our school. Parents will be notified prior to any in school field trip through our email, school calendar, and our weekly newsletter. School field trips will also be listed on the weekly lesson plan.

### **Sunscreen**

Please apply sunscreen to your child daily before attending our program. If your child is not wearing sunscreen, preschool staff may only apply sunscreen with written consent by filling out and signing our topical preparation form which is included in our enrollment forms.

### **Toileting**

Toilet training is required unless there is a medical reason for the child's inability to be toilet trained. We work hard to promote bathroom independence. Set your child up for success by sending them to school in clothing that they can manage on their own. If your child is still in a diaper/pull-up, a guardian must be immediately available during the entire class time and will be called into the classroom to change them. Teachers need to stay in ratio and are not allowed, per our policies, to change a diaper or a pull-up. In the event of a simple accident for a child not in a diaper/pull-up, the child will be given clean clothes, provided from home, to change into by themselves. Staff will verbally assist the child as needed. For a messy accident, a parent will be called to come in to assist their child. If a parent is not able to come in a timely manner, and the child cannot clean up on their own, a teacher, with another staff member, employee witness, will assist the child. Another employee will assist with the ratio. If the child has repeated accidents, a parent will be required to remain in the building/parking lot the remainder of the school year or until no accident has occurred for at least 2 weeks. Teachers will put the soiled clothes in a plastic bag, in a locked container, and return them to the parent/guardian at pickup. If the

clothes are not your child's, please return the clothes to the preschool program after they have been washed. If they are your child's clothes, please replace the extra set in case another accident occurs.

### **Arrival/Dismissal of Children**

Parents must sign in and out using their first and last name, no initials. It is required that all children be accompanied to and picked up from SSAP by a person listed on their child's Authorized Pick-Up form. Children may not sign themselves in or out. Log-In/Log-Out will provide a clear record of attendance and tardiness, as mandated by State Licensing. Children will be released only to those on the authorized pick-up list. Persons unknown to SSAP staff will be asked to show ID. Authorized persons must be at least 18 years old. To authorize an alternate person to pick up your child, you may add them to the list or provide written consent that includes the person's name, the specific date(s), and your signature. Verbal consent will be accepted only in an emergency. If there are custody issues, it is the family's responsibility to provide the preschool director with appropriate legal documentation. Both parents have the right to pick up their child unless a court document restricts that right.

### **Consent to Safe Departure of Children from Our Program**

If we have concern for a child's safety, regarding that child departing with you, we will call another person on your authorized list to pick up the child and/or call the authorities for a wellness check. This pertains to preventing an intoxicated, aggressive, emotionally distressed or an uncontrolled parent/guardian from driving a child home.

### **Late Arrivals**

Please remember that tardiness impacts the day's schedule for your child and all the other children in the program. Please be mindful of our 8:30 am drop-off time. Students will not be accepted after 9:10am. If you arrive late, quietly sign-in and have your child wash their hands and join the group in the current daily activity.

### **Late Pick-Up/Failure to Pick-Up**

Please contact the preschool directors and/or leave a message if you are going to be late picking up your child. A late fee of \$1 for every minute will be charged for any pick-up that occurs after the scheduled pick-up time of 1:30pm. This must be paid before the child can return to SSAP. If a child is not picked up by 1:30pm, staff will first try to contact the parent/guardian, and then the emergency contacts. After 45 minutes with no response, staff will contact the Department of Social Services/Police, and the child will be placed in their custody.

## **Classroom Procedures:**

### **Communication with Families**

Program information is provided in our parent handbook, newsletters, and through emails. The best way to communicate with teachers is by email or text. Parents may request a meeting with

the teachers or director anytime. Administrative information will be provided via email, so be sure your email is correct, and inform Nicole or Gina of any changes. Newsletters will be emailed weekly and will provide important information about events, program curriculum, volunteer opportunities, and much more.

### **Guidance and Discipline**

In order to provide a positive and safe experience for all children, we observe three basic wise choices:

1. We keep ourselves and our friends safe.
2. We keep our toys and materials safe.
3. We use walking feet inside the classroom and building.

Teachers use positive methods of guidance that encourage independence and a sense of responsibility. We believe that developing a relationship with the child and the family is essential to keeping communication lines open and discussing what works at home and what works at school. Redirection is a way to guide the child from inappropriate play to a more appropriate activity. Communication can include giving alternative choices or assisting the child with problem-solving. Physical punishment or physical redirection is never used. We are a hands-off program unless the behavior is a danger to the child or to others. We promote a safe, nonaggressive environment. We do not allow or tolerate any violent play, which includes play fighting, weapons, wrestling of any sort, etc. If this occurs, the teachers will redirect the children to more constructive types of play. When a child does not observe the expected guidelines, the teachers and directors will discuss an appropriate plan of action which may include any or all of the following steps:

- Separate the child from the group for an age-appropriate amount of time with an adult always present or within view.
- Listen and respect that child (social/emotional training)
- Discuss with the child the inappropriate behavior before they return to the group and what is the appropriate behavior for that activity and why it is appropriate.
- Parents will be notified of any challenging behaviors during our care. Biting and hitting are a natural, developmental process. If the skin is broken or a bruise is visible, an incident report will be filled out and all responsible parties will be notified.

Challenging behavior and conflicts naturally occur in group settings with young children. It is our job as educators to help children with self-regulation, conflict resolution, and problem-solving skills. This includes helping children to express their needs appropriately. Teachers use Pyramid Plus Approach and Conscious Discipline when guiding behavior.

### **Challenging Behaviors**

For children who exhibit challenging behaviors over time, teachers and families will work together to develop strategies and create an action plan/behavior plan to address these concerns as follows:

- Collect any data about the behavior including time, duration, trigger including what happened before, during, and after the challenging behavior
- Discuss behavior with preschool directors for data collection, observation, and strategies
- Discuss behavior with parents/guardians while keeping open communication
- Put a plan in place (what works at home/school)
- Collect data after strategies are being used
- If behavior continues, we will contact our mental health specialist.
- If behavior is injurious to others or to the child and we do not have the resources to support this behavior, Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool will make a decision with teachers and guardians to see if our preschool or another school would be more beneficial for the student
- Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool will provide resources that may help in the transition from this school to another program. We consult with Jefferson Center to provide resources to families and teachers who have challenges in the classroom and at home. The consultant will observe in the classroom and with parents at our request. **It is the parent's responsibility to inform the preschool directors if their child has any behavior, mental, emotional, or physical issues, which may affect his/her day-to-day activities in class. This must be specifically noted on the child's enrollment paperwork. Failure to do so may result in the child's dismissal from the Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool.**

### **Referral Process**

Early intervention services are an extremely important tool. These services are intended to improve function, promote social competence and integration, and enable families to understand their children's needs so they can better prepare for the future and prevent unnecessary challenges.

Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool has resources and contacts of specialists if the parents or teachers feel this is needed. If a parent believes that a child needs an evaluation, SSAP will refer her or him to the appropriate resources. We will use the following procedures for referring parents to appropriate social, mental health, educational and medical services, including dental, hearing, or vision services, should we feel that an assessment for such additional services would benefit the child.

- We will offer assistance to the child's parents in making the referral
- Parents are encouraged to call or request an evaluation in writing.
- We will maintain a list of current referral resources in the community for children in need of social, mental health, educational or medical services.
- We will keep a written record of any referrals to medical, social, or mental health services.

Development and implementation of any individual family or child plan through these services will be respected and followed, based on the results of the assessment performed by the referred agency. This site will collaborate with referring agencies that conduct services by either allowing services to be performed at the childcare site, modify lesson plans to include activities

to incorporate service recommendation or collaborate with families to promote services for the child. All outside services must be paid by families and these services include but are not limited to speech, occupational, physical and behavior therapies.

### **Request for a Child's Removal**

The removal of a child from the program will always be a last resort after following the appropriate disciplinary route for the situation at hand. Every effort will be made to keep the child active in the program. However, if incidents of dangerous or disruptive behavior continue to occur after interventions, strategies, data, and no improvement is taking place, the child may be removed from the program entirely. No refund will be provided for children who are removed from the program.

### **Technology**

Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool believes that media time (i.e. "Screen Time") should be very limited for children. This is also supported by the American Academy of Pediatrics as well as Child Care Licensing. We believe that it is better for children to be engaged in play activities rather than watching TV, DVD's, playing computer games, etc. SSAP is a technology free school.

### **Handling of Children's Belongings**

All children's belongings should be labeled with their name. Please provide an extra set of clothing including socks (especially 2 pairs of underwear) in a zip lock bag with your child's name clearly labeled. Your child's personal belongings will be stored/hung on a hook labeled with their name on the outside of the classroom. Although our teachers make an effort to monitor children's belongings, we cannot guarantee the security of their belongings.

Students will bring a backpack large enough to hold artwork/projects and other supplies to school with their personal belongings. Please do not send your child with a tiny/mini backpack as these are not large enough to hold belongings. Each backpack should contain the following:

1. Change of clothes including socks and underwear in a labeled Ziplock bag
2. Labeled snack(s); labeled lunch (for students staying for lunch.)
3. Labeled water bottle
4. Labeled seasonally appropriate clothing: Mittens; Coat; Hat; Sunhat

Water bottles and food items MUST be labeled with the child's first AND last name per licensing regulations. At Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool, students will be engaged in active learning, which means they may get messy inside the classroom and while playing outside. Parents are asked to dress their child appropriately for indoor play, outdoor play, and wear closed toed tennis shoes. Unless it is extremely cold outside (below 20 degrees), children WILL play outside for a portion of the time. Shoes for active play are required. Natives, Crocs, dress shoes, flip flops, and sandals are not permitted on our playground. Any type of neckwear

(necklaces, ties, scarves) is discouraged unless it can be easily removed to prevent a choking hazard.

SSAP provides activities and equipment for children, so they should not bring toys or expensive/valuable items to school. SSAP is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items, including money.

### **Food and Allergies**

#### **WE ARE A NUT FREE PROGRAM**

Parents are asked to report to Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool and to the child's teacher if their child has any allergies. Since students attending SSAP have severe nut allergies, no nuts or nut products are allowed in the school at any time. Students who have a severe allergy that may require the administration of medication for a severe allergic reaction will need to have a Health Care Plan signed by a doctor and medication in place and a copy given to SSAP BEFORE the student can be in our care.

All children should eat breakfast prior to school. Families must provide a healthy snack and a healthy lunch each day. If the child's lunch does not meet USDA requirements, we will have appropriate foods available to offer as a supplement to that meal at an additional charge.

Safe drinking water will be freely available to the children at all times. Please provide a water bottle labeled with your child's first and last name for the classroom.

### **Celebrations**

Families will communicate individually with the teachers regarding celebrations such as birthdays or cultural events. Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool will honor the demographics in the classroom in planning activities that are inclusive to the beliefs of all students. For birthdays, please be sure all products are store-bought and free of nuts if you will be providing treats to share.

### **Dress Code**

Please dress children appropriately, according to weather, planned activities, comfort, and, most likely, messiness. If a "dress-up day" is called for such as the first day of school or individual picture day, please pack a change of clothing fully marked with your child's name on each piece. Also, consider the needs of your child for the use of the restroom. Clothing children cannot handle themselves, such as one-piece jumpsuits and complicated belts are not recommended. Please do not send your child to preschool in flip-flops, sandals, high heels, or any other shoe that restricts their ability to run, play, ride tricycles, climb, or play on the playground. If your child wears snow boots to school, be sure to also pack a pair of indoor shoes such as sneakers.

### **Visitors/Volunteer Policy**

All visitors, including parents, are required to check in with preschool directors and/or staff and sign in on the Visitor's Log located in the sign-in/out binders near your child's classroom.

Volunteers sign a confidentiality agreement and read through our procedures. All permanent volunteers must complete a background check. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Gina or Nicole 720-788-3948. All volunteers must sign off that they have no criminal record. We reserve the right to background check any parent volunteer or guest.

### **Licensing/Reporting:**

#### **Reporting of Child Abuse**

As a child care facility, each staff member is required to take a 2 hour and 15 min training and read and sign a statement clearly defining child abuse and neglect pursuant to state law and outlining the staff member's personal responsibility to report all incidents of suspected child abuse or neglect according to state law. Should you suspect child abuse at our facility, a report of suspected child abuse must be made to the Jefferson County Department of Human Services at 303-271-1388. We make every effort to provide a safe and healthy environment for children. If you believe that your child has been abused, you should seek immediate assistance from your County Department of Social Services. The Colorado Department of Human Services has a new statewide child abuse and neglect hotline. – 1-844-CO-4-KIDS (264-5437) or you can find out more information at [Child Abuse & Neglect - CO4Kids](#). Colorado Law requires that childcare providers report all known or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. It is better to report and be wrong, then not to report at all.

#### **State Licensing / CDHS Phone Numbers**

Your child is enrolled in a childcare program that is licensed by the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS). The license indicates that the program has met the required standards for the operation of a childcare facility. If you have not done so, feel free to ask to see the license and the last facility inspection. Our license is displayed in the lower commons.at the top of the ramp, hanging near the sign in/out book.

#### **Licensing Questions/Complaints**

Childcare services play an important role in supporting families, and strong families are the basis of a thriving community. Your child's education, physical, emotional, and social development will be nurtured in a well-planned and implemented program. Remember to observe the program regularly, especially with regards to children's health and safety, equipment and play materials, and staff. If you have a complaint regarding suspected licensing violations at this or any other licensed childcare center, you have the right to report your concerns. We ask that you speak with us first so we can correct or explain the concern. For additional information regarding licensing, or if you have concerns about a child care facility, or if you would like to review a licensed facility file, please consult the Colorado Department of Early Childhood at 710 S. Ash Street Denver, CO 80246 or call 303 866-5958.

**Filing a Complaint**

We want to hear from you if you have questions or concerns about the Stepping Stones Adventure Preschool Program. We will make every effort to resolve any issues or concerns you have about our program. We ask that you speak with your teachers and directors so we may resolve any concern you may have.

Thank you for taking the time to read through all of our policies and procedures. Please reach out to Nicole or Gina with any questions or concerns [steppingstonesapco@gmail.com](mailto:steppingstonesapco@gmail.com) . We look forward to having your family join our preschool community!