

# Hope Early Learning Center

240 Brown Street S.E.

Grand Rapids MI 49507

Phone 616.301.8458

## Great Start Readiness Program Parent-Student Handbook

### Daily Hours

#### Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday

7:45-2:45

#### Early Dismissal Wednesdays

7:45-1:45

#### Fridays

No Class



Mrs. Heidi Cate - Superintendent

Dr. Art (Doc) Garner, Jr. - Building Principal

Joshua P. Barnhart- Assistant Principal/Preschool Director

Gabrielle Grahs - Teacher

Annette Dinsmore- Teacher

Diana Brand - Teacher Assistant

Leslie Gutierrez- Teacher Assistant

**School Year 2023-24**

**Hope Academy of West Michigan  
Board of Directors**

President: Barth Roberts

Vice President: Todd Medendorp

Secretary: Dr. Bernard Ayoola

Treasurer: Barbara Foster

Additional Members:  
Dr. Bernard Ayoola

**GSRP Program Office Phone: 616.447.5679 Fax: 616.365.2314**

These materials were developed under a grant awarded by the Michigan Department of Education.

**SCHOOL & GSRP CONTACT INFORMATION**

<b>School Name</b>	Hope Academy of West Michigan
<b>School Address</b>	240 Brown St., Grand Rapids, MI 49650
<b>School Office Phone Number</b>	616-301-8458
<b>Lead Teacher Name</b>	Gabrielle Grahs & Annette Dinsmore
<b>Lead Teacher Email</b>	ggraahs@hopeacademywm.org & Adinsmore@hopeacademywm.org
<b>Associate Teacher Name</b>	Leslie Guterrez & Diana Brand
<b>Associate Teacher Email</b>	lguterrez@hopeacademywm.org & @ dbrand@hopeacademywm.org
<b>Lunch Aide Name (if Applicable)</b>	
<b>Classroom Phone Number</b>	Grahs: 616-600-6573 & Dinsmore: 616-600-6569
<b>Tardy or Absence Reporting Number</b>	616-301-8458

**IMPORTANT GSRP SCHOOL DATES**

<b>First Day of School</b>	August 28th
<b>Fall Conferences</b>	October 10th and 12th
<b>Fall Intersession</b>	October 14th- October 22nd
<b>Thanksgiving Break</b>	November 22nd- November 24th
<b>Winter Holiday Vacation</b>	December 23rd- January 7th
<b>Spring Conferences</b>	February 13th and 15th
<b>Winter Intersession</b>	February 16th- February 25th
<b>Spring Break</b>	March 23rd- April 7th
<b>Last Day of School</b>	May 30th

*Your child's teacher will provide you a copy of the school calendar*

## **CONTENTS**

School & GSRP Contact Information	3
Important GSRP School Dates	3
Welcome to Great Start Readiness Program	6
Our Mission, Vision and Educational Philosophy	7
Program Admittance Guidelines	7
Procedures for Selection, Placement, and Enrollment	7
Policies and Procedures	9
Accident and Emergency Policies	9
Assessment	9
Attendance: Strive For Less than Five!	9
Behavior Support and Conflict Resolution	9
Communication	10
Conferences	10
Confidentiality	10
Data Participation in Evaluation Projects	10
Photos/Videos	10
School Records	11
Curriculum	11
Daily Routine Example	11
Dress/Clothing	12
Drop Off and Pick-Up Procedures	12
Family Involvement	13
Data Analysis Team	13
Great Start Collaborative Advisory Board Meetings	13
Parent Advisory Committee	13
Volunteering in the Classroom	13
Grievance Policy	13
Health and Communicable Disease	14
Field Trips/Events	14
Home Visits	14
Food Service and Nutrition	14
Food Allergies	14
Donating Food and Treats, Birthday items	14
Mandated Reporters	15
Medication	15
Notice of Discrimination	15

Notice of Program Monitoring	15
Referrals	15
Rest Time	16
Teacher Credentials	16
Program Evaluation	16
Safety and Emergency Policies	16
Building Evacuation Plan	16
Lockdown Procedure	16
Hazardous Exposure Policy	16
Pest Management	17
Pick Up After a School Emergency	17
School Closings	17
Toileting	17
Toys from Home	17
Weather Policy	17
Withdrawal	17
Sick Students	17
Family Resources in Kent County	18

## **WELCOME TO GREAT START READINESS PROGRAM**

Hello Families,

Kent ISD's Great Start Readiness Program would like to welcome you and your child! The GSRP Family Handbook provides valuable information about your child's learning and growth, the philosophy within the program, GSRP policies, and general information about the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) through Kent Intermediate School District (Kent ISD). GSRP in Kent County represents a collaborative effort between Kent ISD local school districts and local Community Based Organizations (CBOs). GSRP receives grant funding from the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and is licensed by the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA). All our facilities are licensed by the State of Michigan and meet all state guidelines. A licensing book is available at each site for review.

Kent ISD GSRP is a state-funded program designed to benefit four-year old children. GSRP is guided by developmentally appropriate practices through individualized instruction for all children. Each classroom utilizes intentional teaching practices designed to meet the needs of all children and families by using child data to provide purposeful instruction. The GSRP guidelines are formed from incorporating high standards established by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA).

The goal of GSRP is to prepare all children for kindergarten. Children enrolled in GSRP attend school Monday through Thursday for either a full school day or half day. The ratio for all GSRP classrooms is 1 teacher to every 8 children.

We believe in the importance of partnering with families, and welcome your feedback throughout the course of the school year. We encourage you to attend Parent Advisory Meetings, Parent Coalition Meetings, and GSRP Data Analysis Meetings. Please talk to your child's teachers about dates and more information about these opportunities! Information can also be found on our website, [www.kentisd.org/instructional-services/early-childhood/great-start-readiness-preschool](http://www.kentisd.org/instructional-services/early-childhood/great-start-readiness-preschool)

Thank you for being an integral part of your child's school experience. We at GSRP believe that you, as your child's family, are their first and best teachers. We look forward to partnering with you in order to help your child be as successful as possible!

Best Wishes,

The GSRP Team

## OUR MISSION, VISION AND EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

### *Kent ISD GSRP Philosophy*

Kent ISD GSRP is a state funded program designed to benefit 4-year-old children in our communities. GSRP is guided by Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) through individualized instruction for all children. Each classroom utilizes intentional teaching practices designed to meet the needs of all children and families by using child data to provide purposeful instruction.

### *Kent ISD GSRP Mission Statement*

Our mission is to create shared relationships with families, teachers, and the local community by cultivating child-centered, purposeful, play-based environments that support critical thinking skills, develop positive self-concepts, and promote independence to create our main overall goal; every child will be socially, emotionally, and academically ready for kindergarten.

### *Kent ISD GSRP Vision Statement*

Our vision is to provide high quality and joyful learning experiences for children to ensure kindergarten readiness with the completion of Kent ISD's Great Start Readiness Program.

Our beliefs align with:

- National Association of Early Young Children (NAEYC)
- Developmentally Appropriate Practice Position Statement
- Connect for Learning
- Michigan State Board of Education
- Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA)
- Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) Guidelines

## PROGRAM ADMITTANCE GUIDELINES

### Procedures for Selection, Placement, and Enrollment

Children eligible for GSRP must be four years old on or before September first of the current school year. Children who turn four between September second and December first of the current school year can apply with an age waiver with completed paperwork if slots are available after September first. Children must be identified as eligible as designated by MDE's eligibility requirements. Qualifying information is kept on file and remains confidential.

### **BEFORE FINAL GSRP PLACEMENT- DOCUMENTS MUST BE COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED**

To secure enrollment and placement in a Kent ISD GSRP classroom, each family must meet the enrollment requirements and return all completed forms. GSRP never requires an enrollment fee.

- ☐ **Copy of Birth Certificate/Government Document:** Stating the child's age
- ☐ **Immunization Record or Waiver:** Showing a minimum of 1 dose of each immunizing agent specified by the Department of Community Health; or a waiver if your child is not immunized for religious or other reasons that only parents can obtain by scheduling an appointment with the county Health Department.
- ☐ **Income Verification:** Income of those adults supporting the child for the last 12 months. Documentation may include: income tax forms, W-2, year to date pay stub, unemployment documents, written statement from employer, proof of receipt of public assistance/food stamps/WIC/child care assistance, SSI proof of receipt, child support, alimony, or pensions.
- ☐ **Proof of Residency:** Driver's license, a current utility bill, rent receipt, tax bill or land contract (If you are currently homeless, provide a letter from the shelter or homeowner where you are living.)

**OPTIONAL Documents Needed:**

- ☐ **Age Waiver:** Needed if child is younger than four years and is admitted into the program
- ☐ **Individualized Education Plan- IEP:** Used only when a Special Education plan is in place as a GSRP qualifier.

**BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR -ADDITIONAL FORMS COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED**

- ☐ **Health Appraisal:** Form that families take to the doctor's office showing that a physical was performed within the preceding year, SIGNED by a licensed physician (or his/her designee) with restrictions noted. Physical due within 30 days of initial classroom attendance (Per Licensing Regulation).
- ☐ **Medication Permission and Instructions:** Used when a child has an allergy or medical action plan
- ☐ **Completed Child Information Card:** Must be filled out and signed by parent/guardian with current and complete information, including phone numbers of ALL individuals authorized to pick up your child and permission to seek emergency medical care. [Due at the time of initial classroom attendance].
- ☐ **Volunteer Background Check Acknowledgement Form**
- ☐ **Kent ISD GSRP Volunteer Abuse/Neglect Statement:** Required for all who regularly enter preschool buildings including daily child drop-off & pick up.
- ☐ **Permission to Photograph/Videotape Form**
- ☐ **Application for Free and Reduced-Price School Meals**
- ☐ **Food/Medical Allergy Form:** Emergency allergy information provided so that it can be in the Licensing Notebook and posted large enough to be visible to all adults in the classroom. Some districts have required allergy forms that are available in the school office.
- ☐ **Written Information Packet Documentation Form:** Confirmation of Family Handbook and Licensing Notebook information was received.

**Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP)****SAMPLE: Sliding Scale Tuition**

Effective July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018

Household Size	Income by Percent of Federal Poverty Limit (FPL)		
	0-250%	Greater than 251% - 350%	Greater than 351%
	Annual Income	Annual Income	Annual Income
1	Up To \$30,150	\$30,151 – \$42,210	\$42,211 and up
2	Up To \$40,600	\$40,601 – \$56,840	\$56,841 and up
3	Up To \$51,050	\$51,051 – \$71,470	\$71,471 and up
4	Up To \$61,500	\$61,501 – \$86,100	\$86,101 and up
5	Up To \$71,950	\$71,951 – \$100,730	\$100,731 and up
6	Up To \$82,400	\$82,401 – \$115,360	\$115,361 and up
7	Up To \$92,850	\$92,851 – \$129,990	\$129,991 and up
8	Up To \$103,300	\$103,301 – \$144,620	\$144,621 and up
<b>Fee: % of Per-Child Amount</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Part-Day GSRP Annual Tuition Fee</b>	<b>NO TUITION</b>	<b>\$181.25</b>	<b>\$362.50</b>
<b>School-Day GSRP Annual Tuition Fee</b>	<b>NO TUITION</b>	<b>\$362.50</b>	<b>\$725.00</b>

Children enrolled into the GSRP/Head Start Blend must not be charged tuition.  
Enrolled children with IEPs must not be charged tuition.



## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Accident and Emergency Policies**

Minor accidents, incidents and/or injuries are common in young children as they are developing balance and movement skills. Depending on the incident, families may be notified in conversation or in writing on the same day as the occurrence of a minor accident or injury (some examples include: surface cuts, scrapes, bruising of skin, or bloody noses). If the injury is of a more serious nature (some examples include: significant blood loss, cuts, head trauma), parents will be contacted immediately by phone and in some cases they will be requested to pick their child up from school. All serious injuries requiring medical attention are required to be reported to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). If necessary, in the event of an emergency, teachers will follow policy to call 911 and then contact parents. If a child needs to go to the hospital, a staff member will be present if a family member is not present. To ensure every family can be reached in an emergency please update any phone number changes on your Child Information Card. Child Information Cards will be given to you to fill out prior to the beginning of the school year. To ensure family members can be reached in an emergency, Child Information Cards must be updated whenever there is a change in contact information.

### **Assessment**

Within two weeks of beginning GSRP, children will be given a developmental screener called the Ages & Stages Questionnaire, Third Edition (ASQ-3). The ASQ-3 takes about fifteen minutes to complete and children are assessed through conversation and observation. Information provided by the ASQ-3 helps teachers understand the developmental levels and needs of individual students as they enter the classroom, allowing teachers to tailor lesson plans to student needs right away.

Teachers continue to document student progress through ongoing child assessments that are aligned to the curriculum. Teachers will share student progress with families at least three times per school year. When teachers share student progress, they will also discuss their goals for the child, learn about family goals for the child, and discuss strategies for helping each child achieve their goals.

### **Attendance: Strive For Less than Five!**

We know that there are times when your child is not able to attend preschool. Young children get sick, especially when they first start school. Other absences occur because families face real barriers, whether it's a serious health problem, a sudden move to a new home or a problem with transportation. We understand that "life happens". Let your teacher know if you are experiencing anything that is preventing your child from attending preschool. As partners in your child's learning, we want to support you and your family in addressing challenging situations and help to create strong attendance habits for your child's success! We ask families to "Strive for Less than Five!", meaning that we try to help children not miss more than five days of preschool in one school year. This goal helps to maintain high levels of learning and development for your child and still leaves room for circumstances that cannot be avoided.

Children who attend preschool more often are more likely to:

- develop early reading and math skills
- be ready for kindergarten
- develop good attendance patterns for school and future employment
- finish elementary school without repeating a grade

GSRP programs must document absences in order to comply with program regulations. If your child will be absent or late; notify the school as soon as possible. Children who are absent from class for 21 calendar school days may be dropped from the program.

### **Behavior Support and Conflict Resolution**

Behavior management is the combined responsibility of students, parents, and other school staff. When children are given meaningful choices, understand adult expectations, and have helpful and caring supervision in an enriching environment; the need for discipline lessens. A child's environment, daily routine, and an adults' approach during interactions have a direct influence on each child.

In GSRP classrooms, children are not excluded or expelled based on the need for medical or behavioral support, assistance with toileting or teacher attitudes and/or apprehensions per grant request.

To gain desired behavior, GSRP teachers:

- establish predictable daily routines
- maintain developmentally appropriate expectations
- encourage children to do things for themselves throughout the day
- create quiet spaces where children can choose to be alone and calm down
- allow children who choose to use the quiet space to rejoin the group when the child feels ready
- serve children through individualized intentional teaching and individualized planning activities
- develop individualized plans for children who develop patterns of inappropriate behavior

In conflict situations between students, teachers:

- treat conflict situations with children matter-of-factly
- approach children calmly and stop any hurtful actions
- acknowledge children's feelings
- involve children in identifying the problem by gathering information and restating the problem
- ask children for solutions and encourage them to choose one together
- give follow-up support when children act on their decision

## **Communication**

Teachers are expected to have frequent and informal interactions with families in order to strengthen the partnership between home and school. Aside from checking in with staff at arrival or pick-up, teachers will also provide you with specified communication methods. Staff will contact families using the information provided on Child Information Cards. Families must inform teachers of any changes (address, phone numbers, emergency and pick up contacts) on the Child Information Card in writing and initial updates throughout the school year. Families, caregivers, and teachers are always expected to handle themselves in a professional and respectful manner.

Translators are available to aid in the communication between teachers and families whose primary language is not English. Teachers are responsible for securing these translators.

## **Conferences**

Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled in both the fall and spring. A scheduled conference allows for more confidentiality and detail than daily conversations permit. Conferences are planned to last a minimum of 45 minutes. During the conference, teachers will share child progress data across developmental domains, set goals for continuous progress, and assist with any additional support which may be necessary. A guardian or teacher may request additional conferences.

## **Confidentiality**

GSRP maintains confidentiality and does not disclose information regarding your child except as required by law or when there is a threat to the health and safety of individuals and families we serve.

### *Data Participation in Evaluation Projects*

The Kent ISD GSRP may be selected to participate in data collection efforts based on programming. If selected, participants may need to make classrooms available, complete surveys, provide requested information like student's Unique Identification Code (UIC), Michigan Student Data System (MSDS), site documents, parent contacts, participate in webinars, phone calls, and meetings, securing, distributing appropriate parent consent forms and other relevant information. Data may be shared with your local district and Kent ISD for important academic and on-going decisions.

### *Photos/Videos*

Photos will occasionally be taken of children to display in the classroom. Legal guardians have the ability to choose whether they permit photos and/or videos to be taken of their child while participating in school activities to be used for publication in local newspapers, classroom newsletters, etc. You may indicate whether or not you will allow photos and videos to be taken of your child on the Photo Release Form. It is a strict policy of Kent ISD GSRP that teachers will not post identifying photos or videos of children enrolled in our program to

their personal social media accounts. Through permission using the Photo Release Form, however, teachers may post to closed groups of people on social media.

#### *School Records*

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-380) assures the parents and legal guardians of public school students the right to:

- inspect student records maintained by a school district
- prevent disclosure of education records to a third party without their consent except in certain limited situations
- request a correction of any part of the student record which you believe to be inaccurate, misleading or violates your rights
- protest to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Office Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington DC 20202 concerning the program's failure to comply with FERPA

Divorced parents have equal access to the records unless one parent or the other is prohibited from having any contact with the child by the court order granting divorce. Written documentation must be on file in order to limit adult contact.

#### **Curriculum**

Kent ISD GSRP utilizes Connect for Learning in all classrooms. This research-based curriculum aligns with Michigan's Early Childhood Standards for Quality for Prekindergarten (ECSQ-PK). Children's progress is reported in the areas of social-emotional development, physical development, language development, literacy, math, science, social studies, art, and English speaking skills.

#### **Daily Routine Example**

7:45-8:00	Arrival, Sign-in, put away belongings and greet friends and teachers. Transition from home to school.
8:00-8:20	Breakfast: This is served family style in the classroom.
8:20-8:30	Bathroom Break
8:30-8:45	Welcome and Read Aloud: The teacher and class will discuss the book for literacy skills.
8:45-9:00	Connect: The class explores the day's learning focus.
9:00-9:30	Outside/Large Motor Skills: Children will have a chance to exercise large muscles by climbing, running, jumping etc
9:30-9:50	Small Groups: Interactive hands-on learning with a consistent teacher.
9:50-9:55	Planning: Children will use a variety of ways to plan how they will direct their own learning through play.
9:55-10:55	Learning Centers: Children choose what they want to investigate or learn about. Children also practice problem solving skills.
10:55-11:00	Transition to Lunch: Clean-up and wash hands.
11:00-11:20	Lunch: Meal is served family style either in the

classroom or in the cafe' next door.

11:20-11:30	Bathroom Break
11:30-11:45	Read Aloud the book of the day
11:45-12:30	Rest time
12:35-12:45	Afternoon planning
12:45-1:25	Learning Centers/Focus Groups/Snack: Children will engage in play and small groups to reinforce learning and eat a snack.
1:25-1:45	Recall: Students share what they learned during center time.
1:45-2:00	Snack/Bathroom
2:00-2:30	Afternoon Outside/Gross Motor.
2:30-2:45	Fast Focus/Large Group: Songs and chants about today's topics.
2:45	Dismissal

### **Dress/Clothing**

Children should be dressed in clothing that is comfortable and appropriate for indoor and/or outdoor play and messy activities. During cold weather, please send children to school wearing hats, mittens, gloves, snow pants and boots.

- Label clothing with first and last name.
- Please provide an extra change of clothes that goes with the season (socks, underwear, pants, shirt, jacket etc.)
- Please do not send children in their best clothes, play clothing that is comfortable is best.
- During the winter, please bring extra shoes if a child is wearing boots to use in the classroom.
- A backpack or large bag is recommended to carry belongings to and from school.

### **Drop Off and Pick-Up Procedures**

For safety reasons when dropping off and picking up children, a parent/guardian (**16 years of age or older & listed on emergency card**) must accompany the child to the designated arrival/dismissal area. Please be on time. **Preschool students will be dropped off at the preschool lobby and picked up at the classroom door.**

- Each child must be signed in and out on the attendance log with initials and indicated time by a responsible adult who is listed on the Child Information Card. *(Per Licensing)*
- **Children will only be released to persons listed on the Child Information Card**, unless the school is notified by a legal guardian, in writing, of a change.
- Teachers may request photo identification of anyone picking up a child. *(Per Licensing)*
- If the teacher or principal/director has any doubts about the documentation provided, a decision to not release the child will be made.
- No children are permitted to walk home without proper supervision.
- Children who enter/leave the program via the school bus/day care will be signed in/out by a staff member.
- If a child is still not picked up after one hour of school time ending, and teachers have made an attempt to call all contacts on the Child Information Card, CPS will be called.

Children living in 2 households, divorced or separated parents:

- A birth parent WITHOUT custody may NOT have access to his/her child or NOT have the child released to him/her, unless court documentation says otherwise.
- Family members with custody should inform the school/teachers of the arrangements and provide a court order (restraining order) which will be kept on file in the school office.
- Without a court order, teachers cannot legally prevent a birth parent from picking up their child.

## **Family Involvement**

Research shows children who are successful in school have strong and positive interconnections between family, school, and community. Please consider becoming involved in the following ways, and if you have any questions, contact your child's teacher or the GSRP Office at 616-447-5679.

### *Data Analysis Team*

The data analysis team meets three times per year and includes teachers, Early Childhood Specialists and family members. This meeting focuses on analyzing program and child outcome data, setting program goals, and monitoring goal progress. Meeting dates can be found on the school calendar.

### *Great Start Collaborative Advisory Board Meetings*

The Great Start Collaborative Advisory Board is an opportunity for families to work together with local professionals to help ensure all children have a great start in being ready for kindergarten. Meeting dates can be found on the school calendar.

### *Parent Advisory Committee*

The Parent Advisory Committee meets twice per year. This group allows families and teaching staff to focus on program considerations and look at child outcome data. Families serve as active decision-makers

### *Volunteering in the Classroom*

Caregivers or guardians are always welcome in the classroom, given that they have submitted the district's Volunteer Background Check Form and the Reporting Abuse/Neglect Form in advance of the visit. Volunteers may wish to bring an activity for the children, read a story, share a talent, or participate in activities underway, or attend a field trip. Please coordinate any special activities in advance with the staff. Contact your child's teacher about participating in classroom activities.

## **Grievance Policy**

All families are encouraged to address questions or concerns with their child's teachers. Ongoing communication is vital to your child's success. Most concerns can be addressed at the classroom level; however, if you and your child's teacher are not able to reach a satisfactory resolution, you may discuss your concern with the GSRP Coordinator. Contact the Coordinator by calling the main office at 616-447-5679.

## **Health and Communicable Disease**

GSRP follows guidelines as stated by the Kent County Health Department. It is the policy of Kent ISD GSRP to temporarily exclude children, staff, and volunteers from care who may be infectious. Children must be fever-free and without the use of fever reducing medication for 24 hours before returning to school. If staff become aware that a person has a communicable disease, symptoms will be posted or sent home in note form.

*When to keep your child home:*

- Fever or oral temperature greater than 101 F
- Rash with fever
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Breathing difficulties, constant coughing, or constant runny nose

## **Field Trips/Events**

If a field trip or event is scheduled it will be announced in writing before the event. Trips and events are connected to children's learning and may include visiting local businesses or community parks within walking distance from the site. Families are not charged any amount of money for field trips. All family members who would like to attend must fill out a Volunteer Background Check Form and a Volunteer Child Abuse/Neglect Statement form.

## **Home Visits**

Teaching teams will coordinate two home visits during the school year as part of the GSRP requirements. The first visit will take place at the beginning of the school year and another visit will be in the spring. Home visits are planned for one hour. During home visits teachers and families discuss and complete required paperwork, discuss parent involvement and various opportunities, discuss goals parents have for their child for the year, discuss family interests and needs. The first home visit is an opportunity for the teacher to get to know each child before the first day, allow the child to feel more comfortable around the teacher, and for families to ask any questions they might have about GSRP. The second home visit will be scheduled at the end of the year where teachers will give many resources for extending learning opportunities throughout the summer.

## **Food Service and Nutrition**

GSRP works in cooperation with the local school districts to offer meals and snacks at no cost to families. Menus are provided in advance and will be posted in each room for parents to view. Preschool nutrition is extremely important to your child's healthy physical and mental development. All meals are in accordance with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Meals include the 5 food groups: dairy, protein, grains, fruit and vegetables. Full day students receive two meals and one snack. Half day students receive a minimum of a snack, but also may include one meal.

Meals and snacks are provided to all children family-style. Family-style serving provides an ideal time to model table manners. It also encourages children to be independent in passing, scooping and pouring their own food. Mealtime is a time for meaningful conversations to take place between adults and children.

### *Food Allergies*

Notify your child's teacher with special dietary and/or allergy requirements so that a detailed Food/Medical Allergy Form (with a doctor's directions and signature) to be filled out and meals/snacks can be provided according to the child's needs.

### *Donating Food and Treats, Birthday items*

Due to licensing regulations, only store bought pre-packaged food may be brought into the classroom. Teachers will never ask families to donate food.

## **Mandated Reporters.**

Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. GSRP staff members are mandated reporters. GSRP staff members are

not required to discuss their suspicions with families before reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior or condition before making a report. Under the Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on child's body
- Severe verbal reprimands
- Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness, season
- Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (e.g. car seats, seat belts, etc.)
- Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Not providing appropriate nutrition for your child
- Leaving a child unattended
- Sending a sick child to school over-medicated to hide symptoms, which would typically require the child to be kept at home until symptoms subside

### **Medication**

Staff may not give or apply medication without prior written permission from a physician and a parent/guardian. All medication must be in the original container and clearly labeled with the child's name. Prescription medication must have the pharmacy label and be given according to the directions on the original container unless accompanied by a written order from the child's physician. Non-prescription medication, including sunscreen and insect repellent, requires prior written family permission. Written log must be kept with the medication.

### **Notice of Discrimination**

GSRP follows the State of Michigan guidelines and does not discriminate. Diversity is valued, encouraged, and reflected in the classroom learning environment.

### **Notice of Program Monitoring**

Kent ISD GSRP is required to work with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to measure the effect of the state-wide Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP). Information is sometimes collected about GSRP staff, enrolled children, and their families. Program staff or a representative from MDE might:

- Ask parents questions about their child and family.
- Observe children in the classroom.
- Measure what children know about letters, words, and numbers, etc.
- Ask teachers how children are learning and growing.

Information from you and about your child will not be shared with others in any way that you or your child could be identified. It is protected by law.

Questions? Please contact Kent ISD GSRP at 616-447-5679 or MDE Office of Great Start, Early Childhood Education and Family Services, at [mde-gsrp@michigan.gov](mailto:mde-gsrp@michigan.gov) or 517-373-8483

### **Referrals**

Staff will provide families with referrals to services for food, housing, childcare, behavior support, etc. Referrals for children that may have special needs will always be discussed with the family first. Whether the program staff or the family is bringing the concern, the process of referral will be explained. Concerns will be documented, and an observation will be requested. Staff will develop a plan and try various strategies. Staff may do additional screenings and evaluations, have meetings with families and report results and make plans for future action. Referral procedures to meet child and family needs are always kept confidential.

### **Rest Time**

Per licensing, teachers must provide a quiet space and rest materials. GSRP rest time lasts 45 minutes. Quiet activities will be provided for children who do not wish to sleep during rest time. Hope Academy provides a

blanket for each child at rest time. If you choose to provide personal items for rest time, please label with your child's first and last name.

Children will assist with setting up and cleaning up to promote independence and responsibilities. Mats/cots will be sanitized in accordance with licensing rules. Your child's teacher will let you know more information about bedding and a washing schedule.

### **Teacher Credentials**

All GSRP lead teachers and associate teachers are highly qualified and meet qualification requirements set forth by the State of Michigan.

Lead Teachers must have one of the following qualifications:

- A valid Michigan teaching certificate and an Early Childhood Education (ZA) or Early Childhood-General and Special Education (ZS) endorsement
- A bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development with a specialization in preschool teaching. The transcript will document a major, rather than a minor, in child development or early childhood education.

Associate or Assistant Teachers must have one of the following qualifications:

- Associate's degree (AA) in early childhood education or child development or the equivalent
- A valid classroom CDA credential
- 120-hour approval

### **Program Evaluation**

Each classroom will be rated using the Program Quality Assessment tool to provide feedback on areas of strengths and areas for improvement. Results will be used to plan staff training, revise management practices and seek additional resources. Each classroom instructional teaching team will be observed and given feedback at least twice per year by an evaluator that is familiar with the curriculum.

Feedback will be used to discuss strengths and improve the quality of the program. GSRP also uses a self-assessment and receives a score from the Great Start to Quality program. A star rating, ranging from 1 to 5, is awarded to the center and is available for viewing on the Great Start Connect website, [www.greatstartforkids.org](http://www.greatstartforkids.org).

### **Safety and Emergency Policies**

Procedures and evacuation plans for severe situations are posted in each classroom and include detailed instructions for specific emergency procedures. Per licensing, phone numbers for emergency personnel and the building address are posted in each classroom.

#### *Building Evacuation Plan*

In the event of a building evacuation, a relocation site has been predetermined to ensure that all children and adults are effectively and safely moved to an alternate clean and secure site. Children with special needs will be accommodated in accordance with the special health care plans on file. For questions, please refer to your location's Building Evacuation Plan.

#### *Lockdown Procedure*

Lockdown procedures have been created to ensure the safety of all children and adults in the building. Children with special needs will be accommodated in accordance with the special health care plans on file. The severity of the threat will determine how lockdown procedures are enforced. In a 'Lockdown Code', family members will not have access to the building until law enforcement has issued an 'all clear'. For questions, please refer to your location's Lockdown Procedure.

#### *Hazardous Exposure Policy*

A plan for responding to a situation of hazardous exposure has been put in place to ensure the safety of all children and adults in the building. Children with special needs will be accommodated in accordance with the special health care plans on file. In this situation, family members will not have access to the building until law enforcement has issued an 'all clear'.



### *Pest Management*

Per licensing regulations, liquid spray or aerosol insecticide applications will not be performed in any classroom unless the room will be unoccupied for at least 4 hours or longer if required by the pesticide label use directions. Families will receive advanced notification of pesticide applications through these two methods; letters sent home with students and notices posted at the center entrance and on classroom Family Information Boards.

### *Pick Up After a School Emergency*

In the event of an all school or site-wide emergency, district or site protocol will be followed, including how families will be contacted. Once law enforcement has determined that an emergency has been resolved, family members will be contacted. Adults will be provided details on how, when, and where to pick up their child.

### **School Closings**

If inclement weather or other issues cause a district to close schools or sites, GSRP classrooms follow the instructions of the local district where your child's classroom is located. Morning half-day sessions will be canceled if there is a 2 hour delay. Closing information is reported on local radio stations, local TV stations, and on local district websites.

### **Toileting**

If a student is not fully toilet trained, a collaborative plan will be developed between the classroom teachers and the guardian of the child. If your child is not yet fully potty-trained, please notify the child's teachers prior to the first day of school.

### **Toys from Home**

Contact your child's teacher if you have questions about bringing toys or comfort items from home to school, as well as the procedure for storing them.

### **Weather Policy**

Being physically active helps your preschooler learn healthy daily habits. Outdoor play and fresh air are important for the healthy development of children. Preschoolers who participate in active play can get the physical activity they need to maintain a healthy weight, develop muscles and strong bones, and reduce their risk of developing some chronic diseases. GSRP is required by the State of Michigan to provide 30 minutes minimum of daily outside time. We follow the district's policy when it comes to indoor vs. outdoor recess.

- Dress your child for the seasonal temperature
- Label your child's clothing
- If your child is well enough to attend school, he/she will be expected to participate in all classroom activities, including outdoor time (*Per Licensing*)

### **Withdrawal**

If you wish to withdraw your child from the program, please notify your child's teacher at least one week prior to your child's last date of attendance. Kent ISD requests a forwarding address or school contact if the child will be enrolled in another school program.

### **Sick students**

- (a) Changes in a child's health. Someone from the preschool team will immediately call parents or guardians.
- (b) A child experiences an accident, injury, or incident. Someone from the preschool team or the school office will immediately call parents or guardians.
- (c) A child is too ill to remain in the group. They will immediately call a parent or guardian, while having the students sit with school staff until someone shows up to pick up the students.

## FAMILY RESOURCES IN KENT COUNTY

EMERGENCY NEEDS (FOOD, SHELTER, UTILITY ASSISTANCE)		
Community Action Kent County (ACSET) (food, housing, weatherization, energy)	<a href="https://www.accesskent.com/Departments/CommunityAction/">https://www.accesskent.com/Departments/CommunityAction/</a>	616-336-4000
Community Resource Directory 2-1-1	<a href="http://www.refersoftware.com/hwmi">www.refersoftware.com/hwmi</a>	2-1-1 or 616-459-6281
Department of Human Services (MDHHS)	<a href="https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/">https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/</a>	616-248-1000
Homeless Resources	<a href="http://www.homelesshelterdirectory.org">www.homelesshelterdirectory.org</a>	800-A-SHELTER
Salvation Army (food, energy, housing, homelessness)	<a href="http://sasocialservices.org">sasocialservices.org</a>	616-459-9468
HEALTH CARE		
Children's Special Health Care Services (chronic health conditions)	<a href="http://www.accesskent.com/health">www.accesskent.com/health</a>	616-632-7066
Center For Disease Control and Prevention	<a href="https://www.cdc.gov/">https://www.cdc.gov/</a>	800-CDC-INFO
Immunization Clinic	<a href="https://www.accesskent.com/Health/Immunizations/default.htm">https://www.accesskent.com/Health/Immunizations/default.htm</a>	616-632-7200
Kent County Health Department	<a href="https://www.accesskent.com/Health/">https://www.accesskent.com/Health/</a>	616-632-7200
Maternal Infant Health Program	<a href="https://www.accesskent.com/Health/PregnancyParenting/health.htm">https://www.accesskent.com/Health/PregnancyParenting/health.htm</a>	616-632-7058
Medicaid Enrollment and Coordination	<a href="https://www.accesskent.com/Health/PregnancyParenting/medicaid.htm">https://www.accesskent.com/Health/PregnancyParenting/medicaid.htm</a>	616-632-7058
Michigan Community Dental Clinics	<a href="http://www.mydental.org/">www.mydental.org/</a>	877-313-6232
Refugee Health Services	<a href="https://www.accesskent.com/Health/Families/refugee.htm">https://www.accesskent.com/Health/Families/refugee.htm</a>	616-632-7058
Vision and Hearing Screening	<a href="https://www.accesskent.com/Health/Screening/default.htm">https://www.accesskent.com/Health/Screening/default.htm</a>	616-632-7047
WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)	<a href="https://www.accesskent.com/Health/WIC/">https://www.accesskent.com/Health/WIC/</a>	616-632-7200
Women's Health Network	<a href="https://www.accesskent.com/Health/whn_program.htm">https://www.accesskent.com/Health/whn_program.htm</a>	616-632-7283
LEGAL HELP		
Friend of the Court	<a href="https://www.accesskent.com/Courts/FOC/">https://www.accesskent.com/Courts/FOC/</a>	616-632-6888
Legal Assistance Center	<a href="https://legalassistancecenter.org/">https://legalassistancecenter.org/</a>	616-632-6000

Western MI Legal Services	<a href="https://www.lawestmi.org/">https://www.lawestmi.org/</a>	616-774-0672
<b>PARENT OR FAMILY</b>		
Bright Beginnings	<a href="http://bb.kentisd.org">bb.kentisd.org</a>	616-365-2276
Early On (developmental concerns)	<a href="http://www.1800earlyon.org">www.1800earlyon.org</a>	800-EARLY-ON
Great Start To Quality Kent Resource Center (Quality Daycare Options)	<a href="http://www.greatstarttoquality.org">www.greatstarttoquality.org</a>	616-447-5678
Parent Helpline (24 hours)	<a href="http://www.nationalparenthelpline.org/">www.nationalparenthelpline.org/</a>	855-4A-PARENT
Success Basics	<a href="http://www.successtartsearly.org">www.successtartsearly.org</a>	
<b>REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD AND ADULT ABUSE OR NEGLECT/DOMESTIC VIOLENCE</b>		
Child Protective Services	<a href="https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs">https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs</a>	855-444-3911
Domestic Violence (Safe Haven Ministries)	<a href="http://safehavenministries.org/">safehavenministries.org/</a>	616-452-6664
YWCA Domestic Crisis Center -24h	<a href="https://www.ywcawcmi.org/welcome">https://www.ywcawcmi.org/welcome</a>	616-451-2744
YWCA Sexual Abuse Crisis Line -24h	<a href="https://www.ywcawcmi.org/welcome">https://www.ywcawcmi.org/welcome</a>	616-776-7273

**R 400.8155(1)-(5) Child accidents and incidents; child and staff illness.**

**(1) A center shall have a written plan for how and when a parent is notified when personnel observe any of the following:**

- (a) Changes in a child's health.**
- (b) A child experiences an accident, injury, or incident.**
- (c) A child is too ill to remain in the group.**