



Preschool Handbook

2020-2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The staff at Szetela Early Childhood School extend a warm welcome to all of you. You have taken the first step in your child's lifelong road of education and this is a very important step. According to 40 years of data, the most important and beneficial learning time for a child is from birth to 5 years old; therefore the value of a quality early education is immeasurable. (See complete data results on <http://www.strategiesforchildren.org> website).

This handbook is designed to help you and your child become well acquainted with the services our school provides and the rules and regulations of Szetela Early Childhood School. The following information should be beneficial to you now and throughout the year. Please read through this booklet and keep it as a reference.

As a staff, we recognize that the family and home are the first and most significant influences in your child's life. We will be keeping in close contact with you all year long through newsletters, Parent/Teacher Conferences, and through notes, emails, and/or phone calls. Any time you have any questions or concerns, please notify the school as soon as possible. Thank you for your cooperation and support! We look forward to working with you and your child(ren) and hope you all have a wonderful learning experience at Szetela that will provide a solid foundation for the school years that follow.

Principal

Dr. Janet L. Reid

Organizational Structure of Szetela Early Childhood School

Address: 66 Macek Drive
Chicopee, MA 01013

Telephone Number is: 413- 594-3597

Fax Number is: 413- 594-3596

Principal: Dr. Janet L. Reid

School Secretary: Ms. Patricia Bieda

Office Assistant: Ms. Taylor Raleigh

Office staff is available Monday through Friday from 7:30-3:30

Szetela Early Childhood School is an integrated language based preschool program that services young children with special needs and their typically developing peers. Classrooms are set up as learning centers in which well educated and knowledgeable teachers facilitate learning, communication, and socialization. We use a multi-sensory approach. Children are encouraged to experiment and explore using the provided materials to solve problems, create, and make their own discoveries. This program meets all the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for preschool.

AM Session	8:30-11:00
PM Session	12:15-2:38
Full Day Program	8:30-2:38

School Vision Statement

The Szetela Early Childhood School is committed to providing a high quality and developmentally appropriate early childhood program in an integrated setting, for all students.

School Mission Statement

The mission of the Szetela Early Childhood School is to provide each child the opportunity to learn and grow as a unique individual who respects and values the uniqueness of others. The staff desire to establish strong relationships with the home as acknowledgment of the fact that parents are the first teachers of their children. The teachers use developmentally appropriate procedures to engage children in the learning process. Children are expected to be active learners, protected and encouraged as they explore and discover their world.

Registration Procedure

At Szetela we have children with special needs as well as peers. Children with special needs are referred for special education services by Early Intervention, parents, or other caregivers. The children will then be evaluated and there will be a meeting to determine if the child qualifies for specialized services. If the child qualifies then an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be written and the child will receive a special education slot at Szetela. If the child does not qualify for any services we will either offer the child a peer (typical) slot, or if we are full we will put their name on the waitlist.

To register your child we need the following documentation:

Completed forms in our school's registration packet

2 Specific Proofs of Residency- See packet

Immunization records

Birth certificate

Copy of license

*Other items may be requested

If your child is chosen for a peer slot, they will be assigned to one of the integrated classrooms either on the first or second floor. Each classroom has assigned staff of a teacher and paraprofessional, in some instances there may be another paraprofessional assigned due to student needs.

Peer Tuition

Tuition is due on the 15th of the previous month (Ex. October's tuition is due September 15th) and there are 10 payments throughout the school year. Although some months have less school days the tuition amount is based on a yearly amount and divided by 10. If you are unable to pay for some reason please call the principal immediately and do not risk losing your child's slot. We appreciate you working with us on the tuition as it funds several of the staff members at Szetela and without tuition we would be unable to have so many classes. Payment is accepted by check or money order only; made out

to the City of Chicopee.

Half Day: \$200/month

Full Day: \$450/month

Classroom Placement

The assignment of students to classes is the responsibility and decision of the principal in consultation with appropriate faculty and staff. Professional expertise is utilized to assess the child's learning style, academic ability, preference for teaching styles and performance in varied learning environments. Although parent input is not solicited, parents may submit in writing any information that would assist the Principal in the placement procedure prior to June 1st of the year preceding enrollment. Information

provided should address the child's strengths and weaknesses as well as the desired teaching style that would best fit your child. Requests that name specific teachers will not be considered.

Attendance

As part of the Chicopee School System, we follow the school calendar for days scheduled. To get the full benefit of this educational program, it is expected that your child will be in school every day, on time – 8:30 AM for the morning program and full day and 12:15 PM for the afternoon program. If your child is going to be absent, please call the school office and an excused absence will be documented. If a student has multiple unexcused absences in a row, the principal will be notified and address the situation.

Breakfast and Lunch

For the AM and full day students, free breakfast is served from 8:00 to 8:30am in our cafeteria with staff to supervise. Any child who is transported to school by bus, will be given the opportunity to eat their breakfast in their classroom.

For the PM and full day students, free lunch is served in the cafeteria from 12:00 to 12:15pm and will also be supervised. Any child who is transported to school by bus, will be given the opportunity to eat their lunch in their classroom.

Paraprofessionals will take the children to their classrooms after eating.

Snacks

Students in the full day classrooms are asked to bring a healthy snack to school as well as a drink. Please see your child's individual teacher about this. Please be aware of any posted warnings regarding allergies, i.e. "Allergy Safe Room". Items will all need to have the ingredient labels on the food item to ensure the safety of all.

Smoking

Smoking is not allowed on any public school properties.

Cell Phone Policy

For student and staff safety, there is NO cell phone use within the school building.

Expectations

It is expected that all adults be respectful and polite to each other. Rude or vulgar language will not be tolerated. If parents have a complaint they are expected to speak to the person concerned and if they are unable to come to a resolution then the parent should speak to the principal, who will investigate the matter. At all times please remain calm and polite and model acceptable behavior to the students.

Students are expected to follow the classroom rules. These will be taught to them over the first few weeks of school and reiterated during the school year when necessary. When disciplining a child, staff members will always be polite and respectful of the child. No one will ever be demeaned or humiliated. We strive to change a bad behavior, not to punish the child. Parents will be advised of any problems their child is having and the teacher will work with the parents to improve the situation. Each year, families are asked to read and sign the "School District's Discipline Plan". Please make sure that you have seen, read, and signed this document.

Parking Lot Protocol

As in any parking lot, especially with young children, it is expected that all vehicles will use EXTREME CAUTION and slow speeds while in the parking lot. All families are expected to follow MA laws and all children should be properly restrained in their car seats or by seat belts when traveling. The Chicopee Police Department can be notified if safety concerns are observed.

The parking lot has a limited number of parking spaces but we ask all families to be courteous and patient while dropping off and picking up their children. All vehicles must be parked in a parking space. No vehicle should be left running in the driving lane to drop off or pick anyone up, even if it is for a quick second. We ask that you are patient and wait for a space, to correctly park your vehicle and then escort your children to/from school. There are many persons of all ages and height, walking at different speeds so it is imperative that all drivers proceed with care and observe the pedestrians in and out of the walkway, which is marked with painted lines.

For the safety of all, we ask that adults walk with their children, holding hands, while in the parking area. Drivers cannot see small children and running children are at a bigger risk.

REMINDER: Handicapped parking spaces require a State Identification card for parking. No one else may use those spaces, even for "only a moment". If a person is not able to negotiate stairs, there is a ramp entrance for their use. One is located in the front of the building.

The school doors are always locked. You must request entrance into the building by ringing the bell and identifying yourself in the intercom and camera at the front door. This is a safety measure for the children and staff.

Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures

Drop Off

Students with their caregivers will line up in their designated classroom areas outside the front of the building. Promptly at drop off times (8:30 AM session and 12:15 PM

session), the teachers/staff will come outside to escort their students to their classrooms. The staff are not able to wait outside for any students that are late as it affects the flow and safety of the students entering the building. If your child's class has already transitioned into the building, then the procedure for late drop off is to patiently wait outdoors until all of the students have safely entered the building and transitioned to their classrooms. Once all the classrooms are in, ring the doorbell at the front of the building and identify yourself, sign the late student sign in sheet, and wait with your child in the lobby until a staff member can safely leave their classroom to retrieve your child.

If you bring your children early for breakfast or lunch, staff members will be out to retrieve the students and walk them to the cafeteria. The doors will be checked in 5 minute intervals for late arrivals. Please try your best to be on time.

Pick Up

Teachers and staff will escort students back outside to their designated classroom areas promptly at dismissal times (11:00 AM and 2:38 PM). Once the teacher has accounted for all their students, dismissal of students will begin. Please wait until the teacher has dismissed your child before trying to take them out of their lines. If a designated pick-up caretaker is not present at the dismissal times, the student will be brought back into the secured building and if necessary, parent/s and/or emergency contact numbers will be called to ensure that the student is being picked up as promptly as possible to reduce their anxiety and nerves. Caretaker will need to ring the front doorbell, identify themselves, enter the building to the office, and sign the late student sign out sheet.

We understand situations arise but please make every effort to be as prompt as possible. Principal will address repeated late drop offs and/or pick ups.

If you need to pick up your child early, please do so before 2:20. From 2:20-2:38 the front doors will not be opened to protect our students' safety. All the students and staff will be preparing to be dismissed and we need this to run as smooth as possible. There are NO exceptions to this.

Emergency Dismissal

All caretakers with permission to pick up your child need to be listed as emergency contacts on your enrollment form. If you need to update this at any time please let the office staff know in person and the updates will be made. If we do not recognize or know the emergency contact person picking up your child, they will be asked to provide photo identification before we will release your child to them. Please advise them of this. For safety reasons, your child will not be released to anyone that is not listed as an emergency contact.

If someone other than a custodial parent/guardian, who is listed as an emergency pick up will be picking up your child, please contact the teacher advising them of this prior to the pick up.

School Cancellation

We are very fortunate in Chicopee to have an automated telephone system, so if school is cancelled or delayed for any reason all students' homes will receive a recorded message or text message advising them of this. Closings will also be announced on local radio and television channels. **It is very important that you keep us updated with any change of phone numbers so they can be entered into the phone system.**

Two Hour Delayed Opening

If there is a two hour delay, AM preschool will be cancelled. Afternoon session will be as normal and full day students may arrive two hours after the normal time (10:30). There will be no breakfast served when there is a delayed opening.

Health Services in the Preschool

A school nurse is at Szetela full time to deal with minor student injuries that occur during school hours, contacts parents if a child is sick, or injured, record any visits to the office and also advises parents if a child has visited them. In addition the nurse keeps the health records up to date so it is important for parents to advise the nurse of any changes in their child's health.

When the nurse is absent there will either be a full time substitute nurse, or a nurse from another school will be on call. Either way school staff trained in pediatric CPR and First Aid are available.

If a child has any doctor's notes stating school restrictions please see or contact the nurse and give the nurse written documentation from your pediatrician. This document must specify the restriction and when the student can return to the activity.

If children are sick with a communicable disease or has vomiting, diarrhea, or have a fever of 100 or over parents are requested to keep the child home until symptoms are gone or for at least 24 hours to prevent the spreading of germs throughout the school.

For the complete Health Policy please see the nurse.

Medication Authorization

If medication is necessary to be administered during the school day, a Medication Authorization Form and parent consent are necessary. Prescription medications need to be hand delivered into the school nurse by the parent/guardian, in the original container, and labeled with the child's name, instruction for administration, including the times and amounts for dosages, and the physician's name.

Mandated Reporting Policies

As professionals in contact with young children and their families, we as staff are mandated reporters and required by law to help the Department of Children and

Families become aware of children who may be abused or neglected. We do not judge families or state opinions, we report significantly concerning factual information and DCF investigates further to determine if there are concerns or not. Open communication between families and school staff is very important to relay important information to each other to avoid unnecessary concerns.

Safety Drills

Teaching safety is a high priority for all members of the Szetela School staff. Throughout the school year we will be having scheduled and unscheduled safety drills, such as Fire Drills, Shelter in Place Drills, Lockdown Drills, and Severe Weather Drills. All of our practices are completed in a manner to teach the students what needs to be done during an emergency while remaining calm in a comfortable environment.

Dress Code

Children need to be dressed appropriately for the season in clothing that is safe and is not distracting. Flip flops and open toed shoes are not safe at preschool. Children with unsafe clothes/shoes will be unable to participate in gym, which is part of our curriculum.

*Please remember to change the extra clothes in your child's cubby as the season or the size changes. We want your child as comfortable as possible.

General Bus Rules

Transportation is only provided for children with special needs and this transportation is door to door. Caretakers need to accompany the child out to the bus and also meet the bus at the end of the school day. Times of pick and drop off will be determined by the bus company. On the first week of school please put your child's name and classroom number inside their backpack as new drivers and monitors do not always know the children. Any changes to the pick up and drop off locations must be announced to the bus company and the school with 48 hours notice.

Report Cards and Progress Notes

Report cards will be sent home 3 times a year. (December, March and June). At the end of the first marking period, parents will be invited to have a conference with the classroom teacher. We strongly recommend that you take advantage of this time to talk to the teacher about any concerns you, or your child, may have. If at any other time you feel you would like to talk to the teacher please call the office. A message will be given to the teacher who will call you during his/her prep time to set up a conference time. Progress reports for students with special needs children will be completed at the same time as the report cards.

Visitors/Volunteers

If you wish to visit/volunteer, please see the Principal for more information on the documentation that needs to be completed.

Conclusion

We hope you and your child enjoy your time at Szetela Early Childhood School. We have a very dedicated staff that will do whatever they can to make our students successful. If you have any concerns, no matter how minor, please talk to someone here. The principal is available from 8:00 AM-3:00 PM Monday-Friday and all messages will be returned within 24 hours unless there is an emergency.