

Dear Parents,

The Saint Mark Kindergarten program was established to provide the growing needs for full day kindergarten. The program provides a Christian learning environment which respects and encourages young children's exploration and curiosity while providing opportunities for growth in all developmental areas. We believe that children need "to be children" and grow, learn, and feel good about themselves and what they are capable of doing.

Throughout your child's enrollment and your participation as a parent, I welcome suggestions you may have for improving the quality of service provided by our program. Please do not hesitate to share your ideas or concerns with us.

Sincerely,

Stacey Zenowich,  
Kindergarten Teacher

Gene Holmes,  
Principal

## Philosophy and Program Goals

The Saint Mark Kindergarten supports the philosophy that a responsive environment will foster positive growth and learning for each child. This philosophy is based on these basic beliefs:

- 1.) That all children need to express themselves through interaction with Nurturing adults and peers while being encouraged to be themselves.
- 2.) That all children need an environment that responds to their Individual developmental and spiritual needs, while maintaining a safe and healthy atmosphere.
- 3.) That children need to be allowed to be children with the opportunity to make choices within a developmentally appropriate setting and follow through with those choices.
- 4.) That positive, participatory relationships with parents, the parish and the community will be fostered.

## Acceptance Policy

In the event that there are more applicants ready for kindergarten than there are seats available, the school administration will use the following criteria to determine acceptance:

- a. Readiness - The child must be developmentally ready for kindergarten, as determined by the Gesell screening and the screening teams. Placement in full day kindergarten is made with the child's level of development in mind. Children who are found to need more time to mature will not be accepted to the program for the upcoming school year, but will be offered the opportunity to re-register the following year with guaranteed acceptance if re-testing shows they are ready.
- b. Priority - Acceptance of students who are ready for school, the priority of acceptance is:

First Priority - Children who have siblings currently in St Mark School and for re-tested children.

Second Priority - Children of new families who are registered parishioners of one of the five Catholic parishes in Stratford.

Third Priority - Children of Catholic families who are members of parishes outside the Stratford region.

Fourth Priority - Non-Catholic children.

This priority of acceptance applies to all grades.

## Program Policies

The full day kindergarten program at Saint Mark begins at 7:55 AM and ends at 2:00 PM. Nutritious snacks and lunches should be provided for the children. Please provide only one snack and a juice for morning snack as the children only have approximately 15 minutes for snack. Milk can be purchased on a full-year basis and hot lunch can also be purchased. Kindergarten children will be given a rest time each day after lunch. A mat will be provided for each child. Children may bring a small blanket to be kept at school. It will be sent home periodically to be laundered. Quiet music is played to help them rest.

## Typical Daily Schedule

7:30 - 8:00	Arrival/Before School Activity
8:00 - 8:35	Circle time: (Prayer, Pledge, Calendar, Weather, etc.)
8:35 - 9:15	Centers
9:15 - 9:50	Religion
9:50 - 10:10	Snack and recess
10:10 - 10:30	Language Arts
10:30 - 11:15	Language Arts
11:15 - 11:55	Gym
11:55 - 12:20	Lunch
12:20 - 12:35	Recess
12:35 - 12:55	Rest
12:55 - 1:15	Math
1:15 - 1:45	Writing Workshop
1:45	Prepare for dismissal
1:50	Call for buses
1:55	Call for walkers

## Specials

Gym: Monday 10:50 - 11:20  
Music: Tuesday 9:20 - 9:50  
Library: Wednesday 8:10 - 8:30 - Book  
Spanish: Thursday 11:30 - 11:50  
Library/Computer: Friday 8:10 - 8:50

## OUR CURRICULUM

All Curricula for Kindergarten and all other grades are available for parents to view online ([www.catholicschoolsfairfieldcounty.com](http://www.catholicschoolsfairfieldcounty.com)).

### Learning Centers:

A vital portion of our program consists of learning centers. These centers revolve around a unit or theme and usually lasts 1-2 weeks. The children are expected to complete their given center task before they are allowed choices of their own. Children visit different centers daily on a rotating schedule. The centers set up in the classroom are: Math (manipulatives and independent), Writing, Science/Soc. Studies, Listening, Blocks (large and small), Drama, Construction, Computer, Puzzles, Art Station (plus Easel), Play-do, and Sand/Water Table.

### Language Arts:

At Saint Mark we use a phonics based, whole Language approach toward reading readiness. Children are given the tools they need along with lots of encouragement to develop at their own pace. Thematic units integrate many aspects of learning not only in language arts but in other areas as well. We incorporate the use of children's literature into each unit focusing on the importance of many Pre-reading skills. Oral skills are developed by using big books, shared reading and experience charts. The written language is developed by writing many class books, individual journals, and "temporary" spelling. Among the many skills focused on in kindergarten, include: letter formation, recognition and initial consonant sounds, left to right progression, rhyming sounds, creative thinking, recalling details in sequence, listening with interpretation and participation in choral speaking of poems, and finger plays.

### Mathematics

Readiness will be acquired through informal activities such as centers using math manipulative materials, and through planned experiences which occur through games and discovery. Patterning, graphing, sorting, shapes (two and three dimensional), and numbers are some of the skills focused on in kindergarten.

### Religion

We follow the Kindergarten School Program of Silver Burdett Ginn and also use the Pflaum Gospel Weeklies. Our faith is reinforced daily through prayer, music, bible stories, and example! We attend monthly mass and special prayer service with our "Eighth Grade Partners". This has become a very special part of our program.

### Art:

The children are encouraged to participate in many arts and crafts activities. Please provide a smock, labeled with your child's name, to be kept in the classroom.

### Computers:

There is a computer located in the kindergarten classroom which the children can use on a daily basis. The class also uses the computer room once a week with a computer teacher.

#### Literacy Activities:

Through a variety of teaching strategies, we seek to provide meaningful, purposeful, and functional literacy experiences. Our kindergarten program encourages creative thinking, phonics skills, and letter formation. Periodically, a new letter is introduced and literacy is developed in the daily center activities. Often the appeal will come to the child through our use of rhyme, rhythm, and repetition.

#### Library:

Each Wednesday, the children go to the library to check out books. The books need to be returned by Monday. The children also receive Library instruction from a trained Librarian on a weekly basis.

#### Music / Gym:

Along with daily music and Physical Education provided in the classroom, kindergartners receive an instructional music, gym class once a week. During this time trained instructors will guide the children through these activities.

#### Outside:

As part of daily program, the children go outside to play. We ask that you dress your child appropriately according to the weather forecast for each day.

#### Parent Involvement

Opportunities are always available for parents to get involved. If you wish to lead an activity or share a special talent or volunteer your time please let the teacher know ahead of time.

Parent Conferences: Parent conferences are scheduled for late fall. All parents are required to meet with the kindergarten teacher at that time to discuss your child's progress. Conferences throughout the remaining portion of the year will be scheduled only when needed.

#### Discipline Policy

It is our hope that each child enjoys the activities planned by understanding that he/she shares responsibility for his/her own experiences. With prior knowledge of our basic rules of safety and good conduct, each child should be aware of how to exercise self discipline, that we are here to help them and that we want them to succeed.

The teacher strives to build self-esteem, independence, the ability to socialize in a group, and develop self control for each child.

The teacher will interact and diffuse any dangerous or unsettling conflicts as follows:

1. Re-direct play activity.
2. Discuss conflict, explain rules, offer alternate activity.
3. Terminate activity.
4. Remove child to sit in quiet chair for some private time (not to exceed five minutes).

Consistent difficulties will be discussed with parent and principal.

## SPECIAL DAYS

**Birthdays:** We celebrate birthdays during snack or after lunch. If you would like to send in a special "treat" for your child's birthday, please make sure you have an adequate number of treats for all the children. Please remember that treats should be peanut free.

**Field Trips:** Special events will be planned to add to the curriculum. Parental permission for participation in these outings will be requested prior to the event.

**Holidays:** During special holidays, the teacher will plan special activities which are appropriate for the children. Notices of these events will be sent home or included in the newsletter.

**Cooking:** During different times throughout the year your child may be introduced to a new cooking activity. This is a fun way to reinforce a unit or theme for the kindergarten. It also encourages pre-reading, math, and science skills.

**Woodworking:** We teach the simple skills of sanding, hammering, and painting on wood while doing special projects throughout the year. The children achieve great satisfaction in creating with their hands and the use of these tools.