Updated September 2026

Saskatoon Student Child Care Services

Family Handbook

Saskatoon Early Childhood Education Demonstration Centre

Royal West Early Learning Centre

Sharon Van Cleave Child Care Centre

SSCCS

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Welcome

Welcome to SSCCS. We are so happy to have your family join us and look forward to supporting your children through their stages of growth and development. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to your child's educator, the program director or executive director.

Nancy Lautner – Executive Director – nlautner@ssccs.ca

Tami Carriere – Director – ECE Demonstration Centre – tcarriere@ssccs.ca

Traci Thomson – Director – Royal West ELC – tthomson@ssccs.ca

Christina Hembroff – Director – Sharon Van Cleave Centre– chembroff@ssccs.ca

Land Acknowledgement

Saskatoon Student Child Care Services, Inc. respectfully acknowledges that our childcare centres are located and operated on Treaty 6 Territory—the traditional and ancestral lands of the Cree, Saulteaux, Dene, Dakota, Lakota, Nakota, and Métis nations. Saskatoon Student Child Care Services, Inc. is committed to working in a spirit of truth and reconciliation to make a better future for all.

About Saskatoon Student Child Care Services, Inc.

Saskatoon Student Child Care Services, Inc. (SSCCS) is a non-profit, registered charity that supports parents in their pursuit to become independent, contributing members of society and nurturing caregivers.

SSCCS is regulated through the Child Care Act and Regulations and licensed through the Ministry of Education, Early Years Branch.

- The Child Care Act: download.pdf
- The Child Care Regulations: download.pdf

SSCCS locations are:

Royal West Early Learning Centre

The Royal West Early Learning Centre is at the north end of Estey School. Licensed for 59 spaces, Royal West Early Learning Centre offers care to children aged 0 to 6 years for families of all communities.

Address: 441 Witney Avenue North, Saskatoon, SK S7L 3M6
Phone: 306-683-8390
Hours of Operation: Monday – Friday, 7:30 am - 5:30 pm
**closed on statutory holidays*

Saskatoon Early Childhood Education Demonstration Centre

The Saskatoon Early Childhood Education Demonstration Centre is at the north end of Mount Royal Collegiate. Licensed for 66 spaces, the Demonstration Centre offers care to children aged 0 to 6 years. The childcare center was made with observation booths to partner with Saskatchewan Polytechnic and support the education of future Early Childhood Educators.

Address: 440 Avenue W North, Saskatoon, SK S7L 1C1
Phone: 306-659-4900
Hours of Operation: Monday – Friday, 7:00 am - 5:30 pm
**closed on statutory holidays*

Sharon Van Cleave Child Care

The Sharon Van Cleave Centre is in Mount Royal Collegiate and is primarily for young families attending high school. Licensed for 22 spaces, Sharon Van Cleave Child Care Centre offers care for children aged 0 to 29 months. The Family Support Coordinator is available to encourage young families to develop parenting skills and provide individual support so families can be successful in school and life.

Address: 2220 Rusholme Road, Saskatoon, SK S7L 4A4
Phone: 306-683-8383
Hours of Operation: Monday – Friday, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
**this centre operates in conjunction with the Saskatoon Public School Division calendar.*

Mission Statement, Goals and Philosophy

Misson Statement

SSCCS serves families by providing quality early learning and childcare and parent/caregivers support programs that:

- form the foundation for children's optimal development and
- support parents'/caregivers' pursuit of their educational and career goals.

Goals

Saskatoon Student Child Care Service Inc. is committed to:

- providing accessible, quality childcare services and parent support programs to assist parents in completing their education and/or being active participants in the work force;
- providing quality childcare programs that contribute to the training of early childhood educators

Philosophy

SSCCS believes every person has the right to education, employment, and a nurturing environment that provides opportunities for optimal development. Our view is that children are competent, curious, inventive, and born to learn. All children from all backgrounds and cultures, and at every age and stage, deserve our respect. They are strong and powerful contributors to their own learning. Working in partnership with each other, educators, family, and community members, children construct knowledge and learn about their world.

Confidentiality

All staff, volunteers, and students at SSCCS enter into a signed Confidentiality Agreement to ensure:

- Information about your child and family is held in strictest confidence
- Information about your child and your family is not released without your written consent
- That information is released appropriately when parents are separated or divorced (the program requires proof e.g. a legal document such as a custody agreement)
- That your child's program file will be reviewed only by the SSCCS staff that are working with your child and family

Communication and Administration

Communication is essential to a healthy childcare relationship, and we endeavor to communicate frequently and fully with all our families. We utilize Parent, a full-featured childcare management system that invoices for fees, collects payment, and sends annual receipts. In addition to the administrative features of Parent, you can communicate directly with the educators working with your child, see the daily activities at the centre and enjoy the pictures posted on the app showing you the fun and excitement that your child is having throughout the day. The Parent App is SOC2 certified to ensure that your information is safe and secure.

The SSCCS Team

The SSCCS Team is comprised of many professionals who are dedicated to supporting your child's growth and development.

Board of Directors

A community-based board of directors governs SSCCS. Serving on our board of directors are professionals who bring their knowledge and experience from early learning and childcare, education, administration, business, and finance. Each of our board members strongly supports early childhood professionals and the work of early learning and childcare. The Board of Directors for SSCCS is invested in delivering early learning and childcare programs that serve the community well.

Executive Director

The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring that all three centres are implementing our mission statement and policies, as well as fulfilling licensing and legal requirements. The Executive Director also prepares budgets and financial statements, applies for grants, develops partnerships with external organizations, supports each centre director, and assists in short and long-term planning.

Centre Director

The Director is responsible for the overall operations of the centre, managing finances, and supervision of all staff. They support the educators in developing and implementing children's programs and creating a family friendly environment.

HR/Payroll Manager

The HR/Payroll Manager is responsible for providing support in all human resource areas, including but not limited to hiring, onboarding, payroll and benefits.

Assistant Director/Supervisor

The Assistant Director/Supervisor supports the Centre Director with some administrative tasks, supports staff and families, and fulfills most of the duties of the Centre Director in their absence.

Early Childhood Educators (ECEs)

The ECES are trained early learning and childcare professionals who are committed to the care and education of the children. They are the main point of contact for families and are responsible for facilitating play and learning, child guidance, creating rich learning environments, and documenting learning.

Family Support Coordinator

The Family Support Coordinator supports families in need by providing parenting support and access to community and medical services. This position includes providing support to young families to complete their education.

Inclusion Coordinator

The Inclusion Coordinator works to support the holistic development of children of all abilities. The Inclusion Coordinator partners with other professionals to coordinate services (i.e., speech-language pathology; behavioral consultation services) and applies for individual inclusion grants as needed.

Pedagogical Mentor

The Pedagogical Mentor works to support educators in programming and facilitating learning experiences using best practices in early learning and childcare. They set goals and empower staff to pursue continuous learning and skill-building to provide excellence in childcare.

Chef

The chef is trained in culinary arts and upholds strict food safe practices. They are responsible for providing nutritious meals and snacks for the children and maintaining a well-balanced menu.

Required Staff Certification

All full-time educators have minimum ECE I certification, current First Aid and CPR and a clean criminal record check with vulnerable sector search.

Supervision

SSCCS follows the requirements for supervision as set out in the Child Care Licensees' Manual, Part IV – Division 2 - Publications Centre

Fees

Group	Age	Total Centre Fee	Family Reduced Fee
Infant	6 weeks to 18 months	$1206.50	$217.50
Toddler	19 months to 30 months	$1006.11	$217.50
Preschool/Kindergarten	31 months to 6 years	$888.78	$217.50

Children who turn 6 years old are eligible for the family reduced fee while in kindergarten. Children who are 6 years old and completed kindergarten are not eligible for the Parent Fee Reduction Grant and must pay the full fee of $888.78 for the months of July and August.

Fee Policy

Fees are due in full the first of each month. Accommodations can be made to pay fees on the 15th or 20th of the month.

Families who leave the early learning centre with an outstanding debt have 30 days to pay their fees. If no payment has been received within 30 days, the Centre will send the account to Credit Bureau of Saskatoon Collections

Fees are paid by automatic withdrawal through the Parent App

Late Pick up Policy

Caregivers who pick up their children at the end of the day are reminded that they should be arriving with enough time to exit the centre **prior** to closing. If you know you are going to be late, please contact the centre. **If you contact the centre to notify about your late pick up, late fees will still be applied.**

- Late pick up fees are $40.00 for pick up between 5:30 and 5:45 plus an additional $20.00 for each additional full or part 15-minute interval
- Late fees are due on the first of the following month

Enrolment and Termination

To enroll children in our care, families must complete the Agreement for Childcare Services. Upon receiving the completed Agreement, families will be registered into our childcare management system, Parent, and sent additional forms to complete. All forms must be completed prior to the child starting care. Any changes in care arrangements (change in family structure, change in fees, hours of care, etc.), requires a new Agreement for Childcare Services form to be completed.

Services may be terminated with 5 days' written notice within the first month of care. After the first month, one month's written notice of termination of childcare services is required, received by the 1st of the month.

Services can be changed from full-time to drop in with one month's written notice, received by the 1st of the month.

SSCCS reserves the right to terminate childcare services with no notice for nonpayment of childcare fees.

Professional Development

Up to three organization wide PD days will be held each school year which will result in centre closures. Families will be notified of these dates with at least one month's notice.

Child Guidance

Child guidance is approached in a manner that fosters self-esteem by creating an environment that values and cares for each unique child. Staff strive to implement strategies that are tailored to each child's individuality. Corporal or verbal punishment is not tolerated and will not be used as a guidance strategy. Our goal is to equip children with the principles, attitudes, and skills they need to become confident, responsible, caring, independent individuals.

Goals of Child Guidance

1. To protect children from harming themselves, others, or property.
2. To help children develop self-regulation skills.
3. To help children develop the skills to solve their own problems.
4. To help children develop independence and high self-esteem.
5. To help children develop the skills to interact positively with others.

When challenging behavior occurs, educators use positive methods of guidance which show respect for the child and help the child learn independence and developmentally appropriate behavior. SSCCS's policy emphasizes prevention of challenging behavior. The guidance strategies used will always consider the child's age, the individuality of the child, and the type of behavior the child exhibits.

Physical, emotional, and psychological punishment will not be permitted while a child is in the care of SSCCS. This includes, but is not limited to, spanking, shaking, rough handling, humiliation, rejection, withholding food, isolation, or deprivation of basic needs.

Educators/caregivers are encouraged to ask for assistance, relief, and ideas from colleagues, when necessary. The inclusion coordinator and/or the centre director and, if available, other supporting professionals may be involved with assisting educators in developing skills, strategies, and program plans for challenging behavior. Ongoing challenges will be discussed with parents/guardians and solutions will be arrived at together.

Goals of this policy are to:

- Protect children from inappropriate child management practices
- Respect each child in our care
- Set limits on behavior and respond consistently to challenging behavior
- Form healthy relationships/attachments with the children

SSCCS staff and management will work with parents/guardians to work through challenging behaviours when needed. Although we strive to be an inclusive environment, we are aware that there are some circumstances where we may not be able to meet the needs of certain children. In those circumstances, SSCCS will provide one month's written notice of cancellation of childcare services. In the rare circumstances where a child's behaviour poses a severe safety risk to themselves or others, SSCCS reserves the right to terminate childcare services with no notice.

*Please note that all SSCCS staff have a duty to report any suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect and follow the government of Saskatchewan Child Abuse Protocol.

https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/justice-crime-and-the-law/child-protection/child-abuse-and-neglect

Illness

Children need to feel well enough to actively participate in daily activities both indoors and outdoors. Children who are ill need the one-to-one care, attention and rest that cannot be adequately provided by our program. Bringing a child who is ill to childcare exposes him/her to secondary illnesses and exposes the staff and other children to illness. Bringing a child back to the program before all symptoms have subsided risks a relapse and further delays their recovery. If your child becomes ill during the day, we will keep them as comfortable as possible and expect prompt pick-up by family members or emergency contacts.

Please keep your child at home if they have been prescribed more than one medication, aside from emergency medications (i.e. asthma inhaler, epi-pen, etc.). They may return once they only need one medication or are both completed.

Illness Policy

Once in the centre, should a child begin to show signs of sickness, symptoms will be monitored. If an individual has any of the following four symptoms listed, they will be sent home immediately.

- Fever above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or 38.0 degrees Celsius with behavior changes and/or other symptoms
- Diarrhea – exclusion is required for all diapered children whose stool is not contained in the diaper and toilet-trained children if the diarrhea is causing "accidents"
- Vomiting
- Any communicable diseases including unexplained marks or rashes (must be medicated/diagnosed before returning to the centre)

Exceptions:

A fever above 104 degrees Fahrenheit or 40.0 degrees Celsius will be sent home immediately without consideration of behavior changes and/or other symptoms.

An unexplained temperature above 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit or 37.8 degrees Celsius auxiliary (armpit) in a child under four months will be sent home immediately and a medical evaluation is recommended.

If an individual has any combination of two or more of the following symptoms listed, they will be sent home:

- Steady coughing

- Headache
- Muscle and/or joint aches and pains
- Sore throat
- Chills
- Runny nose
- Nasal congestion
- Dizziness
- Loss of appetite (difficulty feeding for children)
- Altered sense of taste or smell
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing and/or a heavy/rattly chest
- Nausea
- Unable to participate in daily activities

Medical attention should be sought out as soon as possible for any of the following situations:

- A quickly spreading rash of any nature
- A large volume of blood in the stool
- A cut that may require stitches
- Suspected consumption of any toxic substance

***This policy is subject to change based on new information.**

When children can return to the centre:

- When feeling well enough to participate in daily activities
- Once fever free (without fever reducing medication) or once all other symptoms of illness have been improving
- 24 hours after the first administration of prescribed medication
- After diarrhea has stopped

Upon diagnosis of communicable disease and/or illness, please refer to the reference chart for return to centre guidelines.

Communicable Diseases-Reference Chart

Families are asked to notify the centre if their child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease. Any known communicable disease within the centre will be anonymously posted and emailed to the families.

We will continue to report to families and staff confirmed cases of communicable disease / illness as required of us by SHA / Public Health.

Medication Policy and Procedures

All medication must be in its original container – prescription medication must be clearly labelled by the pharmacist. Note that pharmacists are usually able to

split out prescription medication into two containers so that you can have one at home and leave one at the centre.

Only full-time staff members will administer medication. A physician's written direction is required when administering more than one medication (other than emergency medications) or when more than the recommended dosage is needed.

- Medication is handed directly to the Centre staff by the child's parent/guardian
- A medication form is filled out and signed by the parent/guardian which permits centre staff to administer the medication.
- Medication is stored safely, locked away in the fridge or cupboard or associated lock box until needed.
- The medication form is filled out with the time and the initials of the employee administering the medication. Any needed notes about the dose administered are documented on this form also.
- When the series of medication is complete, the parent/guardian signs off on the back of the medication form to indicate that the series of medication is no longer required.
- Any unused medication is given directly back to the parent/guardian to dispose of properly.
- Completed medication forms are given to the Centre Director (or designate) to be stored in the child's file.
- Aside from emergency medications (i.e. asthma inhaler, epi-pen, etc.), medications that are prescribed to be administered to a child "as needed" will not be administered at the centre.

In exceptional circumstances, non-prescription medication will be administered on the oral authorization of the parent. Written authorization must be obtained as soon as possible in these circumstances.

Minor Injuries

When minor injuries occur SSCCS will do the following:

- Provide any necessary first aid
- Report injury to families using an injury report on the Parent app
- If your child comes to the centre with an injury that was not sustained while in our care, we will note it on an injury report on the Parent App for your acknowledgement

If you notice an injury that was not reported please contact the Child Care Director at the centre the child attends.

Injury and Unusual Occurrences (IUO)

In accordance with Child Care Regulation, if a child attending the centre sustains an injury requiring medical treatment beyond basic first aid or is involved in an unusual or unexpected occurrence, the centre will:

- Immediately notify the parent of the child or, if the parent is not available, any person designated by the parent as a person to contact in case of emergency
- Within 24 hours of the occurrence, notify a program consultant
- Within 7 days of the occurrence, submit an IUO report to the Ministry of Education, Early Years Branch

If your child is involved in an unusual occurrence, the centre will always inform you with utmost priority.

Depending on the nature of the injury or occurrence, the centre may:

- Call an ambulance to transport the injured child to receive further medical assistance
- Share your and your child's information with Saskatchewan Health Authority
- Go into either a perimeter or full lockdown
- Send children home for the day or until it is safe to operate the centre as usual

Nutrition

The centres provide a 5-week rotational menu that is approved by the Early Years Branch of the Ministry of Education. Our chef prepares two snacks and lunch each day. If your child(ren) has food allergies or other dietary requirements, please communicate this information to the centre director. You will be provided with a copy of the menu and are required to bring your own alternatives when needed.

Food from Outside the Centre

Other than food required for allergies or dietary preferences, no outside food or drink is permitted in the centres.

Allergy Form

If your child has an allergy, you will be provided with an allergy action plan to complete and return to the centre.

Weather Guidelines

SSCCS believes in the importance of outdoor play during all the seasons throughout the year.

In the winter months children and educators will go outside daily up to temperature of minus 25 degrees Celsius inclusive of windchill. Outside play when the temperature is colder than minus 25 degrees for preschool aged children is up to the discretion of the educators if all the children going outside have appropriate clothing. Groups will spend short periods of time outside in cold temperatures. Families are responsible for providing appropriate clothing.

From May to October, educators will apply sunscreen on the children prior to going outside. The centre provides basic sunscreen, but families can provide their own if wanting a specific kind. Families are responsible for providing a hat for their children.

If the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) is 7 or higher, children will not go outside.

Safety Drills

Fire Drills

All the centres do monthly fire drills. In the case of a real fire or other emergency evacuation, children and staff will evacuate to pre-arranged muster points and families will be notified as soon as possible.

Lockdown and Secure and Hold Drills

Lockdown and secure and hold drills occur twice a year. In the case of a real lockdown, families will be notified after clearance from the Saskatoon Police Services.

Family Expectations

Drop-Off Expectations

- Families are required to support their child to wash their hands upon arrival each day (this includes infants who can hold their head up without support)
- Families must verbally confirm with one of the room educators that they have arrived with their child.

Pick-Up Expectations

- Families must verbally confirm with one of the room educators that they are removing their child from our care.

Conduct Expectations

- Families are expected to follow the rules and expectations set out by the staff and management of SSCCS and to speak respectfully to all SSCCS employees. Repeated incidents of not following rules set out by the organization or disrespect to the staff will not be tolerated and may be cause for termination of childcare services.

What to Bring from Home

Please label all items from home with your child's name.

All items will be kept in your child's room. Every child is assigned a cubby where their personal belongings can be stored. It is advisable that items stored in your child's cubby, such as a change of clothes, be kept in a backpack or bag that can be left at the childcare centre.

All children

- Diapers or pull ups (if used)
- Minimum 2 changes of clothes
- Water bottle (except for very young infants)
- 2 photos of child with family (labeled with names of each person in the picture)
- Appropriate outerwear for the season (i.e., hat in the summer, ski pants in the winter)
- Pair of indoor shoes

Infants

- Formula or Breastmilk, labelled with your child's name and dated
- At least 3 Baby bottles (if still on formula/breastmilk)
- Water bottle (older infants)
- Pacifiers (if used)

***Please ensure that there are no items in your child's bag other than what is listed above.**

The Centre Provides:

- Snacks and Lunch (note that we do not provide food alternatives for children with allergies or special dietary needs.)
- Sleep sacks and blankets that are age and developmentally appropriate for each child
- Sudocreme
- Vaseline
- Wipes

What to Wear for Our Play-Based Programs

Children are encouraged to get their hands dirty as they focus on hands-on learning through play-based activities. While smocks are provided for painting and sensory play, it's advisable for children to wear clothes that can get stained or messy. Thank you for your cooperation!

Toys from Home

Please do not bring toys and other belongings (ex. jewelry, books, games, dolls etc.) from home. Exceptions will be made for jewelry and accessories that are worn for religious or health purposes. The centre will provide children with options to use as comfort items when/if needed.

Transitioning from Home to Centre

Starting a new program can be both exciting and daunting, especially for children. It's normal to feel worried, stressed, or anxious during this time. Our educators are committed to minimizing discomfort and creating a welcoming and safe environment for all children and families. Our educators work in partnership with families to develop a transition plan that suits you and your child's needs. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to discuss them with your child's educator.

Tips for Making the Transition Easier:

- Create a goodbye routine. When leaving at drop-off, let your child know that you are leaving – do not just disappear. Having special handshakes, reading a book, reciting a goodbye message, or waving through the window are all great ways to say goodbye and help transition your child into being at the early learning centre for the day
- Make sure drop-offs happen quickly. It can be harder for the child to let you go if the process is drawn out
- Let your child know a time frame you will pick them up through concrete examples that fit into their day, such as, "I will be back after you are finished your afternoon snack."
- Help your child transition into the room by saying things like, "There are the blocks you played with last time we were here. Remember how you built that great tower? You could do that again," or, "Look, there's your friend Liam! I wonder if he would like to play with you this morning."
- You set the tone. Keeping a positive attitude and being excited about going to the early learning centre will help your child know that this is a safe and fun place for them to look forward to

Program Schedules

Daily schedules are based on what is developmentally appropriate for each age group. We recognize that children are each unique in their personalities. The early childhood educators are trained to adapt the schedule in response to individual and group needs. Educators facilitate a balance between a schedule that is flexible and responsive, while also providing structure and predictability.

Please be aware of the following times when considering drop off and pick up times:

9:30-10:00- Morning Snack

11:30-12:00-Lunch

12:30-2:30- Nap/Quiet Time

2:30-3:00-Afternoon Snack

*Please see room educators for your child's daily schedule

Toilet Learning

Staff will work alongside families to support toilet learning, with consistency between home and the centre in mind. If you want to learn more about the toilet learning process, please don't hesitate to ask your child's educators for additional information and resources.

Please be sure to bring extra clothing—especially underwear, pants, and socks—to keep with your child's belongings for when accidents happen. Staff will always respond to accidents by simply and calmly helping children change their clothing without criticism. Soiled clothing will be sent home in a sealed bag.

Additional Services

Speech and Language Pathology is a service provided by the Saskatchewan Health Authority. Supports offered are assessments, recommendations, and consultation services.

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Services (formerly Behavioural Consultation Services) is a service provided by the Saskatchewan Health Authority. They provide support to children 0-6 who are not enrolled in school with behavioral and/or emotional challenges.

Program Details

Play and Exploration

The Play and Exploration Early Learning Program Guide was developed by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education Early Years Branch to promote high-quality, age-appropriate, play-based learning experiences for young children. SSCCS closely follows the Play and Exploration guide in all our programs

Reggio Emilia Inspired

SSCCS is inspired by the work of educators in Reggio Emilia, Italy who believe that children are competent, capable, and are central to their own learning. Educators come alongside children to build knowledge through observation and inquiry to support the "100 Languages of Children". Carefully planned, purposeful, and aesthetically pleasing environments, both indoor and outdoor, provide the structure for this learning with a heavy emphasis on play. Our Reggio Emilia inspired philosophy is child-centered, experiential, and relationship-driven.

Outdoor Pedagogy

SSCCS believes that outdoor play and access to nature is essential to developing children's physical, cognitive, emotional, creative, and social development. Outdoor programming is built on a strong foundation of respect for the environment, curiosity, and wonder for the natural world. Children of all ages embrace outdoor learning in various weather conditions to connect with and explore nature. From building snow forts to flipping rocks over in search of various insects to feeling raindrops for the first time—children explore as competent and capable learners to build their understanding of the world around them. Children are supported to take risks that grow and challenge their skills and to better assess and manage risk in all areas of their lives.

Emergent Curriculum

Emergent curriculum is the planning of activities and projects which emerge in the daily life of the children and adults learning together in an educational environment. Often the focus of the emergent curriculum begins spontaneously with a child or group of children and is followed up by the educator who plans and frames the content, the environment, and the accompanying resources. Monthly themes are not used, but instead educators observe and listen to the children and partner with them to create a more meaningful and immersive curriculum. The emergent curriculum is responsive to the children's needs, interests, and developmental levels.

Considerations to guide Educators when creating an Emergent Curriculum:

- How are we supporting the holistic development of each child (Social Emotional, Physical, Spiritual, Intellectual, Creative, etc.)?
- What values and interests are we observing?
- How can we extend the play we are observing into meaningful and educational experience?

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Optimal learning takes place during child-initiated play and focused learning. Learning is limited during unstructured and highly structured play.

Considerations to Guide Educators in Developmentally Appropriate Practice:

- What is age appropriate?
- What is individually appropriate?
- What is appropriate to the social and cultural context in which children live?

Anti-Bias Education

SSCCS honors and respects all children and their families' backgrounds. This includes race, ethnicity, heritage, place of birth, language, gender, sexuality, religious beliefs, age, education, ability, family structure, socio-economic status, etc. The role of the educator is emphasized in anti-bias curriculum as adults that have the power to create, teach, and even sustain bias, but equally have the power to eradicate it. Since bias begins to "affect children's development early, it is developmentally appropriate to address [it] in our work with young children" (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010, p. 11).

Anti-bias education has four main goals:

1. Each child will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities
2. Each child will express comfort and joy with human diversity; accurate language for human differences; and deep, caring human connections
3. Each child will increasingly recognize unfairness, have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts
4. Each child will demonstrate empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions.

Physical Environment

SSCCS ensures that the physical environment promotes the safety and wellbeing of the children. We maintain a clean environment, both indoors and out, and ensure that all equipment is in good repair and age appropriate.