



Saddleback Children's Center

*Parent Handbook
2016-2017 School Year*



**Saddleback
Children's Center**

*30322 Via Con Dios
Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688*



Welcome to Saddleback Children's Center!

We are happy that you have chosen our Preschool for your child! We give thanks to God as you join our Preschool family. It is our hope that this handbook will serve as a guide to help you and your child gain the greatest benefit from our Preschool program.

Parents and teachers can work together to make the transition as easy as possible. Parents can talk about school in a positive way emphasizing the fun of learning and making new friends. Our teachers are very gifted at helping children feel welcomed and comfortable in their new classroom setting. Each child will transition at their own pace. Your child's teacher will be available to assist in any way possible should this be uncomfortable for your child at first.

We want your child to discover that the world outside the immediate family can be an exciting, safe place, rich in the abundance of God's wonder and blessings. It is our desire for your child to feel at home at our school and to see that this is a place where they can become all that God has intended for them. We look forward to a wonderful first day as well as an exciting year with you and your child.



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Welcome to the Saddleback Children's Center Family

Philosophy

Saddleback Children's Center exists to provide a first educational experience, which helps each child develop to his or her full potential. All children need and deserve to be guided in ways that will help them be safe, healthy, happy and well-adjusted. The Preschool relates the Christian message of faith, love, and acceptance to children living in a changing world.

Mission Statement

We intend to promote the development of the whole child: physically, socially, emotionally, creatively, intellectually/cognitively, and spiritually. We will provide a warm, safe, nurturing environment in a developmentally appropriate program with individual learning centers where children can explore and interact freely. We respect and seek to meet the needs of each individual child including those whose needs are different. We further believe the teacher's role is to actively engage each child, to intentionally extract positive experiences, to observe each child's learning development in order to discuss and develop learning goals with parents, and to provide a continuously adapted classroom environment that will challenge each child. These learning centers will extend to the outdoor playground as well, allowing children to dig in sand and garden areas and experience art, music, dramatic play, and a variety of gross motor activities.

Our mission is to provide care to a wide range of children including children with more specific needs. It is our hope that each child will leave Saddleback Children's Center saying and believing "I am a good person. I am a kind friend. I make good choices. I am a good thinker and I *love* to learn."

Tuition

Tuition is based on a ten-month school year. Total yearly costs are listed on our registration form and on our website. Tuition for the entire school year can be paid at any time. If you choose our monthly payment plan, payments are due the first day of each month and are considered late after the 10th of the month.

Late Payments:

There will be a **\$25.00 late fee** charged if tuition is received after the 10th of the month. If for some reason you are unable to pay your monthly tuition, an attempt must be made to contact the school to discuss payment options.

You will be notified by statement on the 11th of the month if no tuition has been received. Tuition must be paid within 48 hours of notification or an additional **\$25.00 will be charged to your account for a total of \$50**. If no payment has been made by the 15th of the month you will receive a phone call to discuss further action. Your child may not return to school if tuition payment for the current month has not been received by the first of the next month. For example, if you have not paid tuition for September by October 1st your child may not return to school.

Withdrawal

Once your child has started school, if you decide to withdraw your child from our program for any reason, one month's notice is required. If you fail to give one month's notice, you will be charged for the entire month's tuition.



Our Staff & Visiting

Staff

Our staff is carefully selected to provide a loving and nurturing Christian environment while stimulating the children academically and socially. All staff members are experienced, well-qualified, and knowledgeable in child development. Kindness and consideration are modeled in both words and behavior. Positive reinforcement is used to guide children and help them develop a strong self-esteem. Staff members are required to attend staff meetings, professional seminars, and the California Association for the Education of Young Children (CAEYC) annual conferences in order to keep abreast of new developments in early childhood education and continue to provide a quality program for the children.

Parent Involvement

We believe parent involvement is an important part of the learning process. We encourage parents to share information about their child and the family circumstances with their child's teacher. Families are encouraged to participate in the program and to interact with each other in order to create a first educational experience which will help each child develop to their full potential. A parent volunteer list will be passed out at the beginning of the school year listing many ways parents can help out. Parent help and support is a vital part of our program and is much appreciated.

Visitors to the Center

Once you have enrolled your child into our program, we recommend that you have your child visit our school a few times before they start. Please see your enrollment pack for more details.

We welcome parents to our center at any time. All parents must report to the office before going to the classroom except when they are bringing or picking up children. Although we do not have observation facilities, for those wanting to observe their child discreetly we will attempt to provide a place for inconspicuous observation.



Drop Off, Pick Up & Absences

Arrival/Departure

Your child must be accompanied into the classroom by an adult who must wait until your child is acknowledged and accepted into the group. If for any reason, the child is not permitted to remain in class (signs of illness, for example), the adult is responsible for either returning the child home or making other arrangements for his or her care.

Sign-in sheets are located outside each classroom door. You must sign your child in and out with your full name and the time. For your child's safety, he or she will be released only to a parent or authorized adult. Written permission is required if your child is to be picked up by someone not listed on your child's authorization form.

Center hours are 7:00 am to 6:00 pm for full-day students. Our half-day morning preschool session is offered from 8:45 am to 11:30 am. Our extended day program is offered from 8:45 am to 1:00 pm.

It is important that your child be on time for class. It disrupts the classroom and makes adjustment difficult for your child when he/she is dropped off after class has begun. Because our staff members have responsibilities in addition to being in the classroom, they will be unable to be with the children during times other than scheduled times. Parents leaving their children past closing time (full-day children) or past dismissal time (half-day children) will be assessed a late fee of \$1.00 for each minute late.

Absences

We would appreciate being notified when your child will be absent from school. Please call the school and let us know the reason for the absence and the duration of the absence (Children can become disturbed by the absence of a classmate unless they are reassured with a reason for the child's absence and the approximate time of his return). In cases of communicable diseases, we need to notify other parents to watch for symptoms in their children. Parents of any child returning to school after having a communicable disease should contact the Director for any specific instructions.

There will be no reduction in tuition due to the absence. In the event of an extended absence, the parent and Director should decide if the child's place should be retained (and paid for) or released to another child.



Health & Safety

Illness

It is our desire to keep the children and adults at Saddleback Children's Center as healthy and safe as possible. In order to do this, we need your cooperation.

The State of California requires children who appear to have the following symptoms to be excluded from school:



- Fever AND sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, irritability or confusion. Fever is defined as having a temperature of 100°F or higher taken under the arm, 101°F taken orally, or 102° taken rectally.
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting within the last 24 hours
- Body rash with fever
- Sore throat with fever and swollen glands
- Severe coughing – congested or persistent cough
- Eye discharge – thick mucus or pus draining from eye or pink eye
- Child is irritable, continuously crying, or requires more attention than staff can provide.

Sick children need to be picked up as soon as possible. We are not licensed for sick child care. If a child is sent home for any of the above reasons, the child must stay home for a 24-hour period. A doctor's note may be required for re-admittance to the preschool.

Your child must be without a fever for 24 hours before returning to school. Even if your child does not show any of the above symptoms, but feels “under the weather” it may be wise to keep him home; perhaps an extra day of rest will help fight off something more serious.

Parents will be notified if children have been exposed to any communicable or serious illnesses. Before a child returns to the preschool after having a communicable illness, the parent must provide a doctor's note to assure that returning is safe for the child and others.



Health and Safety Continued...

Prescription Medication

Only prescription medications in the original container labeled with the child's name will be administered at school. If you need to have medicine administered to your child at school, you will need to sign in on our medication chart each day the medicine needs to be given. Parents with children needing EPI-PENS or asthma inhalers left here on campus for emergencies will need to obtain an authorization form from the office and have your child's physician fill it out. Whenever any emergency medication is administered, 911 will be called and the parents will be notified. Please keep your emergency contact phone numbers current. Your child is counting on you.

Discipline

Children are sent to school to develop and learn social skills. Social behaviors can be taught by helping children discover positive ways to solve problems. Giving children verbal prompts and examples such as, "Ask your friend to please give you the toy when they are finished," is an important part of helping children to become social among their peers. When children become upset, talking to them about their feelings and helping them to express themselves verbally is usually all they need to gain confidence in a particular situation.

Children with Food Allergies

We are a peanut and tree nut free school. If your child has a food allergy, we will take every possible precaution to help ensure their safety at school. Children with food allergies will also have their names posted on the allergy chart in the classroom as well as their food allergies listed on their food placemat for snack. We will send home information to all the parents in that classroom alerting them about food that cannot be served in the classroom due to allergies. If you have any questions or concerns about your child's allergies, please contact the school office for additional help.

Children with Asthma

If your child has asthma and stays in our full day program, you can request that your doctor prescribe an inhaler to be left here on our campus. Please stop by the office for additional documents you will need to have filled out.

Biting Policy

If a child bites another in the classroom, the biter will be sent home for the day. Every effort will be made to help children talk and use words to work out their frustrations. Biting is considered a stage of development and usually occurs when a young person lacks the ability or maturity to express their emotions verbally. We do require children to be past the biting stage to attend our program. Children that have three or more biting episodes will need to be removed from our program.



Health and Safety Continued...

Accident Reports

Although the children are supervised at all times, accidents may occur. In case of a minor accident or injury, the staff will handle the incident and either call you to report the incident or fill out an "Ouch Report" which will be sent home with your child. If a serious accident occurs and the child needs immediate medical attention, we will first summon emergency aid, and then notify the parent.

The center will refer to the child's "Emergency and Health Procedure" form. Please keep us informed of any changes in emergency information such as a new telephone number, a new physician, etc. Your cooperation is vital to your child's well-being.

Vision, speech, hearing and dental screenings

Screenings will be conducted at our school at no cost through the Saddleback Valley Unified School District, provided funds are available. These screenings are voluntary and are valuable tools in assessing a child's capabilities. We encourage all students to participate. Permission slips will be sent home prior to screening dates. It is highly recommended that parents take advantage of this free health service.

Sunscreen at school

Please apply sunscreen to your child each morning before sending him or her to school.

If your child is in our full day program and you would like us to apply sunscreen again after lunch, we will do so. Please provide sunscreen labeled with your child's name that can be applied at school. Sunscreen sign-ups are in the daycare room.



Lunch & Snacks at School

Snack and Meals

A snack is served during each morning and afternoon session. We ask that parents participate in bringing snacks on a rotating basis. A snack sign-up sheet is located in your child's classroom. Please sign up for a snack day and bring the snack designated for that day. All snacks are planned in advance and approved by a nutritionist. All foods must be store-bought and sent to school in their original, sealed store packaging. We are not able to serve homemade items because of the possibility of cross contamination with food to which others may be allergic.

Saddleback Children's Center wants to be your partner in providing good nutrition for your child. For full day children or children staying for lunch bunch, who bring their lunches to school, we have prepared the following guidelines to help you plan and prepare interesting and wholesome lunches.

Portions – Young children like small amounts of a variety of foods. A good rule of thumb is about one bite of each kind of food for each year of age (for instance, three bites for a three-year old). Children can be overwhelmed by a whole sandwich or a whole piece of fruit. Give your child small quantities of four or five different foods.

Additives – Stay away from excessive sugar, salt, preservatives, artificial flavoring and coloring. Read labels. We ask all parents not to send any sweets for lunch, as sweets have very limited nutritional value. Children need protein, fruits, and vegetables for healthy brain development and to supply them with the energy they need to make it through the day.

Beverages – If you send juice in your child's lunch, be sure it is 100% pure juice and not full of added sugar or preservatives. Beverages should be milk, water, or 100% pure juice, not HI-C, Capri Sun, punch, or other sugar based "fruit drinks." We recommend you send water in your child's lunch, as water consumption is very important for our bodies to work efficiently and children often do not get enough water each day to maintain good health.

The following list of foods is designed to give you some ideas for healthy lunch box choices. In addition, there are several good books and websites available on creative lunches for children. Check online or with your local library or bookstore for more ideas.



- Fruits, including peeled oranges, pear, apples or banana slices, melon balls
- Vegetables, including sliced bell peppers, celery stuffed with cream cheese or sun-butter, zucchini or cucumber slices, peas in a pod
- String cheese, cheese and cracker sandwiches
- Sun-butter (sunflower butter) sandwich
- Hard boiled eggs
- Noodles, whole-grain breads or breadsticks
- Lunch meat (turkey, chicken, roast beef, etc.)



Schedules

Holidays

Preschool: Saddleback Children's Center will follow the schedule of Saddleback Valley Unified School District with respect to holidays. You will be given a complete holiday schedule at the beginning of the school year, or it can be downloaded from our website.

Full Day: Our full day program remains open except for major holidays. We are closed for one week in August each year for staff in-service and teacher preparation.

Birthdays: A fun occasion for all children is to celebrate their own birthday. We celebrate all of our children's birthdays at our school, even throughout the summer. Children are given a birthday crown to wear throughout the day and the class sings "Happy Birthday" to them.

Parents may sign up to bring in the class snack on their child's celebration day. Parents may bring in the designated snack for the day, or may choose to change the snack item after first discussing an alternate snack with your child's teacher. All snacks must adhere to our healthy food guidelines. Items such as cake and ice cream are not permitted.

Field Trips

Our school provides many on-campus field study activities throughout the school year. Mobile farm animals, reptiles, musicians, local community workers, as well as our local fire and police departments come to our school and visit the children. Each group provides a special learning program geared for young children. Occasionally, a teacher may schedule an off-campus field trip for their class. All parents are notified in advance of these trips and are required to sign a permission slip for their child to attend.

We request that all parents attend off-campus field trips. If for some reason a parent is not able to attend, we ask that you speak to your child's teacher about alternative arrangements for your child's participation.



Calendar of Events

Our school year calendar is mailed out in August, but can be downloaded from our website at any time. We also have copies in the office. Also, our monthly newsletter will have a calendar for the month attached to it with an overview of all school events. Both the school year calendar and the monthly calendars can be downloaded from our website at:

www.saddlebackchildrenscenter.org.



Home & School Communication

Parent Conferences

At least twice each year (October & May) or more often if deemed necessary by parents or teachers; your child's teacher will hold parent-teacher conferences. The teacher will review observations that have been made about your child's development and share ideas, information, and impressions about your child. In addition, we encourage parents to speak to their child's teacher or the Director anytime there is a question or concern.

Child Observation and Assessments for Preschoolers

Saddleback Children's Center uses a variety of assessment methods to support children's learning including observation, developmental checklists, parent input, and outside professional organizations that evaluate children in areas of speech, hearing, vision, and learning abilities. Staff will make every effort to be sensitive to culture and language when assessing children both formally and informally and when communicating with families.

Child assessment is used to continuously monitor and improve the quality of care we provide to the children and families we serve. Assessment is used to inform program planning and decision making, to implement improvements, and to best provide for your children's development and learning through the daily activities within each classroom.

Parent Education

From time to time our center will host guest speakers to present topics of interest to parents such as discipline, growth patterns of young children, health and safety, family relations, etc. You will be notified in advance of these events. We encourage all parents to attend. If you have an idea for a topic of interest, please let us know.

Parent-School Communication

We believe that communication between home and school is important. We distribute school year event calendars and monthly newsletters to keep parents aware of the happenings at our center. This information is also posted on our website at: www.saddlebackchildrenscenter.org. Parents will receive a weekly lesson plan from their child's teacher which outlines what is being covered more specifically in their child's class.



Other Policies & Information

Toys from Home

The center has many appropriate play materials for the age groups served. Therefore, we do not allow children to bring toys from home to play with. Toys from home can cause problems with other children or may become lost or stolen.

Each week your child may bring an item from home on his share day. This item will be kept in the share box until it is time to share it with the class, then kept safe until it is time to take it home. Your child's teacher will let you know when your child's share day is and what types of items he may bring.

When a new child joins an established group, this child may need the security of something from home. This situation should be discussed with the teacher so that appropriate arrangements can be made (what the child may bring, how it will be used at school, for what length of time it can be brought, etc.).

Naptime

Children who stay for our full day program will be required to take a rest. No child is expected to sleep. Children are provided an individual cot and small groups of children are combined together in a classroom for rest time. Naptime runs from 12:45 pm to 2:00 pm. Children who do not sleep may get up at 1:30 to draw, look at books, or work on puzzles.



Full day children need to bring a crib-fitted sheet and a small blanket for naptime. Please clearly label them with your child's name. Blankets and sheets need to go home every Friday to be laundered and returned to school on Monday. You will need to purchase a bucket in which you can keep your child's nap items; this bucket will be stored in your child's classroom cubby and will be used to transport his nap items to the nap room. Buckets can be purchased at Target, Wal-Mart, Lowe's, or ask the office if any school buckets are available for lending.

Please note: Jumpstart Preschoolers see additional information at the end of this handbook.

Dress Code

Preschool activities can be wonderfully messy, gooey, and sticky! Please send your child to school in comfortable, easily laundered clothing which will free them to participate in the many activities we offer. While we do cover children with smocks during some messy activities, you can expect dirt, stains, and paint! You have chosen a school that is rich in hands-on discovery experiences without inhibitions or fears of getting dirty.



Other Policies & Information Continued...

While at the center, children are required to wear shoes to protect their feet from injury and cold weather. Shoes should fit well, be comfortable, and be appropriate for vigorous play activities. Slick-soled shoes are unsafe and are not allowed at school. In addition, sandals, thongs, and other open-toed shoes do not protect the toes and are not allowed.

Each child will need a change of clothing available at school in case of an accident. To keep your child dry and comfortable we ask that you send a change of clothing to school in a Ziploc bag with your child's name clearly marked on it. Although we do have some extra clothes for emergencies, they are limited and may not be what your child is comfortable wearing.

Lost and Found

Our Lost and Found box is located in the foyer at the front of the school.

Emergency Plan

Our Center practices emergency preparedness by implementing fire drills and earthquake drills. Our school also has emergency food and water on hand, along with health, safety, and first aid items. All staff members are CPR and First Aid certified. We follow the emergency guidelines set by State and Local Officials. In the event of a disaster, our staff is prepared to stay with the children until everyone has been picked up. Emergency procedures are posted in each classroom. For an outline of our complete emergency procedures, please stop by the office to pick up a copy or view the one posted in your child's classroom.

Talk to Us

The Director has an open door policy for parents who wish to talk about any concerns they may have regarding their child, their child's teacher, the facility, or the program in general. The Director will refer parents to an appropriate agency or source in matters that are beyond the expertise of the center.

Jump Start Preschool

Jumpstart is designed for children 30 months and older. We offer a first preschool experience to those children that may not be toilet trained or are too old for a toddler program, but may be a little too young for a regular preschool class. We focus on children's social, emotional, developmental and cognitive skills in a nurturing environment that allows young children to grow and learn in their own unique way. This program is center-oriented the same way our other preschool classes are; however, the teacher-child ratio is 1:6 with a maximum of 12 children in the classroom. Children have all the same experiences that our regular preschoolers have; we offer a lot of opportunities to experience music, art, science, math, language arts, dramatic play, and social skill development in a fun learning environment.

All children need to have wipes and extra pull-ups or training pants in their cubbies at all times.

All children need to have at least two changes of clothing in their cubbies. Children that stay all day need to have a crib size sheet and small blanket for their cot at nap time.

