



ORLANDO SCIENCE CENTER PRESCHOOL

2026 – 2027



ORLANDO SCIENCE CENTER PRESCHOOL 2026-2027

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WELCOME

Dear Preschool Families,

I am so happy to welcome you to the 2026-2027 academic year for the Orlando Science Center Preschool. Our mission is to “inspire science learning for all” and what better way to do that than by engaging and nurturing the curious minds of our youngest learners.

For 17 years now, we have been instilling a passion for STEM learning in our leaders of tomorrow. Young children are natural scientists, engineers and problem solvers. During the preschool years, we can build on their curiosity and provide them with the building blocks to create a solid foundation for their educational journey.

Your child will learn to apply their new skills to real world problems relevant to their age and community. Our staff will guide them through scientific inquiry and the engineering design process using effective questioning techniques to encourage thoughtful dialogue. We provide our students with an experience that prepares them not only for school, but for the challenges of life itself. Our preschoolers gain the skills they need to enter kindergarten happy, confident and ready for what lies ahead.

Early childhood education is very important to me, not only as the Science Center’s president, but also as a mother and grandmother. For over 60 years, the Science Center has been focused on inspiring the future through iconic hands-on learning experiences. We are thrilled to be able to offer this opportunity to you and your child at this very important time in their development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John A. ...", with a stylized, flowing script.

President & CEO

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PHILOSOPHY & MISSION

Museums play a powerful role in early childhood education by sparking curiosity, imagination, and a love of learning. Through hands-on exhibits, interactive play, and real-world exploration, young children build critical thinking skills, expand their vocabulary, and make meaningful connections with the world around them. Museums also support parents and caregivers by providing trusted, welcoming spaces where families can learn together. These environments encourage discovery, deepen children's interests, and help connect their natural curiosity to the wider world—laying the foundation for a lifetime of learning.

As the first STEM-focused preschool in Central Florida, the Orlando Science Center Preschool offers a learning experience unlike any other. Our classrooms are developmentally appropriate and filled with hands-on activities, skill-building centers, and access to the Science Center's diverse, content-rich STEM resources.

Our preschool nurtures the whole child through hands-on project-based learning and inquiry-based exploration. Children are encouraged to ask questions, investigate ideas, and solve real world problems that are meaningful to their age and experiences. Our teachers use thoughtful questioning and engaging discussions to guide children through the scientific inquiry process and the engineering design process. Through repeated opportunities to explore, experiment, and create, children develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and engineering skills that build a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

Since the preschool's inception in 2009, the Science Center has been refining a STEM integration model for preschool environments. We developed a blended curriculum model combining our STEM curricula and activities layered with Creative Curriculum. This approach aims to increase STEM integration across all content domains including literacy, language, cognitive, and gross and fine motor skills. Our Scope and Sequence uses a comprehensive and rigorously researched approach that encourages creativity and is based on the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and VPK standards. This curriculum reinforces the values and mission of the Science Center and was selected as the complement to building our STEM program.

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PHILOSOPHY & MISSION *(Continued)*

Orlando Science Center's STEM Preschool is proud to be a NAEYC accredited program. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is the world's largest organization working on behalf of young children. NAEYC accreditation is a rigorous and transformative quality-improvement system that uses a set of 10 research-based standards to collaborate with early education programs to recognize and drive quality-improvement in high-quality early learning environments.

To earn NAEYC Accreditation, Orlando Science Center's STEM preschool went through an extensive self-study and quality-improvement process, followed by an on-site visit by NAEYC assessors to verify and ensure that the program met each of the ten program standards, and hundreds of corresponding individual criteria. In the 30 years since NAEYC Accreditation was established, it has become a widely recognized sign of high-quality early childhood education. More than 6,000 early childhood programs are accredited by NAEYC—less than 10 percent of childcare centers, preschools, and kindergartens nationally.

A high quality, STEM literate staff is another key ingredient to a STEM Preschool model. We developed our own training matrix to prepare all staff involved in our program. By creating a cross-training model with the Science Center Education Department, our Preschool staff receive high levels of ongoing professional development. One of the training programs that has deeply influenced our model is the Boston Museum of Science's Engineering is Elementary (EiE) program. The Orlando Science Center is an endorsed site for the southeast and our in-house STEM Education Specialists have worked extensively with our Preschool team to ensure they are equipped with the skills and confidence necessary to incorporate inquiry, effective questioning, and problem-based learning. We have found that early childhood teachers benefit from a professional development model that pairs them with museum educators. This collaborative training model offers our teachers a supportive cohort of experienced STEM educators to share best practices, collaborate, and grow. Both Preschool teachers and teacher assistants undergo this rigorous professional development to hone effective questioning skills, STEM practices and applications, and engineering design challenge formats.

The Science Center firmly believes in inspiring and supporting the foundational education of our youngest learners. Our program serves children ages three to five including students participating in Florida's Voluntary PreKindergarten (VPK) program. School readiness is a top priority at the Science Center's fully licensed Preschool. By introducing children to STEM at an early age, our preschool engages students in critical thinking and problem solving, both of which are essential 21st Century learning skills.

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DCF License #: C090R0729

NAEYC Accreditation #: 728946

VPK Provider #: 4994

777 E. Princeton Street, Orlando, Florida 32803

407.514.2166

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Juanita Real, Preschool Director; jreal@osc.org or 407-514-2166

BILLING/CONTACT INFORMATION

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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Orlando Science Center Preschool (C090R0729) is licensed by the State of Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) and an approved Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) provider. All Preschool staff have Level 2 (FBI, FDLE, Local Law) Background screenings, First Aid and CPR certifications, Department of Children and Families Child Care mandated training and work experience with children 3 – 6 years old.

Orlando Science Center Preschool operating hours are 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. Preschool hours are 8:30 a.m. – 4:15 p.m., with Voluntary Prekindergarten Plus hours included (9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.). Morning care (7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.) and After care (4:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.) are available for an additional fee. Orlando Science Center Preschool is open to any child and family regardless of race, creed, sex, national origin or physical/mental disabilities.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Safety is a top priority at the Orlando Science Center. The Orlando Science Center is a public facility, and security measures have been taken to ensure the safety and well-being of all children, families, and guests.

For the safety of our school, Preschool classroom doors are always secured, and authorized proximity cards are required to access the classrooms before 9:00 a.m. and after 4:00 p.m. External museum doors can be accessed with an authorized proximity card on weekdays only.

Proximity cards are issued to Preschool families to provide access to the building during non-business hours. Proximity cards issued to Preschool families may not be shared and are the sole responsibility of the caregiver(s) to whom the card is assigned. Additional cards may be provided upon request. Lost or missing proximity cards must be reported immediately to the Preschool Director. A \$7.00 replacement fee applies to lost or missing cards.

Preschool attendees can use the Science Center parking garage Level 2 entrance. Preschool caregivers must scan their proximity cards daily at the garage gate to receive free parking and to gain access to the building via the bridge outside of business hours. The garage card reader is on the right side of the glass entrance doors. Families should not allow others access to the

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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES *(Continued)*

building. Please be aware of your surroundings and report any concerns or incidents to the Preschool team immediately.

While your child is in the care of the Orlando Science Center Preschool, their health and safety are important aspects of our Preschool environment. Please check in at the Preschool reception area or Director's office for late arrivals, early pick up or more information. No child will be released to anyone other than those authorized persons listed on the child's information and emergency forms. We also require our caregivers to notify the Orlando Science Center Preschool if there are any changes to home address, home/cell/employment numbers and authorized person information.

Families enrolled in Early Care may briefly park at Entrance A, the bus loop next to OSC located off Camden Street, during the Preschool year only. Entrance A parking is not available during Preschool Break Camps. At no time is parking allowed in front of the handicap ramp on or in areas marked "No Parking". Caregivers must use their proximity card daily to gain entrance through Entrance A doors during the Preschool year. Please help us keep OSC safe by not allowing unauthorized individuals to enter through the doors with you.

Car line drop-off will be available at either Entrance A or Entrance B from 8:30am-8:50am. Education Department staff members will be scheduled in the car loop to escort children into the building. Please proceed safely through the car line. During inclement weather or due to other circumstances, the car line will not be available. Any closure to the car line will be informed to our caregivers. Please take caution when parking in the OSC garage or at Entrance A. Preschool reserves the right to change drop-off and pick-up procedures as needed.

TOILET TRAINING

For the health and safety of our school, the Orlando Science Center Preschool requires all enrolled children to be independently toilet-trained to participate. No use of diapers or pullups will be allowed. Orlando Science Center reserves the right to remove a child from the program if they do not meet these requirements.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is a very important part of a child's and their family's Preschool experience. The Orlando Science Center Preschool and its staff welcome questions, discussions, concerns and feedback to help create the most beneficial and positive environment for our children and their families. Please contact the Preschool Director or Assistant Director.

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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES *(Continued)*

The Orlando Science Center Preschool and classrooms have several means of communication provided on a weekly and daily basis. The weekly “Peek of the Week” will highlight activities featuring literacy, science, technology, engineering and math along with the Science Center STEM Approach and Engineering Design Process. This written weekly report is a brief look at a child’s day. Preschool utilizes the app Brightwheel as a means for families to check-in/check-out their child daily and for communication with staff.

We are fully committed to your child’s well-being and your satisfaction with our program. If something occurs that makes you feel your child has not received appropriate care, your first step is to discuss the matter with your child’s teacher. The next step is to discuss it with the Preschool Director or Assistant Preschool Director. If further assistance is required to resolve the issue, please contact the Vice President of Education Emily Duguid at eduguid@osc.org.

REQUIRED ENROLLMENT DOCUMENTS

All children enrolled must have the following documents on file:

- Orlando Science Center Preschool Enrollment, current Medical Forms, Waiver and Release.
- Brightwheel Network account set up with proper payment arrangements made.
- Current Florida School Entry Health Exam – FL Department of Health, which attests that child is in good health or that any known medical condition is under control.
- Current Florida Certificate of Immunization – FL Department of Health (appropriate to child’s age)
- An approved vaccination waiver if applicable.
- Orlando Science Center Preschool Photo, Proximity Card, Excursion Release and Consent Permission
- Acknowledgement of:
 - “Know Your Childcare Facility” – Department of Children and Families Family Questionnaire
 - Orlando Science Center Preschool Handbook Agreement
 - Orlando Science Center Preschool Food/Food related Activity Acknowledgement
 - Medication forms
 - Influenza Virus - Department of Children
 - Distracted Adult Driving Brochure
 - Incident, Accident or Sick Report – caregivers must sign this form within 24 hours of any incident or accident when picking up the child. A copy will be shared on Brightwheel.

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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES *(Continued)*

FINANCIAL

The Orlando Science Center is a private, non-profit educational facility. Tuition rates are charged at a weekly rate. A discount is given to current Orlando Science Center members. Orlando Science Center membership is available at www.osc.org, Admissions (Level 2) or 407.514.2139 and is required to be current until the end of the school year to honor a member discount.

An annual registration fee which is NON-REFUNDABLE is required for the school year with a two-week tuition fee paid in advance prior to starting school. Weekly tuition is based on the actual annual operating costs per child. For certain holidays (1-2 days) in which the Preschool is closed, tuition has already been calculated. Preschool tuition is not collected during scheduled school breaks; including Winter and Spring Break. Break camps are available for an additional fee. Please note: Weekly tuition and VPK funds do not include admittance into Break Camps (See 'Break camps' for more details).

If your child is out due to illness, doctor's appointment, vacation or family time, please contact the Preschool Director or Assistant Preschool Director. Your child's weekly tuition payment is still required.

Tuition payments will be processed through Brighwheel automatic billing. Tuition is charged at the weekly rate. Charges are made on the Monday of each school week. The weekly tuition is based on the actual annual operating costs per child. The initial payment is due one week prior to the start of the school year. It is the sole responsibility of the caregiver to set up a Brighwheel Account and keep the information current. For VPK classes, failure to provide a VPK voucher at the start of the school year will change the tuition rate due until a voucher is provided. The credit card on file will be used for auto-billing. Any changes to the credit card must be submitted at least two weeks before the date of the first charge to the new card. The first unsuccessful payment will not incur a fee. However, any subsequent unsuccessful payments will incur a processing fee of \$25 per occurrence, which will be charged automatically. We will request a different payment method if there are consecutive unsuccessful payments. Failure to make payment will result in dismissal from the program.

Through the Brightwheel system, you can access your billing invoices at any time by logging into your online account. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your tuition payments, please contact the Assistant Director.

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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES *(Continued)*

BREAK CAMPS

Break Camps are offered 3 days of Fall Break in November, one week of Winter Break in late December/early January and one week of Spring Break in March. Preschool tuition will not be collected during the week of camp. Weekly tuition and VPK do not include admittance into break camps. These programs are available for an additional fee to children 3 – 5 years old (birthdate by September 1) who are independently toilet trained. These camps are open to both current Preschool families and the general public. To register your child in break camps, please visit www.osc.org/camps. Payment is due at the time of booking, and your spot is not guaranteed until you have registered your child in camp. Preschool families will not be able to use Entrance A or B during preschool camps even when older siblings are enrolled. Preschool camp families are required to walk their preschool campers from the garage to the classrooms.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Should circumstances occur in which your child needs to be withdrawn from our program, the Orlando Science Center Preschool requires a two-week written notice to the Director. Failure to provide the required notice will result in a cancellation fee of two weeks' tuition. This will be processed at the time of cancellation.

DISMISSAL POLICY

The Orlando Science Center Preschool reserves the right to dismiss a child when a situation becomes severe enough and a danger to other children or staff members in the program. (Discipline STEP policies). The Orlando Science Center Preschool will not dismiss a child for race, creed, sex, national origin or physical/mental disabilities.

CANCELLATION POLICY

The Orlando Science Center Preschool reserves the right to cancel Preschool, should a health, safety, weather or emergency arise, without planning a make-up day. If closure is more than five days, makeup time will be taken under consideration by the Science Center's Preschool Director and the Vice President of Education President. Please note that in a county mandated closure, the Preschool does not offer tuition reimbursement for the days missed.

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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES *(Continued)*

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Orlando Science Center Preschool

Providing a quality and successful early childhood education program for our children 3–5 year olds depends on prompt and consistent attendance. To create the best possible experience for children, families, and staff, our Preschool must operate cohesively. Late arrivals and departures are disruptive to the learning process. Our daily instruction begins promptly at 9:00 a.m. and ends at 4:00 p.m. During the daily instruction, our schedule includes morning news, circle time, music and movement, centers (small groups), outdoor play, rest time, snack (am and pm), lunch, Science Center exhibits and continuous afternoon active learning. **A child will be considered absent if they arrive at 9:00 a.m. or later.** If a child has 5 or more late arrivals in a month (15 minutes or more), the Preschool Director will have a conference with the caregivers. Orlando Science Center reserves the right to withdraw a child for continued tardiness or absences.

Preschool Morning care is from 7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. and After care is 4:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Morning and After care is not included in weekly tuition and is available for an additional fee. Each session includes table activities, fine motor skills, manipulatives and indoor games that meet a child's social/emotional, cognitive, physical and language needs and skills. A late fee of \$2.00 per minute per child is charged after 5:30 pm.

If your child is out due to illness, doctor's appointment, vacation or family time, please contact the Orlando Science Center Preschool Director or Assistant Director. Your child's weekly tuition is still required.

CAREGIVER & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Families are always welcome to volunteer in the classroom. We encourage you to visit and join our activities. Your participation and involvement are important to us as we work as partners to provide the best care and education possible for your child.

CUSTODY AND VISITATION

Some families have legal custodial orders that address whether an individual can pick up or visit a child. If a custody order relating to your child exists, a copy must be provided to the Preschool Director for your child's file. This information is confidential and solely for the safety and well-being of your child. Families must update the Preschool Director or Assistant Director when custody orders change or expire.

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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES *(Continued)*

CLOTHING

Children should come to Preschool dressed to play, work, paint, experiment and have fun. Their clothes should be comfortable, easy to button, snap and zip to allow independence in toileting. Children play outside each day except on rainy days. Please provide a sweater or jacket on cool days with your child's name marked on it. Shoes should be closed-toed, rubber-soled, and have a back strap. Sandals must be worn with socks. Crocs and cowboy boots can be dangerous on the playground and are not allowed at school.

ALL children need an entire change of clothes (shirt, pants or shorts, socks and underwear) to be kept at Preschool and changed with the season. Please send this change of clothes in a zip-locked bag. ALL articles of clothing brought to Preschool must be clearly marked with the child's first and last name.

TOYS, BOOKS AND PERSONAL ITEMS

The Orlando Science Center Preschool offers a variety of early learning manipulatives, books, and furnishings for the children in our care. We request that toys and other items from home not be brought to class unless requested by a Preschool Teacher to be used in classroom activities such as "Show and Tell," items from vacations or special projects. Any item brought into the classroom will be placed in the child's cubby or contained in a backpack. To help children feel comfortable during rest time, they may bring a small blanket and one favorite stuffed animal. Bedrolls and sleeping bags are not allowed. All items need to be labeled with the child's full name. Blanket, sheet, stuffed animal and backpack will be sent home on Friday (or the last day of the week the child attends) to be washed and returned the next week. Orlando Science Center is not responsible for children's personal items.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

All preschool children attending the Orlando Science Center Preschool must be independently toilet trained. Children must be able to take care of their own personal needs regarding clothing and bathroom. The children need to wear underwear and not pull-ups.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

As a Child Care provider, all Orlando Science Center Preschool staff are mandated by the Rules and Regulations under the Department of Children and Families to report all suspicions of abuse and neglect. Abuse and neglect may be physical, sexual, emotional, or involve exploitation. For more information, please contact our Preschool Director.

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VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

THE FOLLOWING LANGUAGE IS DIRECTLY PULLED FROM THE EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF ORANGE COUNTY AND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

Voluntary PreKindergarten program (established in 2002) was created and designed to help Florida's children develop the skills they need to become good readers and successful students. It includes high literacy standards, strict accountability, appropriate curricula, substantial instruction periods, manageable class sizes, and qualified instructors. Voluntary PreKindergarten enhances what a child learns at home and instills a love of life-long learning.

The program allows a parent to enroll his/her eligible child (must be four years old by September 1st and reside in Florida) with an approved VPK Provider program.

The VPK school year program consists of:

- 540 instructional hours
- Maintain classes of at least 4 children and no more than 20
- Use of a developmentally appropriate curriculum
- VPK goals, objectives and standards (aligned with developmentally appropriate curriculum)
- VPK instructors hold staff credentials with educational qualifications; Level 2 Background screening (FBI, FDLE, Local Law clearances)

The Department of Education and the Office of Early Learning (DOE/OEL) work in collaboration with the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to guide each VPK Provider through professional development, screening and accountability. Our coalition is the Early Learning Coalition of Orange County (www.elcoc.org).

The Orlando Science Center Preschool is an approved Voluntary PreKindergarten provider with the Early Learning Coalition of Orange County. Approved VPK providers must meet Early Childhood best practices, Department of Children and Families regulations as well as FL Early Learning and Development Standards for Four-Year-Olds standards, goals, objectives and documentation. The continuation of this program is decided annually.

The Early Learning Coalition of Orange County (ELCOC) is the monitoring agency. Monitoring is done semi-annually.

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VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM *(Continued)*

VPK PARENTS' RIGHTS

As a parent, I have the right to:

- Select a VPK program option that meets my child's needs.
- Enroll in either a school year or summer free VPK program.
- Select a VPK program that employs VPK instructors and meets minimum classroom requirements.
- Select a VPK program that follows an approved VPK curriculum and guidelines.
- Enroll my four-year-old in a VPK program.
- Make an informed VPK choice.

VPK PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

As a parent, I am responsible for:

- Complying with date of birth verification requirements
- Complying with residential address verification requirements
- Ensuring my child participates in kindergarten screenings
- My child's VPK transportation
- Complying with the providers' attendance and other program policies

The VPK Parents' Rights and Responsibilities are from the VPK Parent Handbook given at time of VPK certificate of eligibility. The statements are subject to changes based on modification of legislation, statute or rule.

VPK ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Orlando Science Center Preschool's VPK Plus hours are 9:00 a.m. to 1pm. VPK Plus students can enter their class by 8:30 a.m. and leave by 1:15 p.m. at no additional charge. If VPK Plus students enter their class prior to 8:30 a.m. or remain after 1:15 p.m., a fee of \$2.00 per minute will be assessed on the following school day.

A 2026-2027 calendar outlining start and end dates and all scheduled days off is included in the enrollment information and Preschool Handbook. Orlando Science Center Preschool maintains VPK daily attendance records. Please contact the Orlando Science Center Preschool if your child is out due to illness, doctor's appointment, vacation or family time together.

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VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM *(Continued)*

VPK parents must verify the child's attendance for the prior month on either Form AWI-VPK 03S (Child Attendance and Parental Choice Certificate Short Form) or Form AWI-VPK 03L (Child Attendance and Parental Choice Certificate Long Form). Monthly attendance calendar will be available by the last day of the month or first three days of the following month. Please review your child's monthly attendance and sign the appropriate areas. If you have any questions, please contact the Preschool Director as soon as possible.

Parents can only transfer VPK provider center ONE time during the program year. All transfers must be done with a new certificate of eligibility. Should circumstances occur in which your child will need to be withdrawn from our program, the Orlando Science Center Preschool requires a TWO week written notice to the Director. Failure to provide required notice will result in a two-week tuition cancellation fee. This will be processed at the time of cancellation.

The Orlando Science Center Preschool reserves the right to remove a child from the VPK program if the Preschool's attendance policy, regarding absences, exceeds the allowed VPK program's 20% of absences. The Orlando Science Center Preschool reserves the right to dismiss a child when a situation becomes severe enough and/or the child becomes a danger to other children or staff member in the program. (Discipline STEP policies).

The Orlando Science Center Preschool will not dismiss a child for reasons of race, creed, sex, national origin or physical/mental disabilities.

ASSESSMENT

All VPK children will have three (3) different VPK assessments administered to them throughout the school year. Assessment period 1 (Fall Assessment - September), Assessment period 2 (Winter Assessment - January) and Assessment period 3 (Spring Assessment - April/May) are done by the Preschool classroom teachers and in the preschool environment.

The VPK assessments measure each child's print knowledge, phonological awareness, mathematics, oral language/vocabulary at the time of assessment.

- Print knowledge is the child's ability to recognize letters or words and his/her knowledge of letter names (both upper and lower case) and the sounds they make.
- Phonological Awareness is the awareness and manipulation of the different sounds in a word.
- Mathematics measures early numeracy skills across three different areas: counting skills, numerical relation skills, and arithmetic reasoning skills.
- Oral Language/Vocabulary measures a child's expressive language and receptive language

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CURRICULUM

THE SCIENCE CENTER APPROACH

The Orlando Science Center Preschool uses a Creative Curriculum foundation enhanced by our own STEM curricula, providing STEM integration across all content domains. This blended curriculum format applies science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) practices to traditional early childhood domains such as literacy, language, social and emotional development, cognitive development, gross and fine motor skills, and the arts. By applying STEM learning across curriculum areas, learners gain an understanding of how to apply knowledge and use critical thinking skills to solve problems.

WHAT IS STEM?

STEM education is an interdisciplinary approach to learning, combining multiple academic subjects, focusing on the real-world impact of these lessons. It is about students applying science, technology, engineering and mathematics in contexts that make relevant connections between themselves and their school, community, work and their world. STEM education provides opportunities to create skills that move students forward to become stronger problem solvers and more creative innovators that can lead tomorrow's global economy. STEM learning creates an environment that builds critical 21st-century skills, commonly referred to as the four "C's": Critical thinking, Collaboration, Communication, and Creativity. These skills must be fostered throughout a child's education because they are essential to building other important skills such as persistence, innovative thinking and teamwork, and problem-solving.

The Orlando Science Center Preschool's weekly lesson plans embed Creative Curriculum (Teaching Strategies) goals and objectives with standards for three- and four-year-olds, including age-appropriate development skills and STEM enrichment through the learning domains of:

Language and Communication – story time, literacy

Gross Motor – floor activities, indoor and outside play

Fine Motor – manipulative, sensory

Social/Emotional – activities that promote positive relationships

Creative Expression/Art – free art, painting, sensory

Discovery/Math Readiness – blocks, science, sorting, patterns

Music/Movement – self-expression, songs, movement

Enrichment activities include individual, small, and large group skills. Basic Spanish, sign language, music and movement are also integrated into the daily schedule.

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CURRICULUM *(Continued)*

STEM CURRICULUM

Orlando Science Center's STEM curriculum introduces children to STEM vocabulary and ideas, provides foundational scientific inquiry and engineering skills, and incorporates content into experiments and engineering design challenges tied to real-world problems and applications relevant to our children's worlds.

Orlando Science Center's STEM Goals:

- Increase access to rich STEM vocabulary and learning experiences.
- Provide Engineering Design Challenges that tie content across domains and teach children how to innovate and solve problems. (Explore-find out more, Create – try an idea, Improve – make it better. *Engineering is Elementary (2019) Wee Engineer*)
- Provide a foundation for scientific inquiry and mathematical thinking.
- Support 21st century skill development.
- Provide an Orlando Science Center Preschool focused early childhood scope and sequence framework.

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

Play is one of the most important ways in which young children gain essential knowledge and skills. Early childhood education experts believe joy and play are important in a child's early development. Play is meaningful where children make sense of the world around them. Play is iterative where children play to practice skills, try out possibilities, revise hypotheses, and discover new challenges leading to deeper learning. Play is actively engaging, combining physical, mental, and verbal engagement. Children will learn through play in preschool classroom centers.

Literacy/Writing Center

- To become familiar with letters and their sounds
- Organize letters to make words
- Ideas have value
- To communicate ideas in written form
- Learn to be independent
- Recognize familiar words in my environment
- Engage in book making and labeling

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CURRICULUM *(Continued)*

Library Center

- Increase awareness of the enjoyment of books and literacy
- Develop a respect for books
- Learn the rhythm of stories
- Read and interpret pictures
- Become familiar with letter forms, words and stories
- Develop an interest in a variety of books and other print materials
- Discover resources for information gathering
- Develop new vocabulary and comprehension skills
- Increase attention span
- Practice reading readiness skills – top to bottom and left to right

Math Center

- Become familiar with a variety of math manipulatives
- Develop and understand numbers, classification, order, size, comparison, measurement, estimation and counting
- Recognize and write numbers and symbols
- Acquire a knowledge of the concepts more and less
- Develop logical reasoning and problem-solving skills
- Learn to see and create patterns

Dramatic Play Center

- Expand oral language and social interaction skills to communicate with others
- Begin to understand other people and learn about their needs and responsibilities
- Make decisions and solve problems
- Express their ideas with words
- Sort and organize things
- Learn about their world as they recreate real-life situations
- Use emergent literacy skills in an authentic setting.

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CURRICULUM *(Continued)*

Block Center

- Problem solve and plan as they construct
- Develop fine and gross motor control
- Practice social skills
- Improve communication skills and oral vocabulary
- Cooperate with and accept the work of others
- Observe size, relationships, classifications and sorting
- Participate in creative and imaginative play
- Acquire concepts of shape, size, length, and location – all relative to learning to do mathematics
- Develop visual discrimination skills

Science and Discovery Center

- Discuss, observe and explore his/her environment by working with simple machines, plants, animals, insects; making predictions and collecting data; weighing and measuring; performing simple experiments.
- Compare and measure
- Develop problem solving and questioning skills
- Practice observational skills
- Learn to record and interpret data
- Learn about the natural environment
- Problem solve and work with others
- Observation and investigate

Art Center

- Exercise their imagination and creativity
- Learn to take risks by experimenting with paint, crayons, scissors, paper, glue (etc.)
- Express his/her feelings and ideas
- Observe, plan, create and complete a project
- Improve the fine motor skills that are needed for writing
- Learn about colors, textures, lines and spaces
- Increase his/her awareness of his/her 5 senses (see, touch, taste, hear, smell)

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CURRICULUM *(Continued)*

Sand and Water Center

- Strengthen their awareness of his/her 5 senses (see, touch, taste, hear, smell)
- Develop concepts involving space, measurement and volume
- Improve fine and gross motor skills
- Experience problem solving and creative thinking
- Develop social skills as they interact with others

Outdoor Center

- Show ability to adjust to new situations through games, building and pretend play
- Practice teamwork and sharing
- Demonstrate basic locomotor skills – running, jumping, hopping, galloping
- Show balance while moving
- Control small muscles in hands
- Coordinate eye-hand movement
- Explore cause and effect
- Explore nature and the environment

ASSESSMENTS

All Preschool children will have three (3) different assessments administered to them throughout the school year. Assessment period 1 (Fall Assessment - September), Assessment period 2 (Winter Assessment - January) and Assessment period 3 (Spring Assessment - April/May) are done by the Preschool classroom teachers and in the Preschool environment. The assessments encompass a child's developmental areas of social/emotional, cognitive, language/communication, physical (gross and fine motor), math, science and social studies. Assessments will occur individually, in small and large group activities, and through observations in the classroom and outdoor environment.

Throughout the year, two formal conferences are conducted to provide ongoing communication with caregivers to discuss your child's development. During the months of October and March, individual student conferences with caregivers will be scheduled to review progress and set academic goals. In the case of concerns regarding your child's development, please speak to the Preschool Director for suggested steps for evaluation and information about resources.

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DISCIPLINE POLICY

Orlando Science Center Preschool believes that all children should experience success and be treated with respect and love. We strive for a classroom and outdoor environment that provides children with opportunities to explore the world around them within consistent, age-appropriate limits. In this atmosphere, most behavioral issues are prevented. It is our goal that each child entrusted to our care be allowed, encouraged, understand and believe that they are good with the goal being that each child develops the most positive self-concept possible.

Many behaviors considered by adult standards as inappropriate are necessary phases of child development; however, if behavioral issues occur, our philosophy is to help children (1) learn good values and problem-solving skills and (2) take responsibility for their choices. By using the following behavior guidance techniques, we strive to minimize inappropriate behavior while creating a positive environment for each child and through the guidance of Conscious Discipline.

Classroom Management

Our preschool staff (teachers and assistants) will manage classrooms by:

- Integrating all domains of learning (social, emotional, physical, cultural and cognitive) in our curriculum and learning environment. Preschool routines, rituals, communication skills, safe space, class and school family are important components to a child's self-regulation and success.
- Modeling and reinforcing appropriate behavior through appropriate praise.
- Maintaining constant supervision.
- Setting reasonable expectations for each child's behavior based on their developmental levels and individual differences.
- Becoming familiar with each child's special needs.
- Providing interesting, challenging, age-appropriate activities.

Ignoring

When a child behaves inappropriately to get attention, the teacher will ignore the behavior. The behavior can often be stopped when they do not get the desired attention. We use this technique unless a safety issue arises.

Redirection/Distraction

We offer alternatives to children engaged in undesirable or inappropriate behavior by offering a different toy, suggesting a new activity, engaging the child in an activity with a teacher or another child, or by suggesting independent play.

ORLANDO SCIENCE CENTER PRESCHOOL 2026-2027

DISCIPLINE POLICY *(Continued)*

Verbal Intervention

The teacher explains the inappropriate behavior to the child and shows them the appropriate way to handle the situation. For example, a teacher might say, "Use your words," and the teacher can model what the child might say, "Instead of hitting Suzy, say "I'm angry because you took my doll."

Logical Consequences

Here, the teacher helps the child understand the logical consequences of his/her actions by removing an object, activity, etc. that is causing the problem. For example, if a child uses blocks to hit other children, the consequence is to remove the child from the block area.

Thinking Time

The child is separated from the group to allow him/her to relax and calm down, and to enable him/her not to be influenced by his/her peers.

Communication is two-sided; we will do our best to keep the lines of communication open, and we hope you will do the same. We can ensure a positive experience for the child, family, and teachers.

DISCIPLINE STEP PROGRAM

The Discipline STEP Program is used for (1) any inappropriate behavior which continues after the progressive guidance steps have been used; (2) any behavior which threatens the health or safety of other children or staff; or (3) a continuous inability to confirm to the rules and guidelines of the program.

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2026-2027

DISCIPLINE POLICY *(Continued)*

Orlando Science Center Preschool will use the following sequence of procedures:

1. We will observe and record the child's inappropriate behavior.
2. We will document what we have done to try to change the behavior.
3. If inappropriate behavior continues, caregivers of the child will be asked to participate in an immediate conference. Children old enough to understand this conference will be invited to attend. A specific action plan will be developed at this conference to address the behavior, and the steps the parents will take to address and change the behavior. If the behavior persists, the action plan will include steps toward finding a program to serve the family's and child's needs.
4. The Orlando Science Center Preschool Director or Assistant Director may, but is not required to, suggest outside resources to caregivers in responding to the child's behavior.
5. If the inappropriate behavior persists after the child is kept home on several occasions, Orlando Science Center Preschool may request that the caregiver be asked to find another program.

GUIDELINES FOR IMMEDIATE DISMISSAL

Certain behaviors may cause a significant risk of harm to the health and safety of other children or staff. For example, (1) physical assault which results in serious bodily injury, or (2) substantial damage to real or personal property, etc.

Orlando Science Center Preschool may immediately dismiss any child from the program whose behavior creates a significant risk of harm to the health and safety of staff or other children. If exclusionary measures must be taken, Orlando Science Center will provide a list of resources to assist the family in accessing services or finding an alternative place for their child.

Our Policy does not permit the use of the following forms of discipline:

- Corporal punishment.
- Emotional punishment, including ridicule, embarrassment, or humiliation.
- Punishment for lapses in toilet training habits.
- Withholding food, light, warmth, clothing, or medical care.
- Physical restraint, other than the restraint necessary to protect the child or other staff from physical harm.

Orlando Science Center Preschool complies with all federal and state civil rights laws.

ORLANDO SCIENCE CENTER PRESCHOOL

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HEALTH GUIDELINES

POLICY ON TOILET-TRAINING

For the health and safety of our school, the Orlando Science Center Preschool requires all enrolled children to be independently toilet-trained to participate. The Orlando Science Center reserves the right to remove a child from the program if they do not meet these requirements.

NUTRITION – SNACKS AND LUNCH

Snack and lunch times are learning environments where children, with their teacher, can have conversations, develop positive attitudes toward food and nutrition and help build self-help skills. A child's five senses are an intriguing part of the snack/lunch routine.

Healthy eating habits, good food choices, and creating a positive environment for meals will set examples for our children. Children will understand where food comes from and how it helps our body be strong and grow. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) website, www.choosemyplate.gov offers articles and hints on developing healthy eating habits, setting a good example, offering a variety of foods, meal and snack schedules, and other related topics.

We will not deny or withhold food or special treats from any child. We at the Orlando Science Center Preschool encourage our children to "try" one (1) bite of the food items offered. Eating well, resting, and active play are important elements to a child's mind, body, learning abilities, healthy development, and success.

Preschool families should provide their child lunch, snacks, and a water bottle. We request that the food provided be healthy and nutritious choices. Food brought in from home will not be able to be warmed or refrigerated. All lunch boxes/totes must contain a cool pack for the food items. All lunch boxes/totes and water bottles must be labeled with the child's full name, which is a DCF policy. Water bottles need to be child sized. Snacks need to be labeled for AM or PM snacks. Due to NAEYC accreditation, grapes or cherries need to be cut in fourths, no popcorn or pretzels.

CELEBRATIONS & BIRTHDAYS

Celebrations and birthdays are special days for children. If you'd like to provide food for the celebration, we ask that all food items be commercially packaged with ingredient labels to account for child food allergies properly. Please be sure to provide enough food for every child in your child's classroom. Due to allergies and necessary scheduling needs, please arrange with your child's teacher before the day.

ORLANDO SCIENCE CENTER PRESCHOOL

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HEALTH GUIDELINES *(Continued)*

ILLNESS

The Orlando Science Center Preschool reserves the right to turn away an enrolled child assessed by the Teacher, Assistant Director or Director to present a health hazard in the class. Caregiver cooperation is needed to help prevent the spread of communicable diseases throughout our program. Notifying the Preschool is the caregiver's responsibility if a child develops a communicable disease (see Health Guidelines). If a child becomes ill during Preschool hours, the child will be separated from the group in our designated "sick" room with the Director or another designated OSC Preschool staff member until the caregiver/authorized individual can be contacted and pick up the child. The child must remain out of the Preschool for 24 hours or longer until the symptoms have cleared.

The Orlando Science Center Preschool follows the guidelines according to the Florida Department of Children and Families' Child Care Facility Handbook. According to the handbook, any child "suspected of having a communicable disease must be removed from the program or placed in an isolation area. Such person may not return without medical authorization, or until signs and symptoms of the disease are no longer present". Thank you for your help in promoting the health and safety of our students.

For the safety of others, if your child displays one or more of the following, please keep him/her at home.

- A fever in the last 24 hours of 100 degrees or higher
- A cold that is less than three (3) days old
- Heavy nasal discharge
- A constant, nagging cough
- Lethargic, poor color, loss of appetite
- A rash on face or body
- Child is fussy, cranky, and generally not themselves
- Child has nausea, vomiting, and refuses breakfast
- Any sign of diarrhea
- Unusual tiredness
- Any symptoms of possible communicable disease: sniffles, reddened eyes, sore throat, headaches, and abdominal pain plus a fever

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HEALTH GUIDELINES *(Continued)*

REMEMBER – Drainage from the nose that is:

- Clear – can go to school
- Yellow – caution (check other symptoms)
- Green – stay home!

If your child develops any of these symptoms at school, he/she will immediately be isolated, and a caregiver/authorized person will need to pick them up. It is not possible to keep a child inside during outside playtime as all teachers are needed for outside supervision. If your child is not well enough to go outside, please keep them at home to rest. Please follow our return to Preschool 24 hours or longer policy until symptoms have cleared. A sick note will be required to be signed at pick up for caregiver's acknowledgement.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Inform us if your child has COVID-19, chicken pox, mumps, strep throat, head lice, impetigo, or conjunctivitis (pink eye). Likewise, we will inform you if your child is exposed to any of these if 2 or more students have tested positive. Remember: for chicken pox, sores must be completely scabbed over with no new blisters present.

ALLERGIES

Inform us if your child has allergies related to foods, insect bites or seasonal types and what his/her usual reaction is. Please supply a note from your child's physician for detailed information if necessary.

MEDICATION PROCEDURES

Orlando Science Center does not administer oral or topical medications. Children must be able to administer or take medication by themselves. Preschool staff cannot administer any type of medication, except for EpiPen and rescue inhalers.

Caregivers are responsible for delivery and retrieval of medication to and from the Preschool Director. Required medications must be in the original package or bottle and placed in a Ziplock bag labeled with the child's name. All prescription medications must have a prescription label with the child's name and dosage, and physician's name clearly printed. The Science Center Preschool cannot accept medication that is expired.

All medications must be registered and collected by the Preschool Director or Assistant Director and locked in a safe box out of children's reach in the Director's office during the child's enrollment.

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HEALTH GUIDELINES *(Continued)*

Medications can be collected by the end of each week or as agreed upon by caregivers. Any unretrieved medication will be stored for 90 days. Any un-retrieved medications after that time will be properly disposed of as per federal Guidelines.

All medical details are under the Medical/Health history section of the child's information in their Brightwheel account. The Orlando Science Center and Preschool have trained staff who can administer Epi-pens and rescue inhalers in the event of an emergency. Please contact the Preschool Director at 407-514-2166 or jreal@osc.org for a severe allergy action plan that must be completed and given to the preschool before the start of school.

If a child's physician has ordered a special medical management procedure, an adult trained in the procedure must be on-site whenever the child is present. Caregivers or caregiver provided-trained professional must be present to administer any medication. Orlando Science Center Staff Members are not trained to administer special medical management procedures.

EPIPENS & RESCUE INHALERS

Orlando Science Center and Preschool have trained staff who can administer EpiPens and rescue inhalers in the event of an emergency. Please contact the Preschool Director at 407.514.2166 or jreal@osc.org for a severe allergy action plan that must be completed and given to the preschool before the start of school.

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Inform us of any condition that may affect, restrict or inhibit the activities or behaviors of your child.

CLEANLINESS AND HYGIENE

The Orlando Science Center Preschool does its best to maintain strict cleanliness and hygiene standards set forth by the Department of Children and Families and best practices for Early Childhood Programs.

Children wash their hands upon arrival at the Preschool, before and after snacks and meals, returning from the outside play area/exhibits and toileting.

ORLANDO SCIENCE CENTER PRESCHOOL

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HEALTH GUIDELINES *(Continued)*

During rest time, each child has a separate rest cot. Any blanket brought in by the child is sent home on their last day of the week. A complete change of clothes should be left in the child's classroom with their initials or name on their items.

As per DCF regulations and best practices, all surface areas are cleaned with soapy water and/or prescribed bleach and water solution.

Manipulatives, LEGOs, blocks and other items contained within the classroom are sanitized with the bleach water solution once a week unless deemed necessary more often.

If your child has any allergies or reactions to materials (liquid or solid), please advise the Preschool office at time of enrollment and within your child's information forms.

ORLANDO SCIENCE CENTER PRESCHOOL 2026-2027

SAFETY

The Orlando Science Center is a public facility. Measures have been taken to ensure the safety and well-being of all children, families and guests. All guests entering the Orlando Science Center must check in at the Guest Services desk located on Level 2. Science Center staff are available to guide anyone needing information or directions.

Preschool staff utilize the Science Center radio system and carry one with them when visiting exhibits, the playground or outside areas. Staff members also carry cell phones in case of an emergency. All emergency numbers (911, Police, Fire, and Poison Control) are posted in the classrooms, Preschool reception area, and Preschool Office. Directions to Orlando Science Center Preschool are posted next to the emergency number.

We will be very stringent on matters of health and safety. We appreciate your cooperation in all matters of this nature. Our Orlando Science Center Preschool staff is concerned with the well-being of all the children in our care, and we hope that they will never be put into the situation to have to decide if a child is well enough to come to school.

Orlando Science Center is a private DCF-licensed preschool. Access to preschool classrooms and staff-only areas is limited to the following:

- Preschool staff
- Approved preschool caregivers and authorized family contacts
- DCF inspectors, during operating hours, as part of licensure
 - DCF inspections are limited to:
 - Health and safety
 - Ratios and supervision
 - Facility compliance

All museum areas, equipment, and resources are the property of the Orlando Science Center. The Science Center has recognized the need to respect the rights of individuals while protecting the health, safety, and welfare of all children, families, visitors, and Science Center employees. Any individual participating in Orlando Science Center Preschool on Science Center property is subject to search. The search can encompass personal items such as lunch bags, backpacks, or lockers.

ORLANDO SCIENCE CENTER PRESCHOOL

2026-2027

SAFETY *(Continued)*

CONFIDENTIALITY & CHILDREN'S RECORDS

All information contained in your child's records, including your personal information, is confidential. Anyone who is not directly involved in the care of your child or affiliated with childcare licensing, protective services, or other government agencies will not have access to the records without your written authorization or court order. As a caregiver, you can request access to your child's records. We are happy to provide access at reasonable times to records kept on-site, including the Enrollment Agreement, Incident/Accident Reports, Family Communication sheets, or progress notes. For information about the process needed to access other documents that may be included in your child's records, please contact your Preschool Director or Assistant Director. As a primary parent or legal guardian, you have the right to add and update information, comments, data, or other relevant materials to your child's records.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY DRILLS

Fire drills are done monthly per our Department of Children and Families' licensing requirements. These drills occur at various times of the Preschool day. During rest time, children's shoes must remain on due to safety regulations. Other Emergency drills (alternative route, lockdown) are also practiced on a regular basis to allow our Preschool children and staff to be prepared at all times. All Preschool children in attendance on the day of the drill will participate. In an emergency, exits are clearly marked and must not be blocked. When the fire alarm alert system sounds, everyone must evacuate the facility. Our safe location is outside the Orlando Science Center Cafe in the grass area. During Preschool events and performances where caregivers are present, students are the responsibility of Preschool staff and remain in their custody during the evacuation. Caregivers should follow the directions of Preschool staff on evacuating. We talk and practice our evacuations so that our children are aware of the priority of their safety.

WEATHER DRILLS

Weather drills (inclement weather, tornadoes, hurricanes) are also implemented. If we are under severe or threatening weather conditions such as tornadoes, high winds, hurricanes or severe cold, please be aware that our children's safety and security are of utmost importance. We will take every precaution within our limits. Orlando Science Center Preschool reserves the right to close due to:

- **Severe Weather** – Please be aware that rain/lightning may affect your child's pick-up location.
- **Tornadoes or Hurricanes** – Please listen to local news services or call the Orlando Science Center Preschool Director at 407.514.2159 for details.

ORLANDO SCIENCE CENTER PRESCHOOL

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SAFETY *(Continued)*

As a private provider, Orlando Science Center Preschool must maintain safety for our children/families, staff and environment. During any tornado or hurricane event, the Science Center's Safety and Management team will inspect the building and determine if the building can be open. Orlando Science Center Preschool will be open before and following a storm, unless the building sustains damage, does not have power or water or roads are not open. An email notification will be sent.

EMERGENCY AND ACCIDENT PROCEDURES

The most common accidents are skinned knees, bumped lips, teeth, heads and unfortunately normal human bites. Orlando Science Center Preschool staff are trained to give your child the "once over" when they arrive at Preschool. If your child has any bruises, bumps, or bites, please let us know. Likewise, we will do our best to communicate by phone or note if a minor incident occurs.

Plan 1

If a child has a minor accident, the Orlando Science Center Preschool staff will take such actions to comfort the child. Per the Department of Children and Families regulations, Preschool and its staff may not administer any type of medication. Preschool staff may wash a wound, apply a band-aid, give a hug, use calming words, and issue an accident report. First aid kits are located in the classroom and Preschool office.

Plan 2

If the child has an injury that may require professional medical care (i.e., large bumps, head injuries, uncontrollable nosebleeds, cuts that may require stitches or possible fracture), the caregiver or authorized emergency person will be called. The child would be sent with such authorized person(s) to seek further medical attention. The child would be taken to the Preschool designated isolation area with Preschool staff. An accident report will be issued, and a House Manager may be called. Incident and Accident Report – caregivers must sign this form within 24 hours of any incident or accident when picking up the child.

ORLANDO SCIENCE CENTER PRESCHOOL

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SAFETY *(Continued)*

Plan 3

In an obvious emergency and or life-threatening situation, 911 will be called first, and then the child's parent/guardian or authorized emergency person will be called. ALL appropriate procedures will take place until the child is seen by emergency personnel or a caregiver. The Orlando Science Center and Preschool staff are trained in CPR and First Aid for Infants/Children and Adults. An accident report will be issued, and a House Manager may be called. Incident and Accident Report – caregivers must sign this form within 24 hours of any incident or accident when picking up the child.

Thank you for taking the time to review the Orlando Science Center Preschool Family Handbook. The policies and procedures outlined here are designed to support a safe, welcoming, and positive learning environment for every child and family. We recognize that each family is unique, and we are committed to working together to support your child's growth, development, and success throughout their Preschool experience.