

Ms. Hilary's
3's Class Handbook
2021-2022



2021-2022 Parent Training

I hope you will enjoy the challenge and joy of being a teacher in your child's classroom. It is not easy, but it is rewarding. Not only will you be guiding our students' learning and modeling positive behavior, but you will be learning yourself. Mistakes will be made and there will be many questions. Let's look at mistakes as learning opportunities for all and agree that the only "dumb" question is the one not asked.

* Please feel free to contact me by email at misshilarynorthpoint@gmail.com or by phone call / text at (808) 384-9073.

- 1. AT HOME / PREPARATION BEFORE CLASS:** Each child will have a cubby and hook to store his/her coat and backpack. Sending your child with a backpack each day, helps them to be prepared and successful at school. Please always keep back-up face masks and an extra set of clothes in your child's backpack, as well as layers for outside play (we will go outside unless weather is extreme). You may also want to pack a full water bottle labelled with your child's name. Please do not allow your children to bring to toys, stuffed animals, money, valuable objects, candy, or gum to school. **JOVIAL ATTENDANCE:** We use Jovial for attendance this year. You will need to sign in and sign out every day through the jovial website. I have attached a QR code which directs you to the place to do this.
- 2. DROP OFF: Helping class begin safely, on time, and in a respectful manner is very important.** Please park your car in the lower parking lot and walk your child inside through the upper lot doors. (For safety, we do not use the upper parking lot during school hours.) Next, you will assist your child with hand washing in the bathroom closest to our classroom (and using the bathroom if needed) before entering class. This year, we request only 3 children plus their parents in the bathrooms at one time. Please be mindful of social distancing while in the hallway; if it looks crowded, please wait a minute or two and then try again.
- 3. FIRST 15 MINUTES OF CLASS FOR STUDENTS:**

The morning routine will be for the children to:

- find their name tags in the hallway,
 - get a temperature check (parents/caretakers will leave at this point),
 - and put their things away in their cubbies.
- Next, they will find their job and position at the circle for the day,
- sign up for a sharing book,
 - and make an estimation jar guess.

(*We will begin class survey later in the year.)

After completely this "morning admin", they will find an activity for the first ten minutes of class. It is important that children have time to relax for a few minutes and focus themselves in preparation for class.

- 4. WORKING PARENTS ARRIVE 15 MINUTES BEFORE CLASS:** It is the working parents responsibility to find a sub if he/she cannot make it. Please make every effort to be on time or call/text if you running late. Working parent job descriptions are in class for you to use (I have also included them in the back of the handbook).
- 5. COVID SAFETY / SOCIAL DISTANCING:** Masks will be worn at all times during school, both inside and outside. Please pack back-up masks for your child. Working parents must social distance. All adults working in the classroom must be vaccinated or show proof of a religious or medical exception. We will have regular had washing times throughout the day and use sanitizer as needed. Each child will have their own individual supplies to use for writing activities. Shared supplies will be sanitized between uses as much as possible. Worn dress up clothes should be placed in the laundry after use. For the time being, snack will be sent home with children at the end of class. Although we will not force the children to social distance, we can guide and ask children to "keep hands to themselves". When directing children, try to frame safety policies in positive terms ("hands to ourselves" or "please give space" rather than "don't touch" or "no").
- 6. CLASSROOM JOBS ARE IMPORTANT TO THE CHILDREN:** Having responsibilities makes the children take pride in their room and school. Jobs are posted so all adults will be able to help each child complete their tasks. (Working parent cheat sheets also include reminders to help children with specific jobs.)
- 7. FIRST 15 MINUTES FOR WORKING PARENTS:** Guide children to activities placed around the room if they are uncertain of what to do. When a child is finished with an activity, help them return the activity to its box and/or back to the shelf. Teaching children to return the materials is a very important part of learning to be responsible. It does take a while for the children to know they are expected to take responsibility for the environment. Help them by quietly reminding and offering to help carry if necessary.
- 8. THE CHILDREN ARE OUR FOCUS DURING CLASS TIME:** As much as possible, please hold adult conversations with each other before class time or in the hallway. The children are the focus during class hours and adult conversations can be distracting. Please also refrain from using your phone while you are a working parent in class.
- 9. CIRCLE TIME:** The activities in the beginning circle set a tone for the day: encouraging and welcoming each child. This is a very important part of the

program. Please make every effort to be on time so children feel a part of the group. Working parents join the circle and participate as role models for the children. If any child is struggling, a gentle hand on their back or pat may help them settle down and focus. The child may be asked to look at a book in the book area if not attending. They may return to the circle when ready.

10. SMALL GROUPS: We will break into small groups after circle time. Each working parent will have 3-6 children in their group. Small group is mainly for practicing writing and Special Day activities, although special projects may be sprinkled in. Have the children in your small group clean up their supplies and place completed work in their writing folders. If your group finishes early, they can help pile up the circular seat markers or you may grab a tabletop activity for them to work on. They can also stand in line by the cones if they can do so quietly. When the Art Parent is ready to open the Art Center, he/she will ask the student whose job is "Cone Helper" to remove and stack the cones, thereby opening all center activities.

11. CENTER TIME: Listening will be one of the most important jobs you have in the classroom. When children, just like adults, are listened to, they feel they belong. By listening and using a calm voice, you can help children problem-solve. This is one of the best techniques for helping children solve their own problems: a quiet voice with an encouraging tone (not scolding). Sit down or kneel down to be at eye level with the children whenever possible. Facial expressions, silent nods of encouragement and understanding eyes are a very important part of the communication process. Repeat what you hear: "I can see two friends are having trouble sharing the truck. What shall we do?" Listen again, if they are having trouble coming up with solutions; suggest a few. "We could use a timer, or write John's name on the card so he will be next... what do you think?" Listen again for agreement. Congratulate the children for solving a hard problem. If a child has hurt or bothered another child, encourage them to "check in" rather than force a "sorry". Children at this age do not always understand the concept of "sorry" and "checking in" helps to build empathy without placing blame.

*** ART CENTER/SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S CREATIVITY:**

Children understand activities by asking questions, rather than telling. "What do you think we will be doing here?" If children are having difficulty using the equipment, show them how. There may be a sample or "model for inspiration" for certain project, but always encourage children to make the art their own. Please remember it is the process not the product that helps children to learn. Allow time for children to finish.

The finished product will not be judged by how it looks to you. We do not always have to comment on the children's art work- we want them to begin to depend on their own judgements. If you comment, please keep it on the topic of the process: "those brushes

were very tiny. You used many muscles making those punched holes. I see you were thinking of something special when you painted that." Please don't ask, "what is it?" However, it is fun to write on the bottom or side anything the child wants to tell you about their creation. Remember to label work with the child's name (he or she may want to tell you where to write their name). You can find a list of children in the class on the bulletin board above the art sink. Encourage all students to visit the art station, but allow them to take a pass if they do not want to participate. *There will be a few projects (such as Mother's Day gifts) where we will encourage participation more assertively.

*** SNACK/LEARNING PATIENCE AND GOOD NUTRITION:**

As a Covid safety measure, snack will be sent home with children at the end of class. We will revisit this policy midway through the year. At this point in time, snack must be individual, pre-packaged items. When you are snack parent, please check the class allergy list. **The school is a NUT-FREE ZONE. At this time, our only additional allergy in the 3's class is RAW BANANAS.**

Snack process if/when we decide to serve snack at school: Students will wash hands, find their placemat, and take a seat at the snack table. The Snack Parent will then serve them their snack. The Snack Parent should encourage language development and community building through conversation during snack time. After the child is finished with snack, they should clean up their placemat and space, then wash hands before retuning to play. *A lanyard for face masks will be very helpful for snack time (when we start serving during class time)- please consider having your child use one at school.

12. SHARING IS ENCOURAGED BUT NOT FORCED: Please work with children to give them tools to navigate sharing situations for themselves. Encourage children to speak up for themselves using phrases such as "May I have a turn when you are done?", "Can we play together?", "I will find you when I am done using this", etc. Help children get excited about playing together and feel good about taking turns. This is an important kindergarten-readiness (and life) skill.

13. CLEAN UP: The 5 minute warning for cleanup will be a drum. After 5 minutes, we sing our cleanup song. Everyone helps with cleanup. This is a time to stress cooperation and being helpful and responsible. We will meet for a second circle time after clean-up.

14. OUTSIDE/DOWNSTAIRS TIME AND HAND WASHING AFTER: We will be going outside everyday if possible, so please don't forget jackets, hats, etc. On the slide, encourage children to go "up the stairs, down the slide" and call out "all clear" before heading down the slide. When we do play downstairs, students must use walking feet. After recess, the first half of the class will go into the first bathroom

with me and 1 parent. The other half of the class will go with the other two working parents into the far bathroom. After they wash their hands, they line up against the wall to wait for their friends to finish up. We usually sing songs or play rhyming games while we wait. Please collect name tags during this time. Children should use walking feet to return to the classroom after hand washing (it may help to encourage the group to use "tip toe feet" or "giant steps").

- 15. EACH CHILD OF A WORKING PARENT WILL BRING ONE BOOK TO SHARE WITH THE CLASS:** Upon entering school, the "sharing book" is placed on a table with sign up sheets and students will choose one of the three books to hear later. The working parents' children will have an opportunity to introduce their book to the group and share a favorite page. This is a great opportunity for kids to practice sharing in front of a group. It is helpful to talk about this book with your child before he or she shares (title, favorite part to share, what it is you like about this book or page, who gave it to them, where did they get it, etc). A little preparation helps them feel more confident. *Also, working parents, please guide your child toward a book that takes about 5-10 minutes to read, or be ready to paraphrase / elaborate to fill the time.
- 16. READING OF SHARING BOOKS:** After each working parent's child shares their book, we will break into small groups to read the books the children shared. Parents will reward children for listening with a stamp or sticker.
- 17. CLOSING CIRCLE / PICK-UP ROUTINE:** After sharing book groups finish, students return to the large group circle and we will sing a goodbye song. If you are not a working parent, you will be waiting outside for your child. Please be on time. The Snack Parent and Art Parent will bring 3-4 children to the door at a time to meet their parents/caretakers. Snack will also be distributed at this time. The Teacher's Assistant will stay with me at the circle and help children gather their things. After all students have been retrieved, it is the job of the TA to read a story to the children of the Art and Snack Parents while they finish their job/cleaning responsibilities.
- 18. HONOR YOUR CHILD'S CREATIONS BY TAKING THEM HOME:** It is important that you take artwork home. This shows your child that you value what they accomplish at school. Often the art goes along with a theme and can be used as a conversation starter with your child about what they did at school. *I will be keeping some artwork at school for your child's portfolio and the classroom.
- 19. SPECIAL DAYS MAKE YOUR CHILD FEEL LOVED, HELP US GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER, AND BUILD LISTENING SKILLS AND EMPATHY:** Every child will have a special day. These will fall on Fridays. Your class rep will assign your child's special day or have you sign up for a specific day. (While it is not always

possible, we welcome parents if they want to be with us on their child's special day- many try to sign up for snack on this day). While we usually avoid sweet treats for snack, the parent may bring in a special snack if desired by the child on his or her special day. The child will wear a special crown on this day and their friends will ask him or her about some of their favorite things. This discussion helps inspire drawings by friends to be made into a special day book for the child. *It may help if you can discuss with your child some of their favorite things before class that day.

20. PLEASE ERR ON THE CAUTIOUS SIDE AND STAY HOME IF YOUR FAMILY IS SHOWING ANY SIGNS OF ILLNESS. Do not come to school if anyone in your household has experienced the following symptoms in the last 24 hours:

- a. A fever of 100.4 degrees or higher
- b. Chills, cough, sore throat, runny nose, or difficulty breathing
- c. Body aches, headache, or unusual fatigue
- d. Vomiting, diarrhea, or nausea
- e. A new rash

*If your child is overtired, fussy, cranky, and acting like they don't feel well, even without fever, please keep them home. Your child will not benefit from being in class when they are not feeling well.

*I appreciate your cooperation on this. If a child begins to show symptoms during class, I will call their caregiver to come pick them up.

*Be sure you know your class' system for substitutes, in case your child is ill. If you are not clear on this, reach out to your Class Rep.

* If you have been in contact with a known or suspected case of Covid-19, please refer to the most recent CDC guidelines for quarantine and contact the school's Health & Safety Chair. If a community member tests positive for Covid-19 or other highly contagious illnesses, they must alert their teacher and/or the NPCP Health and Safety Chair as soon as possible. The Health and Safety Chair will determine if a school/class closure is necessary.

21. FIRE/EARTHQUAKE DRILLS: We practice fire drills monthly and earthquake drills twice a year. The procedures and an evacuation plan are posted in the classroom by the door.

Fire Drill:

- Smoke detector will be turned on
- Teacher or another adult will call out "fire drill"

- Parents and children stop everything and line up at the door
- Head count is taken and compared to sign in sheet
- Adult leads children out front door to the far side of the playground

Earthquake Drill:

- Teacher or another adult will call out "earthquake drill"
- Adults and children will crawl under the tables- heads down touching knees and arms around head
- Remain under table until advised to come out. Be calm and quiet.

22. RULES FOR PRESCHOOL

- 1) Respect ourselves
- 2) Respect each other
- 3) Respect our school

This includes the following:

We give each other space

Walking feet keep up safe

Calm voices mean everyone can be heard

We will learn to take turns

Everyone cleans

23. THE VALUE OF PLAY:

Research shows that the one key factor to success in a young child's educational meeting is the amount of time they are allotted to play. Although it can be easy to focus on academics from a young age, it is actually through play that kids learn to regulate conflict, solve problems, become resilient, delay gratification, and take turns. These are the skills that our children need most to be successful in life- socially, emotionally, and academically.

On a social level, play-based preschools help children learn the skills they need to be a good friend and work as a member of a group through collaboration, learning to follow rules, use empathy, take turns, and self-regulate. These skills help children to learn the rules of social interaction that will in turn help them in relationships throughout life. Children in play-based settings get lots of opportunities to practice experiencing their friends points of view by working through conflicts about space, materials, and rules with support.

Academically, play promotes language, literacy, and mathematical thinking. Research shows that kids who frequently engage in play, particularly socio-dramatic (imaginative) play, show an increase in the total number of words used, the length of their sentences, and the complexity of their speech. It has been found that play also helps children to understand the relationships between things, which helps them develop the type of reasoning that aids in mathematical performance. Play also helps build the skills of attention, concentration, and impulse control. These skills are integral to kindergarten success. Furthermore, if children are not comfortable in social free-play environments, learning to be so in later years can serve as a distraction from elementary school academics.

Play also provides an outlet for the expression of emotion in young children. Strong emotions, especially frustration, fear, and anxiety, can be overwhelming for children to process. Play provides an outlet to voice those overwhelming feelings. In play-based preschool settings, we provide children with the space to explore how they are feeling, what caused those feelings, and how best to express their feelings in a positive, safe, healthy way.

Playing is learning for children. What appears to adults as aimless pattering about with paints, sand, water, and blocks - in activity centers with other children or by themselves- helps preschoolers develop control of their bodies, investigate cause and effect, and follow-up on the innate human curiosity that is at the root of all high achievement. A good preschool program will permit children to explore their environment without fear of failure, without imposed adult expectations and adult learning priorities. This kind of curriculum helps develop self-confidence and a joy of learning that is the best possible motivation for formal schooling.

“Playtime doesn’t get enough respect. Play gets overlooked. Society doesn’t value it. Play is fun, but equally important, it makes kids smarter. Play benefits especially in terms of later development- especially when we look at creativity, flexibility, and ability to cooperate. Kids who have had a great deal of play are more able to function socially, emotionally, and physically as they move forward in school and life. Parents who want smart kids should realize that rolling around in the dirt is just as important as scoring well on standardized testing.”

“It is a happy talent to know how to play” -Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Play is the highest form of research.” Albert Einstein

“Take chances, make mistakes, get messy!” -Ms. Frizzle

Here are a few guidelines to help promote learning through play (child-initiated activities):

- Don’t hover over children.
- Respect their uniqueness (and independence). Let them do it themselves.

- Allow for mess. Allow children to express themselves in their way.
- Honor each child's timetable for growth.
- Do not always model for children; allow opportunity for risk, to be different.
- Give the child tinkering time- time to put things together and take it apart.
- Let them be problem-solvers and negotiators. Help children find their own solutions if necessary.

2021-2022 Curriculum Themes

Our classroom environment is rich and stimulating, designed to promote exploration by all children. Themes are used to help design learning experiences, but I try to be flexible and offer a variety of activities that are determined by the children's interests and opportunities that may arise.

MONTH

THEME

September - Routines, Unique & Special Me, Apples, Celebrating Fall

October - Pumpkins, Spiders, Leaves

November - Food, Salmon, Gratitude

December - Feelings, Trees, Solstice/Festivals of Light

January - New Years, Snow, Mittens, Arctic Animals, MLK Day

February - Friendship, Dinosaurs, Pete the Cat

March - Whales, Iditirod, Treasure Maps/Pirates

April - Celebrating Spring, Earth Day, Gardening, Butterflies

May - Tidepools, Mother's Day / Father's Day