



**Stavness Early Learning Preschool Parent Handbook  
Policies and Procedures**

Updated **June 2023-2024**

## **Admission Policies and Procedures**

To complete your enrollment for Stavness Early Learning, the following must be completed:

- Parent must complete Enrollment form and return
- Parents must pay registration fee in order to save one's spot
- Parent must pay curriculum fee listed on the enrollment form by July 1st, 2023 for our staff to prepare some incredible materials for your littles
- Curriculum Fee listed is waived for Law Enforcement, Military, and Fire Families
- Parents must bring copies of all paperwork before services can begin. If your family is waiting on updated immunizations and or a physical appointment with your child's primary, a date for the upcoming appointment is required and this form can be turned in at a later date but as soon as possible please

Stavness Early Learning's Hours of Operation are Monday-Friday from 7:45 AM- 3:15 PM, and serve children ages 2-5.

We respect and appreciate the trust you have placed in us to care for and teach your child. At Stavness Early Learning we will offer the very best care that we can for your child. You can help us do that by keeping us informed about health concerns, food allergies, favorite foods, fears, and/or special interests on your child's BRIGHTWHEEL profile. Please make sure to turn your notifications on for this app. in the case of an emergency and we need to contact you. We look forward to sharing information about your child's growth and activities while attending Stavness Early Learning.

## **Philosophy**

The philosophy at Stavness Early Learning Preschool is the following listed statements the director Mrs. Michelle Stavness and staff believe in and feel very strongly about.

Stavness Early Learning is a school-based Early Childhood Education program that focuses on language, reasoning, critical thinking, problem-solving, persistence, the ability to get along well with others, and social emotional learning. Our mission and philosophy have been developed from our educational backgrounds and knowledge, evidence-based practice, developmentally appropriate practice, personal experience and wisdom gained from well respected mentors:

- Every child is teachable and capable of personal growth
- Children learn best with a child-centered approach when the child initiates the learning and the teacher guides them as necessary

- Children learn best when you present them with an environment and experience that engages multiple senses leading to self-discovery, and exploration
- Children benefit from collaborative learning where they are interacting with others, critically thinking, and problem solving with their peers in a natural environment
- Creating a natural environment where a child can choose to have responsibility helps build community, confidence, autonomy and teamwork skills which are necessary to thrive in one's community
- Your child's early childhood education staff are partners with your family in helping your little one to thrive and experience optimal growth
- Children respond best when they are cared for and led by a nurturing, supportive and warm staff/team
- Curriculum should consider each individual's as well as the learning group's needs, cultural differences and backgrounds, social-emotional, physical, and cognitive development

### **Program Goals**

Our goal as a facility is to help your child to grow both academically and more importantly in their emotional intelligence. Our staff puts forth a lot of effort to invest in your student's personal growth, and we hope that one day our students will give back and contribute to their community and family, changing the world and making it a little more kind and courageous, one household and community at a time.

### **Play and Learning Activities**

We are both a school-based program as well as a play-based program. Both are essential in contributing to a well rounded learning environment. Along with our own evidence-based educational philosophies indoors, our outdoor classroom is a big focus for our facility where we dive into earth science, agriculture, our community garden, and organic materials for child-led discovery and exploration. Our program practices many teachings and educational philosophies of Maria Montessori. We've often been called a Hybrid of a school-based program with the Montessori way. Blocks (building), puzzles (problem solving), play-dough (creativity/fine motor), finger painting, sidewalk chalk drawings, singing, reading books, planting seeds in the garden, and pretending to be firefighters, along with sit-down table activities for school-readiness are typical activities that your child may participate in. We strongly believe that children learn by engaging in hands-on activities, and we try to create situations and environments for your children to stretch, as well as dive into their own individual interests while developing confidence! Guiding your child to be more autonomous is a huge part of what we do and who we are. Growing in autonomy has to do with having a healthy confidence and self-esteem, and being able to act and think for oneself.

### **Curriculum**

Our main speech, language and writing curriculum is Learning Without Tears. We are currently adopting a new social studies and math curriculum due to drastic political changes from our previous curriculum. Social Emotional Learning (conflict resolution, getting along well with others, collaborative learning), school readiness (being attentive, prerequisites to core Kindergarten learning, pre-writing/handwriting skills and more), and multi-sensory learning (diverse and engaging materials and music) are some of the special elements of our program. We love our outdoor classroom where we focus on community, autonomy growth, agriculture and science. We have chickens and a garden. The sweetest goats, a Great Pyrenees dog, and a barn cat belong to our outdoor classroom and community. We believe that learning should be an experience that our children participate in. Our kiddos go into Kindergarten and assess high upon entry. We carry good rapport with surrounding primary schools our kids go into after exiting from our program. Our program is child-centered, so the student is initiating the learning and we are guiding, as well as creating an environment our students will be prompted to self-discover and explore.

Please visit and follow our Instagram account @stavness\_early\_learning to see us in action and learn more about our program. I try to post and keep up with what we are up to on a weekly basis.

### **Outdoor Classroom and Activities**

As mentioned previously, our facility's outdoor classroom is a focus for our curriculum! It's important to us to take a lot of what we do inside the classroom and bring it to the great outdoors. Everyday we take the children outside for fresh air and exercise. Often we will bundle up and go outside even on cold days for at least a few minutes. On warm, sunny days we may spend an extended amount of time outdoors. Please make sure to dress your child appropriately and even pack an extra set of clothes just in case. Some of the activities that take place are free play, working in the garden, helping with the chickens and goats, nature walks, planned scavenger hunts, and more. If you have special requests regarding outdoor play (such as sunscreen, insect repellent, etc.) please let our staff know during drop-off.

**Celebrations**---We do recognize birthdays for each child. We enjoy doing something special for the children in our care. If you'd like to contribute anything edible on a special day, we ask that it be pre-packaged goods. No baked goods for the wellbeing of the class. We do recognize major holidays and enjoy exploring other cultures, with special food and activities!

**Toys and Other Items from Home**---We allow children to bring a special "preschool" friend such as a stuffed animal or doll with them to school. However, please don't bring other items. Young children often have trouble sharing and occasionally some items with small parts may not be safe for very young children. We cannot be responsible for items if they are damaged or

broken. Backpacks and the like are of course acceptable. Thank you in advance for your understanding :-)

**Clothing**---Daily play and learning can get messy, especially when playing outdoors or working on art projects. Please dress your children in comfortable, washable play clothes every day. Please provide a labeled extra set of clothing that we can store away (shirt/blouse, pants, underwear, socks) just in case. When we're outside the kids are running and playing so flip flops are discouraged. If your child wears flip flops we ask that there is a strap on the backside of the ankle to help keep them safe.

**Meals/Snacks**---Daily Food for Snack/Lunch

- Snack is served between drop off and lunch
- Lunch is provided by the family and is typically eaten at 11:45/12 for friends who stay for an extended day
- **PLEASE MAKE SURE TO LABEL YOUR CHILD'S FOOD CONTAINERS/LUNCH PAIL :)**
- On occasion, the children may help staff prepare special snacks or meals! Children are encouraged by our, "3 Bite Rule," (but never forced) to eat a variety of foods
- We are no longer a nut free facility. If your child does have an allergy we will have a special table for them during snack to keep a closer eye on whatever they are consuming as well as the friends around them :)

**Behavior guidance**---We try to be respectful of children's basic needs. We support positive behavior by setting up child-friendly play areas, follow consistent routines for eating and resting, and provide breaks and space when necessary. Children under our care are taught simple rules and manners that they can easily understand. Our behavior management strategies are positive reinforcement, vs. punitive reinforcement. This means that we praise positive and choice behavior in order to teach what is desired, pleasing and appropriate. If a child is engaging in an inappropriate behavior, we will offer a, "Replacement behavior," in hopes to redirect their behaviors, as well as seek to figure out the needs of the individual. Please feel free to ask me more information on this.

When children have a disagreement, lots of dialogue takes place and we work it out together as a class family. If necessary we may have a cooling off period such as a, "time away," or a, "break." At times, we may also choose to ignore misbehavior if a child is attention seeking. Our staff always practices evidence-based strategies. We encourage and teach children to develop

problem-solving skills. Our ultimate goal in redirecting interfering behaviors is to help each child grow in positive social-skills and behavior and self-regulating their big and valid feelings.

Our facility does not give timeouts.

**Illness---**Children cannot attend if they have a temperature above 99.0 degrees Fahrenheit, if they have contagious conditions, are vomiting, have diarrhea, and are not able to function well in daily activities. Examples of this may be a constant cough, the need to have their nose wiped continuously, ultimately requiring more supervision than we can provide without neglecting the other children. Please notify the teacher if your child will not be attending. If your child becomes ill during school (fever, diarrhea, or vomiting), you will be notified to pick up your child.

Children must be picked up as soon as possible to consider the wellness of the rest of the group.

- Your child must be free from the fever, diarrhea, and/or vomiting for a full 48 hours before returning to school
- If your child is well but has a sibling that has a fever, stomach bug and/or contagious virus, we ask that you wait before sending your child to school to prevent germs spread
- Suspicious sores or rash must be documented and deemed not to be contagious by child's doctor before returning to school

Medications will be given with consent from the parent's or doctor's direct written consent.

**Medications---**We will only be accepting the following medications:

- Epi Pens
- Inhalers

The administration of medication shall be provided only on a prescription from a physician to the child's parents or guardian. All prescribed medications must be in their original container and not expired. Parents must sign, and date the medication consent release form. Children may not have any medication, over the counter or prescription, in their backpack or lunch box. In the event of an emergency the school will call 911 and the school will not be responsible for any fees that may be charged.

**Emergencies---**In the event of a medical emergency, fire, or natural disaster, we will take immediate steps to ensure your child's safety and will contact you as quickly as possible. If we need to evacuate we will take the children to the director's mother in law's residence in Cherry Valley. We maintain a list of emergency numbers. Please make sure that your contact information is up to date.

**Days Closed---**The preschool will be closed on the following days; we do not deduct tuition for these days, and we do not substitute days for absences: Labor Day, Veteran's Day, the Wednesday before Thanksgiving day, Thanksgiving day and Friday after, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, the week of Christmas, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, MLK Day, Washington's birthday, President's Day, and Memorial Day. We will give you notice for any additional days. If weather or air conditions are unsafe for students, the preschool will close. Tuition for friends who receive full time care will have a prorated/adjusted invoice during months that include extended breaks such as Winter break (December) and Spring break March or April). Our academic calendar is subject to change\*\*\* Please see tuition agreement for further explanation on prorates.

**Pets---**We believe children benefit greatly from playing with and caring for animals. We have a class guinea pig, goats, chickens, a cat, and a great pyrenees dog your child will help care and be responsible for. **If you would NOT like your child to be in contact with any of these animals please make note at the bottom of your signed agreement and speak with us about your concerns. This is a big part of our curriculum and we may not be the right facility for your family.**

Look at this incredible list that mentions some of the excellent reasons why we provide these learning opportunities for our children at SEL:

•Children who raise and develop positive feelings about pets (another LIFE), show many benefits. This can contribute to a child's self-esteem 🌟and self-confidence🌟! Positive relationships with pets can aid in the development of trusting relationships with others. A good relationship with a pet can also lead to developing non-verbal communication, compassion, and EMPATHY🌟 Pets can serve different purposes for children:

\* They can be safe recipients of secrets and private thoughts--children often talk to their pets, like they do to their stuffed animals.

\* They provide lessons about life, including reproduction, birth, illnesses, and more

\* They can help develop responsible behavior in the children who care for them

\* They provide a connection to nature

\* They can teach respect for other living things

Other physical and emotional needs fulfilled by pet ownership include:

\* Physical activity

\* Comfort contact

\* Love, loyalty, affection

and more!

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

**Smoking---**Smoking is not allowed at the facility, including outdoor areas.

**Termination**---Service will be terminated for any of the following reasons:

- If a child is extremely disruptive, e.g., does not make progress in complying with school routine, excessive biting, rages, etc. and we feel we do not have the proper resources and staffing to support and help a child thrive
- If a parent chooses to violate the policy or payment agreements

**Licensing Agency:** We are licensed by the Riverside District Office, Community Care Licensing of California. The State Department makes regular visits each year to inspect the health and welfare of our facility as stated in Title 22, Section 101195 (b) and (c). By law, Community Care Licensing has the right to interview your child without prior consent without the permission of Stavness Early Learning.

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

(Please print first and last name)

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Director's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_