

Oracle Elementary School District #2

## **Mt. Vista Kindergarten Prep Program**



*"Where Our Work is Play"*

## **HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS 2023-2024**

**Mt. Vista PreK-8 School  
2618 El Paseo  
Oracle, AZ 85623  
520-896-3000**

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Janneke McElroy – Speech-Language Pathologist

Suzanne Robertson – Physical Therapist

Suzanne Robertson – Occupational Therapist

Lydia Smith – Medical Assistant

Amy Hinton – Paraprofessional

Ayisha Valenzuela – Paraprofessional

Dear Parents,

Welcome to an exciting year of Mt. Vista Kindergarten Prep! We can appreciate that you are entrusting us with your most valuable possession, your child. You, the parents, are an integral part of our team and your child's primary teacher. We encourage you to read to your child/children everyday. Recite nursery rhymes and sing children's songs at home or in the car. Hearing the rhythm of language helps your child develop pre-requisite skills for learning to read in elementary school. Reading, talking and listening to children also provides a physical closeness that helps bond families.

Our staff is a very dedicated group of professionals. They will provide your child a warm, caring and safe environment to ensure that each child can reach their maximum potential. We are an intervention based preschool program. Our goal is to understand your child's strengths and needs, and work to build on their strengths. Whether your child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or is a peer model student, our staff is trained to make learning fun!

Your child's classroom teacher and para educators are trained to help your child develop and build on skills through developmentally appropriate activities. Your child will participate in a variety of experiential and play activities that will promote cognitive (thinking), language, pre-literacy, gross/fine motor skills and social skills.

Our related service staff, again a dedicated group of caring and loving individuals, will provide your child extra support if they have an IEP. Our Occupational Therapists, Speech-Language Pathologists and Physical Therapists will work with your child to help facilitate development of skills to further assist in their learning.

We are all here to support you the parents as well. Having a young child or children is an exciting time in life, but can also be stressful and exhausting. If your child has special needs we are also a resource to you. We will do all that we can to learn about your child's individual needs and point you in the right direction for more help about your child's specific needs if necessary.

We want to help your child develop a love of learning that will be the beginning of becoming a life-long learner. Enjoy each stage your child is at, as they grow up so quickly. Thank you for sharing your little one with us. We look forward to an exciting year!

Sincerely,

*Theresa Rodriguez*

## **MT. VISTA KINDERGARTEN PREP**

### **VISION**

The vision of the Mt. Vista Kindergarten Prep Program is to be a great program for all children and their families. Children demonstrate growth in all areas of development in a safe nurturing environment that is child-friendly and based on individual needs. Highly qualified professionals provide a stimulating learning atmosphere where development is fostered and measured in a variety of ways. Preschool evaluation teams and classroom teams facilitate transitions from early intervention agencies and to kindergarten. All adults in the school community collaborate to ensure student success through their professionalism, continuous learning, respectful behavior and compassion.

### **MISSION**

The mission of the Mt. Vista Kindergarten Prep Program is to lead all students to achieve their full potential in all aspects of their preschool experiences through a system of professional expertise, compassion and collaboration between preschool teams and parents.

## **MT. VISTA KINDERGARTEN PREP DESCRIPTION**

The OSD Mt. Vista Kindergarten Prep is an integrated program where children with differing abilities and disabilities play and learn together in the same classroom. We are set up to serve both special needs preschoolers ages three to five (not eligible for kindergarten) and typically developing preschoolers in the same age range. Our special needs children may be challenged in one or more of the following areas: Preschool Speech Language Impaired (PSL), Hearing Impaired (HI), Vision Impaired (VI) or developmentally delayed which may affect the following: 1) cognitive abilities, 2) motor abilities, 3) sensory abilities, 4) psychosocial skills, 5) language skills and 6) adaptive behavior. A delay of 1.5 standard deviations below the mean on a norm referenced test in two or more areas on a norm-referenced test would provide services under the state category of Preschool Moderate Delay (PMD). A delay of more than 3 standard deviations below the mean on a norm referenced test in one or more areas would provide services for Preschool Severe Delay (PSD). Our typically developing children come from the school community. The typically developing preschoolers pay tuition to attend the Kinder Prep Program.

The Kindergarten Prep Program follows the school district calendar year. Classes meet four days a week for two and one-half hours per day. There is no preschool on Wednesdays. During the preschool day, the children participate in a rich variety of activities, during which they experience many opportunities for learning. Each day the child may participate in circle time, small group activities, independent work time, snack time and movement activities. The children are given opportunities to make choices about activities and then given a chance to talk about their activity choices. Throughout the year, many concepts are presented through play, songs, literature, finger plays and other sensory related activities.

We use a team approach to working with the children. Different district personnel may also participate in our program throughout the year, such as Speech-Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, and Physical Therapists, However, the most important participants in the Kinder Prep Program continue to be the children and their families that we are here to serve!

In the area of guidance and discipline, our ultimate goal is that each child develops self-control and appropriate ways of solving difficulties. Within the classroom setting, we try to set clear, consistent and fair limits. We listen to the children and help them find ways of resolving their conflicts. We regard mistakes as an opportunity to learn. As part of this learning process, we always look for ways to redirect children to appropriate activities and help them make alternative choices. In some instances, a child may be removed from a situation for a short period of time. The child is then given the opportunity to rejoin the group and appropriate behavior is modeled and encouraged. At all times, our emphasis is on using positive guidance and treating all children with dignity and respect.

## **MT. VISTA KINDERGARTEN PREP**

The new preschool curriculum is designed to meet the developmental needs of children. Play is the primary means of encouraging skill development for three and four year olds. The children are given the opportunity to actively manipulate materials and the physical environment and thus gain new skills by playing with each other and interacting with adults. Each child develops or learns at his or her own rate and new skills are acquired when the child is developmentally ready. Developmentally appropriate practice as set out by the National Association for Education of Young Children is to provide your child with a balance of child-directed and teacher-directed activities.

The program combines music, movement, art, drama, large muscle and small muscle games and activities, language arts and concepts development. Opportunities for social interaction provide experiences in which children learn to share, to respect the rights of others, to understand themselves and how they positively affect their environment and to build on their basic skills.

We have a wonderful staff of teachers and instructional aides that are caring and nurturing professionals with the knowledge and skills to facilitate your child's learning and development. Both Mrs. Small and Mrs. Rodriguez have a morning class and an afternoon class. We ask that you make phone calls or conference with your child's teacher by appointment before the morning program or after the afternoon program, as they need time between classes to prepare for your children.

Therapeutic intervention is provided for children found eligible by related services personnel. If your child is found eligible for services by the Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET), which includes you, the parent, as a part of the team, then services by a Speech-Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist and Physical Therapist, would be provided. Most services occur within the context of the classroom environment, however, there are times when more individualized therapy may assist your child in meeting goals and generalizing skills to the classroom. There may also be times when during re-evaluation, your child would be individually evaluated. If your child receives more individualized services such as these, we require your permission.

Classroom teaching teams meet for trainings and planning on a regular basis. Classroom planning is often based on a theme that centers around the week's activities. Many exciting ideas come from these planning sessions that make your child's experience fun and stimulating.

## **ONGOING PROGRESS MONITORING ASSESSMENTS**

Mt. Vista Kindergarten Prep uses the Teaching Strategies GOLD as part of their ongoing progress monitoring assessment for all special needs children in all areas of development. Results are reported to the Arizona Department of Education as part of the Office of Special Education Program (OSEP) requirements to report early childhood outcomes. The information is used to help drive instruction that meets the individual needs of each child whether it's a child with special needs or a typically developing child.

## **DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES/POLICY**

Effective discipline begins with prevention. The preschool program's prevention strategies include the following: demonstrate appropriate coping skills, prepare a safe and age appropriate environment, schedule events with the children's needs in mind and provide clear, consistent and fair rules.



## **ELIGIBILITY FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES CRITERIA**

Preschool students who are identified as having a disability or developmental delay receive special education services through the Oracle School District free of charge. It must be determined that these children are eligible for services through a formal evaluation process. They must meet eligibility criteria established by the Arizona Department of Education. Eligibility criteria and categories are as follows:

**Preschool – Moderately Delayed (PMD):** Formal assessment procedures determined that compared to the child’s chronological age mates there is a moderate delay (performance on a standardized norm-referenced test measures 1.5 to 3.0 standard deviations below the mean) in two or more of the following areas:

- (a) cognitive development
- (b) physical development
- (c) communication development
- (d) social/emotional development
- (e) adaptive development

**Preschool – Severely Delayed (PSD):** Formal assessment procedures determined that compared to the child’s chronological age mates there is a severe delay (performance on a standardized norm-referenced test measure more than 3.0 standard deviations below the mean) in one or more of the following areas.

- (a) cognitive development
- (b) physical development
- (c) communication development
- (d) social/emotional development
- (e) adaptive development

**Speech-Language Impairment (PSL):** Language assessment has determined the child is developing significantly below what is typical for his/her age (1.5 standard deviations below the mean on a norm-referenced language test) or whose speech, out of context, is unintelligible to a listener who is unfamiliar with the child and the child is not eligible for services under another preschool category.

**Visual Impairment (VI):** There must be documentation by an appropriate specialist that the visual impairment effects the child’s learning and development.

**Hearing Impairment (HI):** There must be documentation by an appropriate specialist that the hearing impairment effects the child’s learning and development.

Individual Education Programs (IEP’s) are developed for children who are eligible for preschool special education services. The Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team develops the IEP. The parents are an integral part of this team. The IEP is reviewed by the IEP Team, which again includes the parent as an integral part of the team.

## CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

Each child with a disability has a right to a Free and Appropriate Public Education. The Individual Education Program (IEP) team determines what level of service the child needs in order to meet their goals. There are several levels of service and service models that the IEP team may consider from, typically our students are provided services through our Inclusive Preschool Special Education Classroom, Mt. Vista Kinder Prep.

**Consultative** services consist of the service provider working with the parent, teacher or other related service personnel to develop and monitor a therapeutic, developmentally appropriate individualized education program that is carried out by the regular teacher.

**Itinerant** services at the home school consists of a service provider working with the parent to develop a developmentally appropriate therapeutic program that is reflected on the IEP. Treatment is provided in a small group environment at the home school and supported by the parent. Children with intense phonological or mild communication needs are most likely to benefit from a small group environment.

**Inclusive Preschool Special Education Classroom** consists of an Early Childhood Special Education Teacher and related service providers working with the parent and child to develop a therapeutic, developmental and/or pre-academic program that meets the child's needs. Related service personnel work with the child in the context of a preschool classroom or individualized sessions based on the child's needs. Approximately 50% or more of the children in the classroom are typically developing children.

**Self-Contained Preschool Special Education Classroom** consists of an Early Childhood Special Education Teacher and related service providers working with the parent and child to develop a therapeutic, developmental and/or pre-academic program that meets the child's needs. Related service personnel work with the child in the context of a preschool classroom or individualized sessions based on the child's needs. More than 50% of the children in the classroom are children with special needs.

**"Homebound"** or **"hospitalized"** preschool instruction is designed for children unable to attend school due to illness, disease, accident or other health conditions. The child's physician submits a medical certification form that the child is unable to attend regular classes due to chronic or acute health problems. The medical certification shall state the general medical condition, such as illness, disease or chronic health condition that is the reason that the pupil is unable to attend school.

**Dismissal** from special education services is a goal for many children. Sometimes dismissal occurs before the transition to kindergarten. Determination of dismissal from services can be based upon:

- Attainment of all current goals;
- Review of existing data;
- Further evaluation; or
- Assessment that indicates the child is functioning within expected limits in all developmental areas.

If dismissal is indicated, the child may complete the semester or continue until a more appropriate transition date is determined by the team. Some students may continue in the classroom as tuition students.

## **REGISTRATION/ENROLLMENT**

All preschoolers preparing to attend the Mt. Vista Kindergarten Prep must complete a registration packet before entrance to the program. Please take the following information to the school office:

1. Registration Packet
2. Birth Certificate
3. Documented Immunization Record
4. Proof of Residency (ie: utility bill)

Special needs children are released from the program under one of the following conditions:

- The evaluation team determines that the child is no longer eligible for special education. (A Review of Existing Data, Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team Report and Individual Education Plan Team meeting must occur for this to happen. The child may attend the preschool until the end of the semester, and is then eligible to become a tuition student. (Parents of tuition students provide their own transportation).
- The child does not attend for 10 consecutive days without notice from the parent as to the reason for absence.
- The parent withdraws the child from the school by completing the necessary paperwork.

We ask that parents of our tuition students please give a two-week notice if they will be leaving the program. Notify your child's teacher. This will enable us to allow another child to attend as soon as an opening occurs.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Regular attendance at preschool and being prompt for class is both appreciated and expected. If it is necessary for a child to be kept home, please call and report his/her absence to the school attendance office, 896-3000.

## **HOURS OF OPERATION**

**3 Year Old Class** – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday from 11:30 AM to 2:00 PM. No Wednesday class.

**4 Year Old Class** – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday from 8:00 AM to 10:30 AM No Wednesday class.

## **CAMPUS REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS**

All parents must complete school registration at the front office of your child's school before beginning school. Please do so PRIOR to your child's first day to ensure that all paperwork with the school's registrar is in place. Registration includes completion of the school's registration packet, information and immunization card, emergency card (which includes four outside emergency names, phone numbers and signatures), a copy of the child's birth certificate, record of up-to-date verifiable immunizations and proof of residency. Both the preschool teacher and the school office require many of these forms and registrations. Please notify the classroom teacher two weeks in advance if your child will be exiting the program.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Bus transportation by the school district is provided for enrolled pre-school students that reside within the District boundaries. Parents have the option to waive the right to transportation if they prefer to take their child to and from school. For any questions regarding where your child may be picked up and dropped off, please **call** Brianna Looney at the Transportation Department at 520-896-3072. Parents must have children ready when the bus arrives. If they are not ready the bus cannot wait and the parent will be responsible for transportation.

If you know your child will not be taking the bus on a certain day or is out sick, please call the Transportation Department at 520-896-3052.

## **CAMPUS VISITORS**

Parents and legal guardians of students enrolled in our preschool program have access to Mt. Vista Kindergarten Prep. Visitors, including parents and legal guardians must sign-in at the Mt. Vista K-8 School Office, receive a visitor badge and proceed to the preschool facility.

## **TUITION**

With generous support from Oracle Schools Foundation, Mt. Vista Kindergarten Prep Program is tuition-free. No tuition is collected and therefore no refunds will be given.

## **ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL POLICY**

Students should be dropped off at school no earlier than five (5) minutes prior to the start of their session, and picked up promptly when the session is over. Early arrival and late pick-up of your children leave teachers without adequate preparation and lunchtime. Please be considerate and time your arrivals and pick-ups properly.

Children will only be released to parents or authorized adults. Please be prompt, as children tend to become upset, restless and/or afraid if you are late. If an emergency arises, call the school office so that we may reassure your child. We must have either a written note or in-person request to:

- Dismiss your child early.
- Release your child to a babysitter, car pool, family member or friend other than specified at the beginning of school. Children will not be released to elementary age siblings.
- You must sign your child in and out at the office for late arrival or early dismissal.

You must sign your child in and out with the preschool staff on a daily basis. Authorized adults may be asked to show photo identification prior to releasing a child into their care.

## **REGULATION**

Arizona Department of Health Services, 400 West Congress, Suite 100, Tucson, AZ, 85701, regulates your child's preschool facility. Their phone number is (520) 628-6541. Licensing inspection reports are available upon request from the preschool site.

## **SNACKS**

A food allergies form must be completed to notify staff of any allergies your child has and these foods will be avoided. Parents are required to provide their students with a small drink and peanut free snack each day. If you do not wish for your child to participate in snack time please let your classroom teacher know. The school does not provide snacks.

## **BACKPACKS**

Please provide your child with a bag or backpack big enough to hold a folder with his/her name on it. It will be used to transport papers, artwork and special items. We ask that you keep it in a special place so it will be available to your child when he/she prepares to come to school. A great deal of learning can take place as he/she takes on responsibility for his/her own backpack. Please check your child's backpack every Friday for the weekly newsletter.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Written permission must be received from parents or legal guardians before preschool students can attend field trips. All field trips will be curriculum based. Information to the parents will include the date, purpose, destination and time of return to campus. An adequate number of responsible adult chaperones must accompany the students.

## **MEDICAL CONDITIONS and ADMINISTERING MEDICATION**

Parents or guardians of any child enrolled the Mt. Vista Kindergarten Prep Program must notify the teacher and school nurse of any medical conditions requiring special attention or consideration, including any known allergies (including food allergies). Children with an infectious disease shall be excluded from class.

A medication consent form will need to be completed by the child's parent/guardian and kept in the school health office for any child requiring the administration of any medication during the preschool day. The school nurse will administer medicine. Medicine must be in the original container and clearly labeled. Students are not allowed to carry medication or administer to themselves.

## **LIABILITY INSURANCE**

Mt. Vista Kindergarten Prep is an insured program, per Arizona Revised Statutes. Documentation of our liability insurance coverage is available for review on the facility premises.

## **EMERGENCY FIRST-AID and ILLNESS**

Emergency first aid is given by the health aide. When a student becomes ill at school, a staff member accompanies him or her to the office. If it is necessary for the child to leave school, the parent is contacted. The student remains in the pre-school until the parent or guardian arrives. ***Please cooperate by picking up your child promptly.*** We will not call unless your child needs to be at home.

For this reason, it is of vital importance to keep your child's emergency card up to date, which includes the following.

- Current home address and telephone number.
- Place of employment and phone number of both parents/guardians.
- Name of 4 people who are responsible for the child in the event parents cannot be located immediately if an emergency occurs.

Children who are ill ***MUST*** be kept home from school. ***Children with fever, diarrhea or vomiting in the previous 24-hour period must be kept home from school.*** If your child will be out sick, please call the school office to inform the teacher. (Sorry, no deductions are made in fees for tuition children).

Parents will be notified by letter if there is an outbreak of any communicable disease.

## **FIRE DRILLS**

Unannounced evacuation/fire drills must be conducted at least once every 30 days as required by law. Emergency evaluation plans are posted in each classroom.

Fire Inspection Reports are displayed in each preschool classroom, per Arizona Department of Health Services requirements.

### **IMMUNIZATIONS**

Before entering the Mt. Vista Kindergarten Prep Program ***all preschoolers must be up-to-date*** with their immunizations. ***A copy of the child's immunization record stamped by the physician's office*** and includes the names of the office or clinic, address and phone number must be provided before your child can attend class.

### **PESTICIDES**

The Oracle School District sprays pesticides once a month for weed and pest control. The pesticides are applied on days when school is not in session (typically on weekends or weekdays over the summer) and a 72-hour advance notification is posted in the Mt. Vista School Front Office each time pesticides will be used.

